

Clausewitz and the People's War

and other politico-military essays

T. Derbent



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Cover: “Glory to the Legendary Patriotic Partisans and Their Supporters,” lithographic print, USSR, 1985.



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In memory of General Hồng Cu

CONTENTS

Publisher's note	9
As a Parting Note	11
Note to the present edition	
Clausewitz and the People's War	12
<i>Revised and expanded edition</i>	
Lenin and the War	170
<i>Contribution to the 100th anniversary of the Zimmerwald Conference</i>	
Towards a Proletarian Military Doctrine (or not)	224
<i>The Frunze-Trotsky debate of 1920–21</i>	
Categories of Revolutionary Military Politics	278
<i>Conference presented as part of the Bloc Marxiste-Léniniste training program, April 3 and 10, 2006</i>	
Marighella and Us	314
<i>Postscript to the publication "Praxis de la guérilla urbaine" ("Praxis of Urban Guerrilla War")</i>	
Hanoi Address	322
Glossary	326

“War is less burdensome than servitude”¹

Vauvenargues

Publisher's note

Two decades after it was first published by Aden, and after a year's work in close collaboration with the author, Foreign Languages Press is pleased to present the new, final edition of *Clausewitz and the People's War*.

T. Derbent's work builds on a long tradition of assimilating Clausewitz's theories into Marxism in general and Marxism-Leninism in particular. Several decades of research have made him one of the leading experts on the military question in its relation to historical and contemporary revolutionary movements. His work (books, articles, conferences) addresses both the historical aspect of this assimilation—with a study of the influence of Clausewitz's writings on Marxist theorists and leaders (Jaurès, Mehring, etc.)—as well as on the theoretical aspect of this assimilation—both in terms of the profound affinities between these thoughts (their dialectical character, their articulation of the relationship between war and politics) and in terms of the direct influence of Clausewitz's theses on the Marxist-Leninist literature.

Consequently, the author's work includes both polemical texts—such as *De Foucault aux Brigades Rouges*, a critique of Foucault's and many others' reversal of Clausewitz's famous phrase "War is the continuation of policy with other means"—and historical essays—such as *The German Communist Resistance*.

Clausewitz and the People's War, however, eludes any such categorization—already tenuous in the case of the other books cited. The book's historical contextualization of Clausewitz's reflections on people's war, to a large extent, tends towards the quasi-encyclopedic exercise towards which it tends; the description of the polemics between Trotsky and Frunze, for example, recalls the endless debate on the universality of protracted people's war.

The main contribution of *Clausewitz and the People's War* remains, however, its side-by-side presentation of the great revolutionary military-political traditions that have, in one way or another, practiced people's war. Articulated in a unified terminology—built around and through a

¹ *La Bruyère and Vauvenargues: Selections from the Characters, Reflections and Maxims*, (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1903), 165.

complex history whose internal tensions the author has not been afraid to highlight—the description of those traditions makes it possible, perhaps for the first time, for the informed reader to compare the different military strategies of the revolutionary movement on a scientific basis.

In addition to the revised and greatly expanded main essay, *Clausewitz and the People's War*, this edition contains a selection of four other texts:

The first, “Lenin and the War,” originated as a lecture Derbent gave in Zurich to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Zimmerwald Conference. The second, “Towards a proletarian military doctrine (or not),” is a short essay on the debate between Trotsky and Frunze regarding the question of the possibility of a properly “proletarian” military doctrine in the ‘20s. The third, entitled “Categories of revolutionary military politics,” is the transcript of a conference given for the purpose of educating activists on the topic. Rather unconventional in content and form, it has more of an educational element than a research-oriented one. The fourth, “Marighella and Us,” was published as the afterword to a collection of texts by the Brazilian revolutionary. The fifth and final document is an address delivered in Hanoi in 2011. It appears in this edition at the request of the author, who wished to pay tribute to General Hong Cu, a great fighter in the wars in Indochina and comrade-in-arms of General Giáp. To facilitate our readers’ understanding of the historical military-political debates, we have provided descriptions of events, organizations and characters, both well-known and lesser-known, to assist in better understanding the text. For this reason, we have also added an extensive new glossary incorporating biographical and historiographical footnotes from the first edition. In addition, we have added a number of editorial notes to help readers with the military, political, and geographical concepts used in the text. Our final intervention, as editors committed to the publication of this magnum opus on the revolutionary military question, was to produce with the author, a historical chart of the various armed revolutionary episodes, strategists and organizations from the early 19th century to the present day.

While the author begins his book by bidding us “farewell,” we end this note by expressing our conviction that the republication of *Clausewitz and the People's War* will help launch a new phase of debate on the revolutionary military question.

As a Parting Note

Note to the present edition

The twenty years that separate this anthology from the first edition of *Clausewitz and the People's War* have enabled me to enhance its content. Dedicated chapters on Giáp and Mao were sorely lacking, and the recent publication of important sources, such as General Giáp's *Memoirs* or Mao Zedong's reading notes, which have since become accessible, have enabled me to fill this gap.

Twelve additional chapters, together with a host of other newly added details, allow me to pretend to have achieved a relative but fair degree of exhaustiveness.

More than twenty years of research and publications have culminated in this edition, which brings my work to a close.

This note is, therefore, also a farewell.

I would like to thank all those who have helped, documented, advised, corrected and edited my work, as well as all those who have read it.

T. D.

Clausewitz and the People's War

Revised and expanded edition

1. Introduction

In addition to the hundreds of texts devoted to it, Clausewitz's masterwork, *On War*, has been commented on, quoted and debated by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Giáp and many other revolutionary strategists. In the field of strategy, Clausewitz's thought is the equivalent of Hegel's in philosophy, or Adam Smith's in economics: one of the foundational sources of Marxism-Leninism. It wasn't until the military writings of Mao Zedong, himself a great reader of Clausewitz², that a revolutionary military policy was fully and coherently theorized; neither Marx, Engels, Lenin, nor Stalin had produced a work that surpassed *On War*, just as *Capital* surpassed *The Wealth of Nations*. What we do have, however, are numerous thoughts and notes, scattered throughout letters, articles and manuscripts, which enable us to grasp the founders of Marxism-Leninism's idea of the value and limits of Clausewitz's thought. We will therefore examine *On War's* theses from the angle of the problem of people's war.

2. A Few Biographical Details

Carl von Clausewitz was born in 1780 in Burg, near Magdeburg in the region of Pomerania (today part of Germany). Unlike so many other Prussian³ generals, he did not belong to the Landadel, the class of large landowners. His grandfather was a pastor, his mother the daughter of a local civil servant, and his father, who had received an officer's commission during the Seven Years' War, had been dismissed from the army at the end of the conflict because of his modest background. As a civil servant, he worked for the state as an excise inspector and raised his sons to worship Luther, Frederick II, Prussia, and the army. As a result, three of his four sons became generals.

Carl von Clausewitz belonged to the middle class of noblemen who, in the absence of large estates, became civil servants or soldiers, as well as public officials given noble titles for outstanding service. He was not officially recognized as noble until 1827, years after his promotion to the generalship.

² Zhang Yuan-Lin, *Mao Zedong und Carl von Clausewitz: Theorien des Krieges, Beziehung, Darstellung und Vergleich*, (Mannheim University Press, 1995).

³ Prussia was a German state that played a key role in the unification of Germany in the 19th century and later became the core of the German Empire.

At the age of twelve, Carl “enlisted” as a non-commissioned flag bearer (Fahnenjunker) in the Prince-Ferdinand regiment stationed in Potsdam. At thirteen, he took part in the Rhine campaign of 1793–1794. On his return, having become an officer, he spent eight years garrisoned in the small town of Neu-Ruppin, during which time he took the opportunity to educate himself. In 1801, he passed the entrance exam for the Berlin War College. There, he became a pupil of the great Scharnhorst, who singled him out for his “rare ability to grasp complex systems,” and made him the best student in his class in 1803.

In 1803 and 1804, Clausewitz read and commented on Polybius, Machiavelli, Feuquières, Puysegur, the Prince de Ligne, Maurice de Saxe and many others. His activity as a theoretician began in 1804, and the following year he wrote and published (anonymously) his first article, “Remarks on the Pure and Applied Strategy of Herr von Bülow or Criticism of the Views Contained Therein” in the *Neue Bellona* review, in which he emphasized the importance of immaterial and moral characteristics in warfare and criticized the dogmatic approach that formed the basis of the strategic doctrines of the time.

It was during this period that Clausewitz met Marie von Brühl. He would love her, and be loved by her, from the first day to the last of their married life; every line of their correspondence, whether as a newly engaged couple or an old married one, bears witness to this unwavering affection.

The Napoleonic Wars interrupted Clausewitz’s theoretical activities. Appointed captain and aide-de-camp to Prince Augustus on Scharnhorst’s recommendation, he fought in 1806 at Jena, Prenzlau and Auerstaedt, where he was captured. His experience as a captive and his deep patriotism nurtured in him a hatred of France and the French that was never to fade, and which occasionally tainted his theoretical work, particularly his assessment of the armies born of the French Revolution.

After spending a year in captivity alongside Prince Augustus, Clausewitz returned to Prussia and became Scharnhorst’s secretary in February 1809. Scharnhorst, who had distinguished himself at the Battle of Eylau, chaired the Military Reorganization Commission. Clausewitz played an active role in the reform of the Prussian army and state. Several of the memoranda issued by the great Prussian reformers—Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Boyen, Grolman—were written by Clausewitz. He was the inspiration for

the famous Exercier-Reglement, which became the supreme law of the army. Clausewitz thus made a significant contribution to the birth of the new Prussian military: reorganization, rearmament and re-equipment according to new requirements, attention to troop morale, national rather than mercenary recruitment, abolition of corporal punishment, recruitment of officers on the basis of competence rather than social origin, etc. He also drafted the new Prussian Army Code of Command. In 1812, he wrote the famous *Manifestos*⁴ in which the reformers argued against an alliance with victorious France and called for a national renaissance.

In the first manifesto, Clausewitz states that

a people can value nothing more highly than the dignity and liberty of its existence.

That it must defend these to the last drop of its blood.

That there is no higher duty to fulfill, no higher law to obey.

That the shameful blot of cowardly submission can never be erased.

That this drop of poison in the blood of a nation is passed on to posterity, crippling and eroding the strength of future generations.

That the honor of the king and government are one with the honor of the people, and the sole safeguard of its well-being.

That a people courageously struggling for its liberty is invincible.

That even the destruction of liberty after a bloody and honorable struggle assures the people's rebirth.⁵

In the third manifesto, Clausewitz, evoking the Tyrolean uprising, the Spanish guerrillas and the War in the Vendée, calls for the arming of the entire people to fight against the invader and analyzes the type of organization such a people's war requires. This text prefigures the famous

⁴ In German: *Bekanntnisse*. Written at the request of a group of patriotic officers gathered around Gneisenau, these manifestos were intended for publication under their joint signatures. They were read and commented on by the group but never published.

⁵ Clausewitz, "Political Declaration," 1812, in *Historical and Political Writings*, Ed. by P. Paret and D. Moran (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 290.

Prussian edict of April 1813 on the *Landsturm*,⁶ and makes Clausewitz the first modern theoretician to have studied this particular type of armed struggle.⁷

Clausewitz then secretly established contact between the new War Ministry and Scharnhorst, who was the army's Chief of Staff. Appointed to the Berlin War College in 1810, Clausewitz taught a two-year course on "petty warfare"—a type of guerrilla warfare that is waged by irregular troops, as well as by small, highly mobile detachments of the regular army—and was entrusted with the military education of the Crown Prince, the future Frederick William IV. A report on the lectures he gave to the Kronprinz, *Principles of War*,⁸ was published in 1812.

When, in October of the same year, Prussia was reduced to the status of a small vassal of the French Empire, Clausewitz, after considering taking up service in Austria, joined the ranks of the Russian army. As Gérard Chaliand observes,

The interesting thing about Clausewitz's situation when he decided to join Russia and place himself in the Czar's service in order to continue fighting against French hegemony was that for the first time in Europe since the start of the French

⁶ The *Landwehr*, a type of local militia entrusted with secondary tasks and serving as a reserve for the line infantry, was different from the *Landsturm*, which truly constituted the people in arms. The edict on the *Landsturm*, inspired by the Spanish experience, signed by the King of Prussia and duly published in the Prussian Code of Law, stipulated that it was the duty of every citizen to oppose invasion with weapons of all kinds. The use of axes, pitchforks, scythes and shotguns was explicitly recommended. Every Prussian had to refuse to obey the enemy's orders and instead do everything in his power to harm him. The "deportations of a frenzied mob" were explicitly deemed less harmful than a situation where the enemy could freely dispose of his troops. In the document, reprisals and terrorist measures were promised to protect the partisan, and the enemy was threatened. This landmark text was the first official document to legitimize partisanship.

⁷ It wasn't until 1822 that Dekker published *Der Kleine Krieg* in Berlin, and until 1827 that Lemièrre de Corvey published *Des partisans et corps irréguliers* ("On partisanship and irregular corps") in Paris.

⁸ Or, more precisely, *Summary of the Instruction Given by the Author to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, in the Years 1810, 1811, and 1812* (original title: *Übersicht des Sr. Königl. Hoheit dem Kronprinzen in den Jahren 1810, 1811 und 1812 von Verfasser erteilten militärischen Unterrichtes*).

Revolution, the duty to one's country took precedence over the duty to one's prince.⁹

In 1813, Clausewitz earned the rank of lieutenant colonel of the Russian army, initially serving on General von Phull's staff. He was one of several who advised the withdrawal of the armies of Barclay de Tolly and Bagration to Smolensk, as evidenced by his report to the Czar covering the situation at the Drissa military camp situated on the banks of the Dvina River.¹⁰ He took part in the battles of Vitebsk, Smolensk, and Borodino ["Bataille de la Moskova" ("Battle of the Moskva River") in French, where Clausewitz led a cavalry corps of 2,500 men]. As the French army retreated across the Berezina stream in disastrous conditions, Clausewitz was entrusted with the delicate mission of obtaining the surrender of the troops of Ludwig Yorck, a Prussian general under French command. His 20,000-strong army corps was Prussia's contribution to Napoleon's war, and Bonaparte had positioned it to cover the left wing of his Grande Armée (Grand Army). Two of Clausewitz's brothers served in Yorck's regiment. Napoleon's defeat changed quite a few things for Yorck, who tended to regard the French as Prussia's real enemies. In the end, talks led Yorck to declare himself neutral.¹¹

A few months later, the King of Prussia broke with the French alliance and declared a national insurrection. However, the insurrection did not take the form of the general mass uprising its promoters had hoped for, and the popular forces and energies that did emerge were quickly subdued

⁹ *Clausewitz en Russie*, preface by Gérard Chaliand to Clausewitz's *La campagne de 1812 en Russie* (Brussels: Complexe Publishing House, 1987), xiii. Translation from French by the Editors.

¹⁰ Napoleon wanted to catch and destroy the Russian army at the start of the campaign. For the Russians, the first step was to disengage Barclay de Tolly's army. Prussian general von Phull had advised the Czar to fight the battle at the country's border, but Clausewitz, who was von Phull's aide-de-camp, made a report on the the entrenched camp's organization near the village of Drissa and recommended retreating to Smolensk. The idea of a deep retreat into the Russian heartland, advocated by Scharnhorst and Clausewitz, had been rejected by the Russian leadership, but was forced upon them by events until Kutuzov, who took over as commander-in-chief from Barclay on August 29, finally made it a strategic choice.

¹¹ After signing the Convention of Tauroggen negotiated by Clausewitz, General Yorck wrote to his king inquiring whether he should engage the "real enemy" (the French) or whether the king would condemn him for this act. Yorck declared himself ready for either scenario with equal dedication; ready, in the event of a condemnation by the king, "to wait for the bullet on a heap of sand with the same heart as on the battlefield."

by the regular army. In 1813, Clausewitz served at Blücher's headquarters as liaison officer with the Russian armies (since the king had refused to reintegrate him into the Prussian army). He took part in the battle of Lützen, where Scharnhorst was mortally wounded, and where he himself was struck in the ear with a bayonet and almost captured. After the armistice in 1814, he became chief of staff of the Prussian legion within the Russian army. In 1815, during the Hundred Days, he was reinstated in the Prussian army with the rank of colonel, and became chief of staff of the Third Corps, which fought at Ligny and then at Waterloo.¹²

In 1816, in Coblenz, Clausewitz, now elevated to the rank of general, resumed his research and wrote a number of articles that would form the basis of his future book *On War*. Appointed Head of the Berlin War College in 1818, he continued his theoretical work until his nomination to the artillery corps in 1830. It should be mentioned, however, that Clausewitz's position at the War College was essentially administrative and had no influence on the nature of the teaching received by Prussian officer cadets. Nevertheless, Clausewitz did take part in the debates on military reform that were taking place in Prussia. In 1819, he wrote *Über die politischen Vorteile und Nachteile der preussischen Landwehr* ("On the Political Advantages and Disadvantages of the Prussian *Landwehr*"), in which he spoke out against those who feared that the *Landwehr*¹³ was a school of revolution, and then undertook the writing of *Preußen in seiner großen Katastrophe* (*Notes on Prussia in Her Grand Catastrophe of 1806*),¹⁴ in which he reflected on the events of 1806.

After being transferred to Breslau, where he had been entrusted with the inspection of the artillery, he returned to Berlin in December as chief of staff to Field Marshal von Gneisenau throughout the period of his assignment to the high command—at that time, Gneisenau was in command

¹² More precisely at the Battle of Wavre, which took place on the same day as the Battle of Waterloo, on June 18, 1815, just a few kilometers from the latter, and which involved a clash between the Prussian corps marching on Waterloo and the French corps blocking their path.

¹³ *Landwehr* refers to a type of reserve military force, typically used in European countries, that consists of civilian volunteers who can be called upon for military service during times of need.

¹⁴ "Notes on Prussia in Her Grand Catastrophe of 1806," in *Jena Campaign Sourcebook*, (Fort Leavenworth: The General Service Schools Press, 1922).

of the Prussian army concentrated on the eastern border as a result of the Polish insurrection. In August 1831, Gneisenau died of the same cholera epidemic that would claim Hegel's life in November of that year, and Clausewitz returned to Breslau with the intention of resuming his work. But he died exactly two days after Hegel, before he had had a chance to complete the manuscripts he had interrupted the previous year.

3. Some Historical Facts

By studying the military, Clausewitz was able to gain a clear perception of the historical upheavals of his time. He understood them through the filter of his monarchist yet patriotic outlook. Marx pointed out to Engels that

the history of the army demonstrates the rightness of our views as to the connection between the productive forces and social relations. . . it was in the army of Antiquity that the *salaire* [wages] was first fully developed. Likewise the *peculium castrense* [camp soldier's pay] in Rome, the first legal form according recognition to the movable property of others than fathers of families. Likewise the guild system in the corporation of the *fabri* [military laborers]. Here too the first use of machinery on a large scale. Again, the division of labour within a branch was first put into practice by armies. All this, moreover, a very striking epitome of the whole history of civil societies.¹⁵

Clausewitz, Napoleon's staunch opponent, was the man who best understood the essence of the Napoleonic wars, even more so than Ney's chief of staff, Jomini. Clausewitz saw the army born of the French Revolution—an army that was capable of sweeping away the old armies of the Princes—as a national, social and, to a large extent, political army, which owed less to Napoleon himself than to Carnot.

The emergence and development of the capitalist mode of production had not waited for the bourgeois revolution to produce a profound impact on nations' military organizations. The bourgeoisie's rise to economic

¹⁵ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, "Marx to Engels in Ryde," in *Collected Works*, Vol. 40, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2010), 186.

and social power was expressed in the role it played in the “learned weapons”¹⁶—engineering and artillery. Among the productive forces controlled by the bourgeoisie, and of growing economic and social importance, scientific and technical knowledge were directly relevant to the art of war. The link between scientific research and warfare is characteristic of the Renaissance, and of the bourgeoisie’s entry onto the political and historical scene. For example, in the eyes of his contemporaries, Leonardo da Vinci was first and foremost a military engineer; his first experiments in the field of kinematic theory focused on the relationship between a projectile’s firing angle and the range. Galileo is credited with having discovered that the theoretical trajectory of an artillery shell is the parabola. The importance of siege craft in dynastic warfare gave an ever-greater role to the artillery.¹⁷ At the same time, scientific, mathematical and technical training became an essential quality required for command. The development of naval warfare following the colonization of the Americas was part of this general trend.

In France, the bourgeoisie’s influence in the navy, artillery, and engineering corps can be traced back almost to the birth of these branches of the armed forces. Even if, in the 17th century, nominal command of the artillery remained in the hands of the nobility under the title of Grand Master of Artillery, a grandee coming from the ranks of the bourgeoisie assumed effective command under the title of Commissary General of Artillery.

The influence of the bourgeoisie on the army was also felt in terms of ideology. The Age of Enlightenment saw the unification of practice and theory, and the birth of the notion of applied science, whereas the Ancien Régime tended to perpetuate a division between the sciences (the domain

¹⁶ Admittedly an unsatisfactory translation, but faithful to the original meaning of the French military expression “*armes savantes*.” This notion has a highly significant historical value, since by designating artillery and military engineering, both fields that require its members—mostly from the bourgeoisie—to demonstrate a high level of technical knowledge, the term “learned weapon” effectively belittles the feudal military art of the aristocrats. Indeed, in the words of the author himself, those who mastered the “learned weapons” mocked “those foolish nobles who were only good at charging the enemy on horseback, while the Enlightenment conferred great prestige on practical skills and knowledge, such as artillery and military engineering.”—Ed.

¹⁷ Siege craft involved techniques like building siege engines, digging tunnels, and using early artillery to capture fortified positions. Dynastic wars were conflicts over thrones or territories, driven by noble families seeking to expand or defend their domains through inheritance or conquest.—Ed.

of the learned) and the mechanical arts (the domain of the “trades”). The situation changed when science became an instrument of production, and Diderot and d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie* ascribed a significant role to the arts and crafts. The scientific rationalist ideal, which found its fullest expression in the work of the Encyclopedists, had begun to exert its influence on French society through Descartes’ philosophy and Pascal’s geometrical spirit. The ideal of the machine—the perfect application of reason to action—was to combine with concrete technical factors¹⁸ in order to transform the armed forces into a unified, systematic structure. Dress (introduction of the uniform), behavior (establishment of codes of discipline), housing (appearance of barracks), training (birth of drill), timetables, etc. all became strictly regulated.

True, the revolutionary and later Napoleonic armies benefited from a rich tradition inherited from the Ancien Régime. As early as Charles VII, i.e., during the campaigns of Joan of Arc, the French army took on what could only be described as an embryonic national character. It was also at this time that the first elements of the French bourgeoisie, such as the Bureau brothers, founders of the French artillery, took part in the war effort. Revolutionary France was reaping the benefits of Richelieu’s policies, which relied on the bourgeoisie to strengthen royal power against the nobility. All areas of administration, stewardship, transport, and services were in the hands of civilians—in other words, members of the bourgeoisie—whether they were officially in charge of these areas or simply entered into commercial contracts with the State.

Artillery (like engineering and navy) required considerable technical and financial resources, which only capitalist economic development could provide. This economic power became a weapon in its own right, something that the traditional representatives of the Ancien Régime’s military doctrine could not accept, starting with the most eminent, Frederick the Great.¹⁹ Indeed, for him, artillery was merely an auxiliary to cavalry and infantry.

¹⁸ The replacement of the musket by the rifle, for example, gave each individual soldier a potential efficiency that had to be monitored to make it effective.

¹⁹ Frederick II was not only a great strategist (as demonstrated by his mastery of interior line maneuvers), but also a great organizer and tactician (his army could switch from column or line formation to echelon formation simply by converting battalions to the left or right). He was both head of state and wartime commander and had a very sound

But if artillery was one of the most treasured historic contributions to the development of the armies of the Revolution and the French Empire (be it the artillery of Gribeauval²⁰ or Bonaparte himself, who was, as we know, a trained artilleryman), this contribution was achieved in spite of the specificities of the Ancien Régime, rather than because of said specificities. In France, this contradiction was only resolved during the revolutionary crisis of 1789. Examples of this contradiction abound. We need only mention the École du génie de Mézières, whose outstanding educational standards were stifled by a recruitment policy limited to aristocrats.

Founded under Louis XIV, the École du génie de Mézières was a French fortification school developed from the experience of the War of the Austrian Succession, and became one of the centers where theory and practice merged throughout the 18th century, providing a breeding ground for scientists such as Monge and Coulomb. Yet, with the Ancien Régime still in place, the recruitment system only admitted students of aristocratic descent.²¹ As this requirement was incompatible with the skills demanded at Mézières (the entrance exam required a high level of mathematics), the number of students fell steadily: on average, only ten or so candidates were accepted each year after 1776. . . The Revolution resolved this crisis by opening up access to all posts to the offspring of the bourgeoisie, basing its recruitment on ability alone, in what was to become the École polytechnique. The results were dazzling: 400 students were immediately recruited, benefiting from the teachings of the greatest scientists of the time and making a decisive contribution, along with their successors, to France's economic and military power.

conception of the latter. He was one of the only men of his century to set as his strategic objective not the control of this or that position, but the destruction of the enemy army.

²⁰ This artillery general of commoner origin, a great engineer and pupil of the Austrian artilleryman Liechtenstein, succeeded with his 1765 reform in considerably lightening the artillery without diminishing its power, improving its precision, and quadrupling its range. He was the creator of field artillery. Napoleon's use of this tool is well known, concentrating it under his direct command rather than distributing it evenly among his units. Used *en masse* both on the offensive (as at Ligny) and on the defensive (as at Lützen), Napoleon's artillery would more than once decide the outcome of a battle, sometimes single-handedly (as at Friedland). Gribeauval's reform was interrupted under the *Ancien Régime* by a fall from grace that lasted until 1778.

²¹ For the historical reasons previously mentioned, this requirement in the infantry and cavalry was even stricter than in the engineering or artillery departments: a regulation published in 1781 required four quarters of nobility to be promoted to captain. . .

In 1812, Clausewitz saw Napoleon's Grand Army cross the "scorched earth" of the Russian hinterland, suffer the terrible blow at Borodino, and melt away under the impact of Russian guerrilla attacks. With its 600,000 men and unrivalled equipment, the Grand Army may have seemed infinitely more powerful than any Napoleon had ever led into battle, but it had largely lost its national character. It was made up of veterans of the Revolutionary Wars who had become professional soldiers, young conscripts who were unenthusiastic about the prospect of fighting on the battlefields of Europe for years to come, and the 230,000 soldiers—out of the 428,000 who entered Russia—whom Napoleon had raised from his vassal states. The latter—Swiss, Austrians, Prussians, Danes, Swedes, Bavarians, Saxons, Westphalians, Poles, Italians, Dutch, Belgians, Dalmatians, Spaniards, etc.—were uninterested in the war, and even secretly wanted Napoleon to be defeated—like the Swiss who defected at the Battle of Baylen. This was not lost on Clausewitz.²² In 1806, he had seen the Prussian army, which had remained stuck in Friedrichian tactics and the magazine system,²³ get crushed by Napoleon at Jena and by Davout at Auerstaedt. In 1813, however, he was able to witness a regenerated Prussian army, which had become national in character and appealed to the masses, fight victoriously against the French, first at Leipzig²⁴ and then at Waterloo in 1815.

Clausewitz was then able to identify the characteristics of modern warfare.

Modern war is waged with the full might of the nation, in an act of violence tending towards the extreme, with the aim of destroying the enemy's armed forces in a decisive battle, and eliminating any possibility of vengeance (otherwise, once peace has been achieved, the enemy will

²² Notably, Clausewitz did not criticize Napoleon's campaign plan in Russia, nor the way he conducted his battles (as at Borodino). To wage war on Russia, Napoleon's choices were optimal. It was the very decision to invade that was wrong; in 1812, Napoleon the war leader was beyond reproach, but Napoleon the head of state was unforgivable. . .

²³ The "magazine system" introduced by François-Michel le Tellier, Marquis de Louvois, in the late 17th century revolutionized French military logistics by centralizing the storage and distribution of supplies, enhancing the efficiency and readiness of the armed forces.—Ed.

²⁴ The *Völkerschlacht*, the "Battle of the Nations" in Leipzig, pitted half a million men against each other, and remained Europe's greatest battle until the First World War. It was the first great confrontation between national armies, and its national character was fully realized when an entire corps of German soldiers, who had remained in Napoleon's army due to alliances, went over to the "enemy" in the middle of the battle. . .

rise again, and, as in the 18th century, the war will begin again).²⁵ For instance, a territory can be occupied only by destroying an army. However, destroying an army does not mean slaughtering its soldiers; the most important thing is to break the enemy's will and ability to fight, for as R. Pichené notes:

At Eylau, the Russians lost 32% of their forces, but they withdrew in order and the battle was indecisive; on the contrary, at Austerlitz, victory was decisive, and the enemy, who had only lost 14% of its forces, was unable to regroup.²⁶

Modern warfare calls for simultaneous efforts at the strategic level (i.e., committing all forces at the strategic level) and successive efforts at the tactical level (i.e., knowing how to commit one's reserve troops—and therefore possessing the necessary forces to dispatch).²⁷

Modern war is characterized by a decisive role played by offensive and mass action, which requires high morale and thus highly motivated soldiers (soldiers who know why they are fighting and are committed to the aims of the war). Clausewitz points out that force is not the sum of

²⁵ This was Napoleon's rule of conduct, writing to Soult during the skillful and daring maneuvers that preceded the clash with the Austrian army on the battlefield of Ulm: "It's not a question of beating the enemy, it's a question of not letting one of them escape. . . . I intend to do everything possible to make our success complete and absolute. . . . If I had only wanted to beat the enemy, I wouldn't have needed so many marches and such fatigue, but I want to capture the enemy, and I want to ensure that, from this army. . . not a single man is left to carry the news to Vienna." ("Letter from Napoleon to Marshal Soult, commander of the 4th Corps of the Grande Armée," in Napoleon Bonaparte, *Correspondance Générale* Vol. 5 (Paris: Fayard, 2008). Translated by the Editors.) In fact, only 1,500 cavalrymen (out of 80,000 soldiers in the Austrian army) escaped captivity. . . . This result cost the French army 1,500 men, who were killed or seriously wounded.

²⁶ Captain R. Pichené, *Histoire de la Tactique et de la Stratégie jusqu'à la guerre mondiale* (Paris: Éditions de la Pensée moderne, 1957), 202. Translated by the Editors.

²⁷ By keeping his Imperial Guard as a reserve force at Borodino until the very end, Napoleon prevented the Russian defeat from turning into a disaster. Kutuzov gave ground but saved his army. If the outcome is uncertain, the commitment of the reserve forces can determine the outcome. If the outcome is victorious, this commitment can turn victory into triumph. If the outcome is unsuccessful, the preservation of reserve forces does not make up for the loss. According to Clausewitz, in tactics the possession of reserve forces is often a trump card (combat can take the form of prolonged confrontations, made up of successive partial engagements), in strategy, every force must be used (strategy is a comprehensive undertaking, and so the strategist must deal with unforeseen events by modifying the distribution of units, not by immobilizing certain forces "arbitrarily"). What's more, the inactivity of indefinitely undeployed troops deprives them of the experience of combat.

means and will ($M + W = F?$), but the product of means and will ($M \times W = F!$): an army with a large number of troops and modern weapons, but whose soldiers have no desire to fight, has zero military value ($M \times 0 = 0$).

4. Vom Kriege

Already in his earliest works, those of 1804–1805, Clausewitz stands out for the rigor of his thought and style, and his concern for the scientific. In a note written in 1816, Clausewitz declares that in writing *On War—Vom Kriege* in German—he was inspired by Montesquieu's way of dealing with his subject in *The Spirit of Law*. Not only did he retain Montesquieu's style of breaking down his writing into short chapters, but also, and above all, his method, his determination to remain within the bounds of scientific knowledge, treating phenomena both in relation to their inherent nature and to their various historical manifestations.

Clausewitz is above all concerned with developing concepts and formulating definitions. Clausewitz first criticizes Bülow's definitions, starting with his distinction between tactics and strategy. For Bülow, tactical movements were those within the enemy's field of vision (or within range of his guns), and strategic movements were those outside this field. This is based on feelings and senses, not conceptualization. Clausewitz, however, only considers those differentiations that relate to the internal structure of the object of study valid.

To grasp these differentiations, he approaches each phenomenon at its most distinct point, where it reaches perfection, that is, at its extremities. Clausewitz was a lifelong practitioner of this method of identifying the extremities as a starting point for conceptual activity. However, it never escaped him that the concrete case lies somewhere between the two theoretical extremes of a described phenomenon, as he very well knew that such a concrete case is characterized by an extremity only insofar as its proximity to it is greater than to the opposite one. It is this distinction between concept and reality that enables theoretical activity.

When it comes to the theory of war, Clausewitz substitutes the notion of science for that of art. The object of an art is the use of available means to achieve a desired end. The theory of war is therefore the theory of its art, of its practice. The definitions of tactics and strategy are easily derived from the definition of art, from the conceptual pair: means/end:

Tactics is the theory of the use of armed forces in engagement; strategy is the theory of the use of engagements in the service of war.²⁸

Strategy has a politico-military objective as its end, and victorious combat as its means; tactics has victory in combat as its end, and armed forces as its means. Strategic success depends on tactical victories, and strategy must therefore provide the means for victory in combat, through the right choice of location, timing, troop deployment and so on.

From his earliest works, Clausewitz touched on issues that would be taken up later in *On War* (such as the importance of morale and the superiority of the defensive, which will be discussed later). But *On War* also brought new issues to the fore.

From 1832 to 1837, Marie von Clausewitz published her husband's *Posthumous Works* in ten volumes, of which *On War* occupied the first three. In her foreword to *On War*, she wrote:

The work which these lines precede occupied my inexpressively beloved husband almost completely for the last twelve years of his life. His fatherland and I unfortunately lost him far too early.²⁹

But Clausewitz's masterwork remained unfinished. Although he was able to rework certain chapters of Book VIII at length, Clausewitz considered only Chapter 1 of Book I to be completely finished.

A number of specialists have carried out scholarly studies to date the chapters and working notes. Raymond Aron, an outstanding Clausewitz connoisseur, devoted himself to this task, before adding:

Why argue about the dates when Clausewitz, as I, following several others, have repeated already, seems to have had mastery over his method and several of his governing ideas at the age of 25? The reader may have anticipated the answer. We do not find here expressed, or explained, the two ideas which

²⁸ Clausewitz first expounded this definition in *Strategie aus dem Jahre 1804*, a notebook that was not published until long after his death, and the content of which was later taken up in his *On War*.

²⁹ Preface by Marie von Clausewitz, in von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 65.

according to the "Warning"³⁰ were to direct the revision of the first six books: neither the two types of war nor war as the continuation of political relations with the adjunction of other means.³¹

In a working note for *On War*, Clausewitz had already enumerated the problems he set out to solve:

Is the aim of the military undertaking distinct from its political end? What is the extent of the forces to be mobilized in a war? What is the amount of energy required to wage war? Where do the many interruptions in hostilities come from? Are they an important part of the hostilities, or are they outright anomalies? Are the self-restrained wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or the migrations of the semi-barbarous Tartars, or the wars of destruction of the nineteenth century all part of the same phenomenon? Or is the nature of war conditioned by the nature of its relations, and what are these relations and conditions? The questions we are concerned with here do not appear in any of the books written on warfare, particularly in those recently written on the conduct of war as a whole, i.e. strategy.³²

The interest of this note lies in the fact that it brings together most of the questions Clausewitz dealt with in Book VIII and Chapter 1 of Book I, in short, all those that preoccupied him in his last works. These led him to distinguish between two types of warfare (which naturally dictate strategic choices):

War can be of two kinds, in the sense that either the objective is to *overthrow the enemy*—to render him politically helpless or militarily impotent, thus forcing him to sign whatever peace

³⁰ "Note of 10 July 1827" (and the unfinished note, presumably from 1830) on the general state of the manuscript. This is one of Clausewitz's last contributions to *On War*.

³¹ Aron, Raymond, *Clausewitz, Philosopher of War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986), 56.

³² "Geist und Tat" ("Spirit and action"), in *Vermächtniss des Soldaten und Denkens. Auswahl aus einigen Werken, Briefen und unveröffentlichten Schriften* (Legacy of the Soldier and Thought. Selection from several works, letters and unpublished writings), Alfred Kröner Verlag (Stuttgart, 1941), 309–311. Paraphrased.

we please; or *merely to occupy some of his frontier-districts* so that we can annex them or use them for bargaining at the peace negotiations. Transitions from one type to the other will of course recur in my treatment; but the fact that the aims of the two types are quite different must be clear at all times, and their points of irreconcilability brought out.³³

The aim of both types of warfare is quite distinct: the imposition of peace (*Diktat*)—or even outright elimination of the enemy—on the one hand; a negotiated peace that spares the enemy certain interests on the other.³⁴

Clausewitz never ignored the links between politics and war, between the interests of the state and the conduct of operations, but it was only later that he made explicit the meaning and consequences of those connections. Before *On War*, Clausewitz's principles did not refer to a particular war, but to war in general: only the relationship between forces involved—inferiority or superiority—seemed to determine the choice of offensive or defensive strategy. In *On War* (or, to be more precise, in the chapters reworked by Clausewitz between 1827 and 1830), we are faced with a major question: don't these principles confront two different types of warfare? In which case, policy can only effectively determine the end if it can accurately assess which of the two types of war prevails in the given circumstances.

In either type of war, the definition of strategy as the use of combat to achieve the political end of the war remains valid; what calls for reflection is the possible change in strategy according to the desired outcome (killing the enemy or not), as the change in outcome influences the deployment conduct of operations [i.e., deployment of military operations].

Unfinished as it is, *On War* has influenced the entire body of contemporary military thought. Its architecture is rigorous. Book I defines the concept of war, its nature and its purpose, and elaborates the main

³³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 69.

³⁴ *Diktat* refers to an imposed settlement or decree, often used in a negative sense to describe a forced agreement without negotiation or consent. In European history, it is most famously associated with the Treaty of Versailles (1919), which many Germans saw as an unfair *Diktat* (implying “dictated peace terms”) imposed by the Allies after World War I.

concepts of the system. Book II is the equivalent of a “theory of theory”; it deals with the relationship between knowledge and power, raises the question of the theorization of an art (in this case, the art of war), and the identification of military action—in particular, that of its leader—with that art. Book III is dedicated to moral forces and their importance in relation to material forces. Books IV and V are concerned with combat and armed forces. These are the books that are most closely linked to the modalities of warfare as it was conducted in Clausewitz’s time, but they remain of great interest insofar as we see Clausewitz’s system confronted with warfare’s historical manifestations. Book VI deals with defense and Book VII with attack—a subject to which we shall return later. Book VIII deals with the war plan, the inseparable link between political and military decisions, taking the reader back to the central theme of Book I.

As we have seen, Clausewitz’s theoretical work did not stand alone. Alongside Berenhorst and von Lossau, Rühle von Lilienstern wrote his own *On War* (1814) and a *Manual for the Officer for Education in Peace and for Use in Action* (1817). All these works contain theses that would later be found with Clausewitz: the importance of the moral factor, the role of coincidence and the limits of reason, war as a political factor, the value of the armed nation, and so on.

5. *Philosopher of War*

Before contemplating how to wage war, before studying wars as they have been fought in the past (with their tactics, course of action, lessons and aims), Clausewitz examined war in general as a concept. We all know his famous formulations: “War is an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will,”³⁵ and “war is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means.”³⁶ These formulations contain a set of definitions. To disregard them implies obscuring the meaning of its concepts and preventing them from being understood.

Many authors, in what they believe to be a brilliant paradox, have reversed the second formula, asserting that “politics is war continued with other means.” This would be to imagine that war is the fundamental social relationship between all states, all peoples, all classes, which is, of course,

³⁵ Clausewitz, *On War*, 75.

³⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, 69.

incorrect: not all conflicts of interest imply a logic of war, because some of them can be counterbalanced by a community of higher interests.³⁷ The reversal of Clausewitz's formula generally betrays an anti-dialectical and, ultimately, militaristic deviation from Clausewitz's thinking. But this habit of turning the formula on its head also reveals the way in which the phrase is commonly understood.

The reversal of Clausewitz's famous phrase is not always illegitimate of course, but while the formula in question is general in scope, its reversal applies only to specific subject areas³⁸—and certainly not to the inter-state relations that were Clausewitz's main concern. Indeed, in his historical inventory of conflicts from Antiquity to the Napoleonic Empire which he outlines in Chapter 8, Clausewitz does not list the Peasants' War in Germany, the Wars of Religion in France and England, or any civil wars. And yet, if the reversal of his formula applies to one category of contradictions, it is certainly that of contradictions between antagonistic classes:³⁹ there

³⁷ Relations between the US and the European Union can be analyzed through conflicts of interest causing "unfriendly" acts of various kinds (industrial espionage, diplomatic disinformation, taxation of imported products or limitation of imports, etc.); but the US and the European Union are fundamentally at peace. Peace is not the exception. It does not presuppose the absence of contradictions; it is simply the state in which violence is not used as an instrument to settle conflicts of interest.

³⁸ Foucault happily turned the famous formula on its head, albeit in a very specific way, as part of a general reflection on relations of power, on the application to the entire social order (factories, schools, prisons, hospitals, etc.) of certain forms of discipline first experimented in the army, such as record-keeping, surveillance, hierarchy, uniforms, drill, grading, placement ("everyone has their place"), schedules ("a specific time for every action"), and so on.

"It may be that war as strategy is a continuation of politics. But it must not be forgotten that 'politics' has been conceived as a continuation, if not exactly and directly of war, at least of the military model as a fundamental means of preventing civil disorder. Politics, as a technique of internal peace and order, sought to implement the mechanism of the perfect army, of the disciplined mass, of the docile, useful troop, of the regiment in camp and in the field, on maneuvers and on exercises. In the great eighteenth-century states, the army guaranteed civil peace no doubt because it was a real force, an ever-threatening word, but also because it was a technique and a body of knowledge that could project their schema over the social body." (Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Random House, 1995), 168.)

³⁹ "Antagonistic classes" in the strict sense of the term—which largely overlaps with the exploited/exploiters categories. However, not all class struggles impose a logic of war. In the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy in England, the period of conflict with and under Cromwell was minor compared to the conversion of most of the English aristocracy to the delights of capitalism. We can, of course, recall the *Manifesto's* famous formula: "Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one

politics is the continuation (often in the form of anticipation) of war, after all. But the scope of this reversal is limited, since within this particular contradiction politics is defined only as political action, and therefore its military aspect from which its politics are the “continuation” only represents specific periods of open confrontation between forces and wills. As such, they are far removed from the type of military prospects more traditional belligerents pride themselves on in the event of victory.

But of what politics is war the continuation? Firstly, of *object-politics*, i.e., the set of historical, social, economic, technical, cultural, and ideological factors that constitute the social conditions of war, making it a socio-historical product.⁴⁰ Secondly, of *subject-politics*, or policy, that is, political action, the “conduct of public affairs” inspired by a set of motives and guided by a specific aim. In this sense, the Clausewitzian concept of “continuation” is to be understood as follows:

1. The specificity of war, namely the use of armed force, which creates a particular situation governed by specific laws;
2. Its relationship to the larger whole of politics. The most commonly quoted French translation, “La guerre est une simple continuation de la politique par d’autres moyens” (“war is the continuation of policy with other means”), is ambiguous on this point,⁴¹ whereas *On War*’s developments are unequivocal: war is only one of several means of conducting politics. This integrative approach is why the reversal of the formula does not

another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.” (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism*, (Paris: Foreign Languages Press, 2020, 33.)

The use of Marx’s expression here demands an examination of the original, German text, which refers not to *Krieg* (war), but to *Kampf* (struggle).

⁴⁰ “The origin and the form taken by a war are not the result of any ultimate resolution of the vast array of circumstances involved, but only of those features that happen to be dominant.” (Clausewitz, *On War*, 580.)

⁴¹ von Clausewitz, *De la guerre*, (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1955), 67. The word *simple*, added in the French translation, may suggest an equivalence, but in that case it would correspond to the German word *einfach*, whereas Clausewitz uses the word *bloss*, which on the contrary introduces a decisive restriction. This problem of translation is highlighted by Julien Freund in “Guerre et politique—de Karl von Clausewitz à Raymond Aron,” (“War and Politics—from Karl von Clausewitz to Raymond Aron”) in *Revue française de sociologie*, Vol. XVII, 1976, page 646. Article available online.

add further depth to Clausewitz's thinking. Rather, it betrays his thought at its very core;

3. A complex relationship between the aims *within* a war (the destruction of the enemy army, the capture of its capital or one of its provinces) and the larger purpose *of* the war (the new situation created as a result of the war: the conquest of a province, the establishment of a new political regime, the annexation of the enemy country).⁴²

Any reversal of Clausewitz's formula ignores these three points⁴³ and is therefore either a superficial approach to his thought (the formula's success owes much to its apparent self-evidence), or a deliberate rejection of his theses.

Basically, the reciprocal action of opposing forces and intentions (each seeking to impose its will on the other, and in so doing, to deprive the other of the means to enforce it—that is, first and foremost, the means provided by armed force) is bound to provoke an escalation of unlimited violence, leading to “absolute” war. According to Clausewitz, war (war as a concept, but also every real, concrete war) is made up of three elements: violence, which derives from passion (this concerns the different peoples, nations involved), the mind acting freely on the world, which unfolds through the interplay of probabilities and coincidences (this concerns the military commanders), and political intelligence (this concerns the different governments). These three components come into play in different proportions, and those proportions can change over the course of a conflict, influencing the character of the war. Two countries may start a war without any hatred between their peoples, only to develop such hatred as the conflict unfolds. Or, on the contrary, the war enthusiasm may wane and give place to weariness. Historical characteristics also determine the

⁴² Clausewitz uses different terms to designate the aim (or objective) *of* the war (German: *Zweck*) and the aim (or objective) *within* the war (German: *Ziel*).

⁴³ A reversal in the strict sense, unlike Glucksmann's, who turns the formula on its head only to examine it from another angle: “The formula is reversed; in war, politics finds not only its continuation, but also its moment of truth,” and “the political-strategic continuity can be read in both directions. If the warrior can only sing of political victory, the ruler determines his aims with a freedom restricted by the ‘instrument’ he claims to wield.” André Glucksmann, *Le discours de la guerre* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1979), 100. Translation from French by the Editors.

relative importance of the various constituent elements: wars under the Ancien Régime were fought by small mercenary armies on behalf of dynastic interests, reducing, if not eliminating, the involvement of the people, thereby keeping the degree of violence relatively low.

However, contrary to the belief of the theoreticians of the Ancien Régime, the degree of violence is not inversely proportional to the degree of civilization; the degree depends on the importance of the interests at stake. This importance can be objective (importance for the nation) and/or subjective (importance in the eyes of the nation, subjective involvement of the people in the goals of the war). Interests may be (or become) weak, in which case the escalation of violence may not occur, and the conflict may even subside to the level of "armed observation."⁴⁴

War then also appears as a clash of opposing wills. It's not enough to simply command the necessary forces; one also has to be willing to commit them and, if need be, to accept the escalation of violence. We have seen great powers disposing of the means to continue a war put an end to it because of what they considered an unlikely successful outcome (an objective and rationally analyzed unlikelihood, or a subjective unlikelihood resulting from poor judgment, faint-heartedness, etc.), or because the price to be paid was seen (rightly or wrongly) as too high.

And if certain conditions allow for violence to be kept below a certain level, this requires the implicit consent of the belligerents. A war leader may hope to achieve his ends without bloody combat, but he would be making a fatal error if he based his strategy on the enemy's willingness to remain below a certain threshold of violence. Clausewitz had in mind Prussia's error and defeat in 1806 (Battle of Jena-Auerstadt), but we could just as easily cite revolutionary movements that were brought down because they failed to anticipate (in their organizational methods, in the training of their activists, etc.) the qualitative leaps of counterrevolution represented by the use of torture, the creation of death squads, and so on.

Whether the stakes are high (and in the case of class warfare between the exploited and exploiters, they are at their highest) or low, war—a clash of opposing forces, a clash of wills—is the product of a political situation. It has a political end as its aim. War is only a means, and the means is con-

⁴⁴ In other words, a tense situation between rivaling troops armed to the teeth, but which does not lead to an actual military conflict.—Ed.

ditioned by the end. In asserting that a purely military view of war is fundamentally flawed, Clausewitz highlights the 18th-century theoreticians' mistake of considering politics separately from the military. Monarchs declared wars, only to leave it to the military leaders to decide on which campaigns to wage on the basis of purely military criteria (strategic and tactical). Clausewitz urges us never to forget that the aim of war is not victory, but peace. Or, more precisely: the aim *within* war (Ziel) is victory, but the aim *of* the war (Zweck) is peace (responding to a certain political objective), which is what really matters. Some victories, by their very brilliance, can thwart the purpose of war: for example, by crushing an adversary there is a risk of upsetting an age-old political balance, potentially leading other powers to enter the war on the side of the vanquished.⁴⁵

6. Clausewitz and the Realm of Philosophy

The question of which side is responsible for a war was one of Clausewitz's many opportunities to demonstrate his dialectical spirit. He pointed out that, between the country that wants to carve up a neighboring country by coveting a province, and the country that is the victim of this covetousness, it is the latter that, in the final analysis, is responsible for the war. Indeed, the predator does not want war but the province, and it is by denying it that the target country causes the war. . . This is not merely an amusing paradox, for it leads to the truth that, in the end, it is the defender who sets the laws of war: who chooses the battle or shies away from it, who determines its time and place, and so on. In this analysis as in others (for example, when he states that the goal of war is not victory but peace), Clausewitz handles dialectics with ease.

It has long been debated whether Clausewitz read Hegel—Lenin, for instance, thought he had—or whether his numerous dialectical insights were simply the result of his own personal outlook. Clausewitz was a professor at the War College at a time when Hegel dominated the University of Berlin. It is also known that Clausewitz met Hegel at the home of their mutual friend, Baron von Meusebach, but he doesn't seem to have studied

⁴⁵ The excessive submarine warfare imposed by the German general staff in the name of strategic efficiency in 1917, despite the reluctance of the German Reich's government, led to the political (and ultimately military) disaster represented by the US's entry into the war.

Hegel's thought. One hypothesis is that Clausewitz was similarly influenced by Kant⁴⁶ and Fichte.⁴⁷ *On War* never actually justifies war—in the way that strict Hegelian orthodoxy would dictate—as a legitimate means of action on the part of the State embodying historical progress. What is certain is that Clausewitz's dialectic differs radically from the Hegelian one. Clausewitz deals with problems by confronting opposites, but these opposites do not resolve themselves in a third stage that is superior to the first two.

Lenin pointed out that Clausewitz had taken courses from the Kantian philosopher Kiesewetter. These courses, which Clausewitz attended in 1801 at the War College, were essentially concerned with logic. They had a considerable influence on Clausewitz. Kiesewetter was a Kantian, but as a public intellectual he adopted a particular approach to Kant's theses, to such an extent that Kant accused him of both plagiarism and treason. Kiesewetter's lectures (and thus, to a certain extent, Kantianism) shaped Clausewitz, who was naturally inclined to philosophical reflection. As such, one could regard Kiesewetter's teachings as the first methodological foundations of *On War*.

But Clausewitz's relationship with Kantianism was ambivalent. At the beginning of the 19th century, as Fernand Schneider writes,

Prussian military thought, stimulated moreover by the desire for imminent revenge [against the French], rose up in opposition to the old strategic doctrines, which were imbued with the rationalism now denounced as contrary to German spirit.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Either directly from the *Critique of Judgment*, or through Kiesewetter's lectures at the War College. Lenin stressed that Clausewitz had attended classes given by this Kantian philosopher. It should be mentioned, however, that Kiesewetter's lectures were essentially concerned with Logic.

⁴⁷ Clausewitz's "Letter to Fichte," written from Königsberg in 1809, bears witness to the former's great familiarity with the latter's thought. In a letter to his wife, Marie von Brühl, dated April 15, 1808, Clausewitz wrote: "There are some very good insights, in my opinion, in Fichte's work; but the whole thing, whatever Stein may have said of it, is only an abstraction and not very practical; it is also quite clear that he greatly feared any allusion to history and empirical reality." Clausewitz, *De la Révolution à la Restauration—Écrits et lettres*, 247. Translation from French by the Editors.

⁴⁸ Fernand Schneider, *Histoire des doctrines militaires* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 39. Translation from French by the Editors.

Clausewitz was no exception, defining the limits of reason in the field of warfare. His affirmation of German irrationalism was a reaction against 18th-century French rationalism.

Having met several important Romantic writers (Madame de Staël, during his forced stay in France, August Schlegel, who became his friend, and many others in Berlin between 1808 and 1830), Clausewitz stands out as the figurehead of what has been called military Romanticism.

Georg Heinrich von Berenhorst, whose *Reflections on the Art of War* was published between 1796 and 1799 to great acclaim, was the first major representative of this movement. He was followed by Johann Friedrich Constantin von Lossau, a disciple of Scharnhorst, with his *Der Krieg: Für wahre Krieger* (translated in English as *War of 1815*), published in 1815.

As in the fields of art and philosophy, military Romanticism challenged the Enlightenment's ambition to establish a system of clear, universal laws. According to the Romanticists, such systems could be conceived for the physical world, but not for the field of human activity, the chaotic playground of the human and national genius.

Hence, according to Berenhorst, the growing influence of chance (caused by the "firearms factor" in modern battles) and that of the personality of leaders, both lie beyond reason and in the realm of the unpredictable—military genius is as far removed from the "mechanical" art of maneuvering as poetic inspiration is from measuring syllables and calculating distances. This view was echoed by von Lossau, who based his theory of war on experience and reserved the realm of new possibilities for the creative genius, "because the entire art lies in the artist"⁴⁹. . .

7. Total War

Did Clausewitz contribute to the advent of total war by shaping military thought, and German military thought in particular, along these lines? The notion of "total war," theorized by Ludendorff, encompasses both the mobilization of all national resources (human, economic, scientific, etc.) in support of the war effort, and the use of violence not only against the enemy nation's armed forces, but also against its human (civilian population), economic and scientific resources. The emergence of total war is,

⁴⁹ Constantin, *Der Krieg: für wahre Krieger* (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1815), 155. Translation from French by the Editors.

in the words of General de Gaulle, who was never shy of using shortcuts in his reasoning, "the substitution of war between peoples for that of war between armies."⁵⁰

Some of Clausewitz's statements seem to justify such a vision: didn't he write that war knows no other boundaries than "certain self-imposed, imperceptible limitations hardly worth mentioning, known as international law and custom, [which] scarcely weaken it,"⁵¹ or that "to introduce the principle of moderation into the theory of war itself would always lead to logical absurdity"?⁵² But it's not enough to simply combine Clausewitz's concept of "absolute war" with his theses on national war to arrive at the doctrine of total war.

The mainstream view is that the architects of total war drew the idea that absolute war was the most effective way to wage war, in other words, by winning the decisive battle quickly and cheaply, from Clausewitz's teachings. However, some (such as Raymond Aron) have argued that Clausewitz's thinking, far from promoting total war, went fundamentally against it; the "absolute war" theorized by Clausewitz would never have been more than a concept, an ideal model towards which war might or might not incline, and that numerous factors opposed this tendency towards the extreme, starting with the relative weakness of the stakes of war.⁵³

While bourgeois philosophers of war assert that it was only with the two great world conflicts of 1914 and 1939 that "wars are no longer the mere clash of armies. . . [—that] war has once again become total, as it was in primitive tribes,"⁵⁴ we know that all wars of a social (i.e., class) nature have been total wars. So, while the war of 1870 does not yet fall

⁵⁰ Charles de Gaulle, *Trois études* preceded by the *Memorandum* of January 26, 1940 (Paris: Le Livre de Poche N°3548, Plon, 1973), 123. Translation from French by the Editors.

⁵¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 5.

⁵² Clausewitz, *On War*, 6.

⁵³ The main divergence between Raymond Aron and Emmanuel Terray [see his *Clausewitz* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 72 and following pages] concerns the theoretical status of the concept of "absolute war": ideal model or real possibility? Professor Christopher Bassford ("Clausewitz's Categories of War and the Supersession of 'Absolute War,'" published on clausewitzstudies.org), definitively demonstrates that Clausewitz abandoned this concept during the course of his theoretical development, in favor of the concept of "ideal war" (as opposed to the concept of "real war"). The incompleteness of *On War* explains why the term "absolute war" is still mentioned in the chapters that were not rewritten.

⁵⁴ Albert Morsmomme, *Anatomie de la guerre totale* (Brussels: Pierre de Meyere Editor, 1971), 80.

into the category of total war, the campaign of the Versailles-based government against the Paris Commune in 1871 does.⁵⁵ Here again, Clausewitz's insights are illuminating. He argued that the concrete realities of the field [i.e., the entire organization of the war effort] would replace the ideals of the extreme and the absolute, and that war might therefore be waged outside the strict laws of extreme. It is the political aim of war that is the key to the equation: if the aim of war is modest, the sacrifices made for it will also be modest; on the other hand, the more powerful the motives for war, the more the war will conform to its abstract, "ideal," "absolute" form. For the French bourgeoisie, the establishment of proletarian power in Paris was infinitely more important than the loss of two border provinces. In the same way, we can contrast the extremely "civilized" way in which the Princes' armies waged "lace wars" in the first half of the 18th century, with the savagery with which these same armies crushed contemporary peasant uprisings.

Clausewitz did not analyze revolutionary warfare, but he did examine the emergence of the similar phenomenon of national warfare. Under the Ancien Régime, the military effort demanded of the nation was purely economic; war was financed by taxation. Military operations were the responsibility of a corps of officers drawn from the aristocracy, and a contingent of men far removed from the productive classes: vagabonds, foreign mercenaries, breakaway serfs or, at best, the youngest sons of the poor peasantry. Hence, according to Frederick II:

⁵⁵ The repression that followed the defeat of the Paris Commune is a case in point, with a particularly ferocious crackdown on working-class leaders, starting with Varlin, who was tortured and shot. The official number of arrests was 43,522. 20,000 prisoners—perhaps more—were executed, often without trial, and sometimes on a mass scale, by the use of machine guns. More than a thousand prisoners died in the first week as a result of prison conditions alone. Tens of thousands of communards were thrown in jail, thousands were deported and most died in exile, exhausted by forced labor, deprivation, and disease. Women suspected of aiding the Communards were shot. Workers' children were killed. In 1877, people were still being tried and sentenced to death. . . . Bourgeois historiography is opportunely "deficient" not only when it comes to social war; the colonial expeditions of the 19th century also flouted all the so-called "laws of war": torture and massacres of prisoners, destruction of civilian livelihoods and large-scale hostage-taking were the rule—as for outright genocide, it was not uncommon.

One must guard these useful, hard-working people as his favorites, and in time of war one should draw recruits from his own land only if forced by dire necessity.⁵⁶

And indeed, half of Prussia's armies were made up of foreigners: mercenaries, deserters, prisoners recruited more or less by force. Even in France, whose army was the most national in character among the great armies of Europe,⁵⁷ cafés and public places displayed the following sign at their entrance: "No dogs, no girls, no lackeys, no soldiers." Long, rigorous training—the famous drilling exercises—transformed the vagabond into an efficient soldier, and each of these soldiers became a precious investment that one was careful not to put at risk. This factor also rendered dynastic wars more restricted, fought with limited means and for limited ends.

Only iron discipline could give cohesion to these troops: soldiers, in Frederick's words, had to fear their officers more than the enemy:

If any soldier should attempt to run away during battle and should set as much as one foot out of his rank, the non-commissioned officer standing to his rear shall run him through with the short sword and kill him on the spot.⁵⁸

The result was such a tendency to desertion that in his *Instructions for His Generals* (1750), Frederick listed fourteen measures to prevent it, directly influencing military operations (for example, avoiding encampment too close to a forest, refraining from night marches, etc.). As long as all belligerent armies were subject to the same constraints, these didn't seem to be particularly incapacitating. But when the citizen army born of

⁵⁶ Frederick, "Das militärische Testament von 1768," *Die Werke Friedrichs des Grossen* (Berlin, 1913), VI, 225–27. Translated and quoted in Jay Luvaas, *Frederick the Great on the Art of War* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1999), 76.

⁵⁷ The victory achieved by the citizen-soldiers during the American War of Independence over the English troops (Hessian mercenaries and the English professional army) naturally left its mark on La Fayette, Jourdan, Berthier, and the other French officers who had witnessed it. Gneisenau was also a keen observer of the advent of the patriotic soldier in America.

⁵⁸ Frederick, "Disposition, wie es bei vorgehender bataille bei seiner Königlichen Majestät in Preussen armee unveränderlich soll gehalten werden, wornach sich auch sowohl die generalität, als andere commandirende officiere stricte zu achten und solches zu observiren haben," *Die Werke Friedrichs des Grossen*, 145–150. Translated and quoted in Jay Luvaas, *Frederick the Great on the Art of War*, 164.

the French Revolution entered the scene—an army freed from such constraints—the balance of power in Europe was upset in this respect too. The French army, for example, could live off the land, detaching innumerable small contingents of supply requisitioners, foragers, etc., without fear of desertion, while the armies of the Princes depended on their warehouses and supply convoys. This logistical revolution had immense strategic significance: revolutionary armies won a degree of freedom of maneuver that their enemies had never enjoyed before.⁵⁹

The socio-political revolution added a tactical revolution to this logistical revolution. The French army could confidently detach light troops on foot and horseback for patrol, skirmish, and reconnaissance operations. Whereas the battalions of the Ancien Régime were only useful as perfectly attuned parts of a single war machine, led by a single man and acting as a single man, French troops could just as easily form themselves into compact columns rushing to attack enemy lines and into semi-circles of skirmishers fighting and covering each other individually, while retaining all their military value even when isolated from the rest of the army.⁶⁰ Immediately after the battle of Valmy, the French Legislative Assembly decreed the formation of three new legions and the recruitment of a large number of “compagnies franches” (roughly translated as “volunteer companies”). Furthermore, the success of Jemappes was largely due to the effective use of “tirailleur” troops (light infantry skirmishers).

⁵⁹ This system was both a cause and an effect: the “*levée en masse*” (in English: “mass levy”) of 1793 would not have been satisfied with the old system of warehouses (“magasins”) and supply bases.

⁶⁰ In his 1799 *Geist des Neueren Kriegssystems* (“Spirit of the System of Modern Warfare”), Bülow saw nothing new in the wars of the Revolution apart from the open formation of skirmishers (as opposed to the compact battalion). It was only after the battle of Marengo and, above all, after those of Ulm and Austerlitz, that he discovered the true nature of the advantage of the armies of the Revolution: the citizen-soldier. Similarly, the Revolutionary Wars saw the reappearance in France of a figure that had disappeared since the Hundred Years’ War: the partisan. When the Duke of Brunswick’s troops entered France in 1792 to reestablish the feudal order, the peasants of the Champagne and Lorraine regions, in the absence of any instructions from the Legislative Assembly, armed themselves and launched an intensive guerrilla war. The Prince de Condé wrote: “We are vexed as much as possible by the peasants. We can only accommodate ourselves with sword and pistol in hand. . . always obliged to fight in defense against pitchforks, shovels and pickaxes.” Quoted in Alain Guérin, *Chronique de la Résistance* (Paris: Éditions Omnibus, 2000), 117. Translation from French by the Editors.

Only a government freed of all the special rights, privileges, internal barriers, monopolies, and particularisms that characterized the Ancien Régime could launch a genuine national mobilization and set up a war economy. All of France's resources were mobilized in the service of war, and the military might that resulted far surpassed the combined strength of the opposing dynastic armies.

8. The Dissymmetry⁶¹ Between Attack and Defense

There are several ways of defining the defensive position. First, by its negative conclusion: defense is aimed at preserving (a territory, an army, a state), not acquiring. Second, by its specific character: it consists in waiting for the enemy to attack. However, a purely passive type of waiting, which is not aimed at repelling the enemy's attack, cannot be considered as part of a defensive approach. Defensive warfare cannot be thought of without the prospect of counterattack. Any defensive war presupposes offensive battles.

The distinction between defense and attack is, of course, a well-known one, but Clausewitz was the first to analyze each of its terms in their own right, from the point of view of their respective, intrinsic strengths. By means of a series of conceptual pairs—hold/take, gain time/lose space, repel/advance, political defense/military attack and strategic defense/tactical attack—he was able to integrate the distinction between attack and defense into his analysis of war and give it new meaning. Unlike other military writers of his century, Clausewitz was extremely skeptical about the supposed advantages of attack. The surprise factor, for instance, is only relevant at the tactical level, where time and space are more limited.⁶² It is of much less importance at the strategic level, where the ability to anticipate the enemy's actions is greater.

⁶¹ Within the realm of military strategy, dissymmetry and asymmetry pertain to two of the three levels of balance among military forces. Symmetry entails evenly matched conflict, dissymmetry involves employing numerical and/or qualitative dominance, and asymmetry comprises of wars between state and non-state entities.—Ed.

⁶² There are differences of another kind: tactics, for example, lend themselves more readily to theory than strategy. Tactics deal with small, similar events, while strategy deals with large, singular events. They therefore do not require the same qualities. Tactics require more courage than intelligence, strategy more intelligence, even brilliance, than courage.

Clausewitz asserts that the defensive is the strongest form of warfare. If the offensive, in addition to serving a positive objective, were in itself superior to the defensive, no belligerent would ever choose to adopt the defensive. Although the defensive is superior to the offensive, it can only be used in the pursuit of a negative objective. Those pursuing a positive one (the acquisition of something) cannot do without the offensive, and must therefore provide themselves with means superior to those of the enemy to compensate for the superiority inherent in the defensive. One adopts a defensive stance when being inferior to the enemy, and this choice in itself enables one to make up, in part or in whole, for this inferiority. Adopting a defensive position means forcing the enemy to act on the terms set out by the defender prior to and in preparation for the conflict, while retaining the advantage of playing second.⁶³

The defensive position is stronger because it is easier to hold than to take. As a general rule, the defender takes advantage of any unforeseen events, of time, of the enemy's wear and tear. While the attacker has the advantage of the surprise factor (such as deciding when the war will break out), the defender is able to take advantage of the surprise factor at the tactical level. The defender has the advantage of the terrain: he knows the terrain, he has entrenched his positions and occupied the most advantageous strongholds and strategic points. He can also opt for a strategy of encirclement, seizing objectives in the enemy's rear, allowing him to play the interior lines, and so on. The defender's position wears out less quickly than that of the attacker, as the former benefits from the help of the population, and enjoys the sympathies and moral advantages that result from his status as the victim of aggression (whereas the attacker's army benefits from the moral strengths of being the one pursuing a positive objective).

Certain intrinsic advantages of the defensive position are in play even before the defender withdraws into the depths of his territory and these benefits only increase with the extent of the withdrawal. As this retreat is costly (since it involves abandoning territory), it should only be undertaken if the initial imbalance of forces is such that all the advantages of defense are required to compensate for it. Depending on the extent of the imbalance, the defender may choose to confront the enemy as he crosses the border. If

⁶³ "Playing second" refers to taking a reactive position, as in chess where black moves after white, often implying a strategic disadvantage or following someone else's lead.—Ed.

he is not strong enough to do so, he may choose to wait and confront the attacker when he has penetrated his territory to the point of arriving at the position chosen to conduct the battle to his advantage (on a river line, for example). Alternatively, if he still feels too weak, he can wait for the enemy to initiate the attack from this position. If the imbalance is still too great to allow for this option, the defender can extend his waiting position until the enemy offensive reaches its climax. Defense does not mean passivity; the defender, retaining the initiative, can retreat to multiply the number of battles, unleash guerrilla warfare on the enemy's rear, etc.⁶⁴

If, from the point of view of the offensive, defensive action represents merely a form of delay, a defensive strategy necessarily comprises at a certain point, the transition to offensive action. The dialectical relationship between attack and defense enabled Clausewitz to develop his pivotal concept of the offensive "climax." Any attack that fails to achieve a breakthrough wears itself out by the energy used to move forward, by natural obstacles and by the distance it has covered in the long run. Some of the attacker's moral and material resources increase as he advances, and, like a horse pulling a load to the top of a hill, he may find it easier to advance than to stop. But in general and for several reasons, if he is led to falter when he reaches the "offensive climax" and fails to strike a decisive blow against the enemy, "beyond that point the scale turns and the reaction follows with a force that is usually much stronger than that of the original attack."⁶⁵ In turn, the attacker must go on the defensive, but he is forced to do so under abysmal conditions.

The defensive thus includes strategic counter-attack, i.e., the rapid and vigorous transition from defense to offense which, for Clausewitz, is the most brilliant moment of the defensive. All the more so as, during this shift towards an offensive position, the defender loses some of his

⁶⁴ It is all the more erroneous to establish an equivalence between offense and initiative, as the latter can sometimes even be preserved in the absence of any offensive action. "To the Western strategist, initiative is often a kinetic force directly based on offensive action. The the Chinese Communists, initiative was rather a potential force: freedom of action, the ability of the army to go where its wished it to." Boorman, H. L. and Boorman, S. A., "Chinese Communist Insurgent Warfare, 1935-49," in *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 81, No. 2 (June, 1966), 171-195.

⁶⁵ Clausewitz, *On War*, 528.

advantages, particularly when the counter-attack takes him into the enemy's territory.

9. Moral Factors⁶⁶

Clausewitz was the first military writer to address the moral factor. Certainly, others before him had emphasized the importance of "morale," in the general sense of the term, for the strength of an army—Joseph de Maistre, for example, had written that when it comes to enthusiasm, "men are no longer added, they are multiplied." But Clausewitz was the first to make a systematic study of the different types of the moral factors of war, their importance and the interactions that link them to each other and to material factors.

The moral factor, for example, is one of two key aspects allowing us to better understand the phenomenon of ceasefire. For if war can be considered a "zero-sum game" (a game where if one player wins something, his opponent loses its equivalent),⁶⁷ then logically if one party would benefit from a truce, the other would benefit from taking action. This is the "principle of polarity." The moral factor is central to explaining this paradox—the dissymmetry between the defensive and the offensive being the other part of the explanation. Unlike solving an equation, the wartime commander never has all the information he needs to make a decision. A

⁶⁶ In military theory, "moral forces" refer to non-material factors like discipline, morale, leadership, and the will to fight, which influence the effectiveness of troops and decision-making in battle. These forces shape psychological resilience and cohesion, often proving as crucial as physical resources.—Ed.

⁶⁷ André Glucksmann (*Le discours de la guerre*, 122–128) asserts that Clausewitz's quandary with mathematics (his interest in it and his refusal to link it to his theory of war) would have dissipated had he been able to discover a mathematical tool that was invented a century later: game theory. Clausewitz was familiar with the calculus of probabilities, which makes it possible to deal with chance, whereas game theory involves the opposition of two conscious adversaries, each serving their own interests through rational choice (alliances are possible, but they depend solely on the individual interests of the players). Game theory has thus forged the concept of the "minimax" (the maximum of minimal gains) and the "saddle point," which corresponds to the Clausewitzian truce when both adversaries opt for the defensive because neither has sufficient surplus forces over the other to compensate for the intrinsic advantage of defensiveness. Raymond Aron demonstrates the limits of Glucksmann's analogy, which is only valid within the pure concept of absolute war, and disregards all the factors that prevent leaders of state and war from making decisions in the manner of mathematicians (insufficient and uncertain information, friction, etc.). Raymond, *Clausewitz—Livre deux: L'âge planétaire* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1976), 232.

great deal of information remains hidden or is a matter of chance, leaving the choice to be determined by the warlord's character. Whether he is rash, audacious, cautious or faint-hearted, he will make different decisions.

Clausewitz goes on to list and define the moral and intellectual qualities of the military commander. He notes that while the study of military art provides the commander with a clear direction and strengthens his capacity to make sound judgments, since war is the theater of moral action and reaction—of the ever-changing face of things, of setbacks and contingencies—knowledge must be subjected to the guidance of the mind and lose almost all its objective properties, taking on the subjective form of “power.”⁶⁸

When teaching the Crown Prince of Prussia, he was already advocating for “heroic decisions based on reason,”⁶⁹ and in *On War* he specified that:

strength of character does not consist solely in having powerful feelings, but in maintaining one's balance in spite of them. Even with the violence of emotion, judgment and principle must still function like a ship's compass, which records the slightest variations however rough the sea.⁷⁰

First and foremost, there is the will to triumph and the ability to face up to the dangers and fatigues of war; but these qualities are just as much those of the military commander as those of the last of his soldiers. Next, there are the intellectual qualities that enable the wartime leader to grasp a situation in all its complexity⁷¹ and indeterminacy. In short, it is a matter of being able to read a situation accurately and on time. As General MacArthur once said, “All battles lost can be summed up in two words: too late!” Finally—and this is the specific moral quality of the military commander—there is the form of courage that is not only fearlessness in the face of physical danger, but also bravery in the face of responsibility.

⁶⁸ Sometimes translated as “expertise” or “aptitude.”

⁶⁹ Clausewitz, *Principles of War* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003), 7.

⁷⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 107.

⁷¹ It also establishes the kind of knowledge that a wartime commander must possess: he doesn't need to worry about the details that his subordinates have to deal with; he doesn't need to know how to fire a cannon, but he does need to know the movement and fire capacity of his own and the enemy's artillery.

It was Delbrück who rightly wrote that

the best-known maneuvers, presented by history as the work of true geniuses (for example, the Prussian retreat from Ligny towards Waterloo), could have been invented by a battle secretary with the map in front of him. Greatness lies in the freedom of intellect and spirit, in moments of tension and crisis, and in the willingness to take risks.

Because the commander's decisions have immense implications while lacking at the same time the scientific quality of mathematical solutions, they require bold determination and the willingness to take responsibility, which, combined, form the hallmark of courage. We've seen wartime leaders demonstrate both strategic spinelessness and great courage in battle,⁷² but only great captains have shown this strength of character, which is all the more meritorious in that it has to be exercised in conditions of danger and fatigue, and is distinguished as the greatest form of courage.

But the moral factor does not only concern the war leader. It obviously also pertains to the army, which is all the stronger if it develops a military virtue that cannot be reduced to mere courage ("morale" in the general sense of the term). It is this "military virtue" that enables an army

[to] maintain its cohesion under the most murderous fire; [to] be shaken by imaginary fears and resists well-founded ones with all its might; that, proud of its victories, will not lose the strength to obey orders and its respect and trust for its officers even in defeat; whose physical power, like the muscles of an athlete, has been steeled by training in privation and effort; a force that regards such efforts as a means to victory rather than a curse on its cause; [to be] mindful of all these duties and qualities by virtue of the single powerful idea of the honor of its arms.⁷³

⁷² Such was the case with Marshal Ney. On June 16, 1815, at the battle of Quatre-Bras, he didn't dare to undertake the maneuvers in time to separate the English and Prussian armies, but once the general battle had begun on June 18, at Waterloo, he put himself at the head of the French cavalry and led them seven times to attack the English infantry entrenched on top of the Mont Saint-Jean. Ney defied death a hundred times and five of his horses were killed in battle.

⁷³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 187–188.

This “military virtue” extolled by Clausewitz is a feature of regular armies. It is acquired through drills and experience—it cannot be boiled down to sheer bravery, which, at best, serves as its raw material—nor is it a matter of the army’s “temperament,” but rather of its “spirit.” Military virtue is a quality, a strength worth having rather than not, though wars have been fought and won without it. Partisans (Clausewitz cites the Vendéans⁷⁴ and the Americans in particular) make up for the lack of military virtue with individual courage, skill, hardiness, and enthusiasm.

The moral qualities of a soldier are part of the data that the commander must integrate into his tactical and strategic choices. The moral values of regular armies (“military virtue”) are best exercised in open field combat, when the army is grouped and able to maneuver, while the moral values of partisans are best exercised in mountainous terrain, where a strong spirit of initiative and individual commitment can be fully brought to bear.

But if the value of an army lies more in its “spirit” than in its numbers, the latter becomes a decisive factor when battles are fought between armies with the same degree of military virtue. Numbers then make the difference, and while it’s good to be superior in numbers in general, it’s especially necessary to be superior in numbers at the decisive place and time, according to the principle of “concentration of forces.”⁷⁵

In the same way that the concept of absolute war has been distorted into the concept of total war, the theses on the superiority of moral over material factors and on the importance of numerical superiority have been simplified and, ultimately, distorted, particularly by French strategists who,

⁷⁴ The Vendéans were the royalist counterrevolutionaries in France’s War in the Vendée (1793–1796), a conflict during the French Revolution.—Ed.

⁷⁵ If by “concentration” we refer less to regrouping forces than to being as strong as possible at the decisive place and time, then the principle of “concentration of forces” has as its corollary “economy of forces.” Economy of forces means deploying the minimum reasonable number of forces on secondary fronts and tasks, to make them available where the battle is to be won. For Clausewitz, concentration is the supreme and simplest law of strategy. It is with this imperative in mind that he criticizes plans to strategically outflank the enemy; this rotating maneuver isolates the marching wing from the main body of the army—they cannot support each other. This strategy is only acceptable when the army’s numerical superiority is such that, even without the marching wing, the main body of the army remains stronger than the enemy. Other exceptions to the rule of the concentration of forces are the aftermath of a victory, which should be exploited and amplified by pursuing the enemy and dispersing its forces; and finally, it goes without saying, there is the exception of guerrilla warfare, which is all the more effective when fighting in dispersed order.

at the beginning of the 20th century, thought they understood Clausewitz (and the defeat inflicted on them by the Prussian armies in 1870) by caricaturing his ideas in this way. This led to Marshal Foch's theses and the bayonet charges of large numbers of French soldiers against German machine guns in 1914. Today, some still believe they can judge Clausewitz not on his theses, but on their tragic and idiotic distortions.

10. Friction

Clausewitz devoted himself to the study of what he called "friction." Friction is everything that prevents a military unit from functioning like a perfectly tuned gear in a mechanism. Friction refers to everything that differentiates war on paper from real war. From fog obscuring the enemy's view, to a cannon failing to open fire on time, to an order failing to reach its intended commander, to rain-soaked terrain preventing a battalion from arriving or derailing a cavalry charge, and so on. The ability to recognize such friction in order to master it is the hallmark of the best generals:

The good general must know friction in order to overcome it whenever possible, and in order not to expect a standard of achievement in his operations which this very friction makes impossible.⁷⁶

The question of "friction" is particularly crucial in guerrilla actions, as the very weakness of the guerrilla unit makes it extremely vulnerable to the slightest unforeseen event.

11. The Decisive Battle

Clausewitz's definition is characterized by the importance given to the structural element, the relationship between ends and means:

The whole of military activity must therefore relate directly or indirectly to the engagement. The end for which a soldier is recruited, clothed, armed, and trained, the whole object of his sleeping, eating, drinking, and marching *is simply that he should fight at the right place and the right time.*⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, 120.

⁷⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, 95.

This relationship is repeated at every level. Just like soldiers, combat itself is merely a means to an end: forces are used to engage in operations, and operations are carried out to achieve the aim of war. If this aim is to break the enemy's will, it follows that disarming the opponent in a "decisive battle" is the most specific means of warfare. However, Clausewitz does not forget that throughout history few wars have actually been fought to a conclusion in a single great battle. To resolve this contrast between abstract and real wars, Clausewitz proposes the concept of the "possible great battle," which serves as a "distant focal point" even in wars where it does not materialize.

Clausewitz nuanced the theory of the destruction of the enemy army as a fundamental military goal in yet another way. A state facing off against a coalition must consider the ties that bind together the enemy alliance as a legitimate military target in its own right. In some cases, the conquest of territory combined with a military defeat can undermine the enemy's will or deprive him of the means to rebuild his army—in this case, the conquest of territory becomes a legitimate military goal. The problem, then, is to determine the "center of gravity" on which to direct the military attack. In most cases, this will be the enemy army, but if the enemy country is divided by civil strife, the center of gravity may be the capital; in the case of a coalition, it may be the army of the principal ally, or the community of interest between the allies. Moreover, Clausewitz recognized that in the case of national wars, "public opinion" is an important center of gravity, and thus a crucial military objective. In analyzing this last point, Clausewitz not only touches on the concept of psychological warfare, which precedes, accompanies and sometimes even replaces actual combat, but also sheds light on the specific framework of revolutionary warfare. This shows just how open Clausewitz's system really is.

Does the question of the "decisive battle" reflect Clausewitz's time more strongly than the other aspects of his legacy—that of the wars between states in the 19th century? In his book-length debate with Field Marshal von Manstein on the Battle of Stalingrad, Field Marshal Yeryomenko wrote:

Since Clausewitz, in the military theory and practice of German imperialism, there has been a whole series of theses which

in their time were in most cases based on reality, but which later, as conditions changed, became dogma. This is what happened with Clausewitz's teaching on the general battle. . . . According to Clausewitz, war can only be victorious if one wins the general battle, to which one must devote the maximum of forces and means. If we lose this battle, we must seek a zero-sum outcome. . . . Soviet military science is far from attributing to a battle the character that Clausewitz attributed to the general battle.⁷⁸

If we confine ourselves to the great clash of armies that settled a conflict in a very short space of time, then the great battles in which Hitler intended to annihilate the Red Army have indeed gone out of fashion. Already during that time, the Soviets had successfully launched vast counteroffensive campaigns. Confining ourselves to such a reading of his work, would be to reduce Clausewitz's thinking to the 20th-century caricature the Prussian-German military school made of it.

Many hold Clausewitz responsible for the contraction of the European military spirit in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Such is the case of the famous British military historian Liddell Hart, for whom

the outcome of his teaching, applied by unthinking disciples, was to incite generals to seek battle at the *first* opportunity, instead of creating an *advantageous* opportunity. Thereby the art of war was reduced in 1914–18 to a process of mutual mass-slaughter.⁷⁹

This is to misunderstand Clausewitz, who had nothing but contempt for “Turkish-style warfare, where fighting most often has no other meaning than to get people killed reciprocally,” and who neither ignored nor disdained the resources of indirect strategy—that is, all those means by which the enemy is strengthened and weakened outside of battle. His analysis of the role of partisan warfare leaves no room for doubt. Simply put, Clausewitz affirmed that war can only be won by the annihilation of the

⁷⁸ Yeryomenko (sometimes spelled Eremenko), *Against Falsification of History* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House), 73–74. Secondary translation from French by the Editors.

⁷⁹ Hart, *Strategy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1954), 224–225.

enemy army, and that this, however well prepared it may be through partisan action, is achieved in a general and decisive battle (in today's terms: through a general and conclusive campaign). Indeed, as Clausewitz points out, if a country gives up trying to win the "decisive battle" because it doesn't have the means to do so, it will be the enemy country which, by this very fact, and according to the principle of polarity, will try to win it, and on the territory of the former if need be. . .

The surprise factor and the ruses of war are of a similar nature. Clausewitz, quite rightly, refused to base any strategy on mere cunning and surprise: that would be tantamount to rolling the dice, since all it would take for the war to be lost is for the enemy to discover the element of surprise.⁸⁰ But this doesn't mean that we have to give up all the resources of misleading one's opponent, of camouflaging ourselves, or of spreading misinformation. The fact that guerrilla warfare is tactically based on surprise is not incompatible with this strategic condemnation of surprise. After all, the revolutionary strategy condemned by Clausewitzian orthodoxy is not the guerrilla strategy, but the insurrectionist strategy, which claims to "surprise" the bourgeoisie through the massive outbreak of armed mass struggle. The terrible defeat of the KPD in 1933 is striking in this respect, as rarely in history has an insurrection been so meticulously prepared.⁸¹ The secret general conference held in December 1932 concluded that the movement was on the eve of its great offensive. In February 1933, the revolutionary forces were overtaken by the reactionaries, who were in a position to take the initiative and enjoy the benefit of surprise. The defeat was a complete one and thousands of KPD activists and cadres, including all the members of the Central Committee, were sent to the camps.

It is tempting to apply Clausewitz's analysis to the context of people's war, considering insurrection the revolutionary equivalent of the classic "decisive battle"—in this case, not the insurrection crowning the insurrectionist strategy, i.e., the result of legal and paralegal preparation, but

⁸⁰ In this and many other respects, Hitler's wars were fundamentally anti-Clausewitzian. . .

⁸¹ By 1930, the KPD had some 250,000 members with military training, divided into district units for rapid mobilization. They were instructed in shooting and street fighting by Komintern specialists and veterans of the First World War and the uprisings of 1918, 1919, 1920, and 1923. The KPD operated clandestine armories and drew on a large number of reserve forces, organizing over a million members and collecting up to 6 million votes.

the insurrection concluding a protracted revolutionary war, marking the transition from its defensive phase of building forces to its offensive phase of annihilating enemy troops and seizing power.

Several major theoreticians and practitioners of guerrilla warfare have rejected the principle of annihilation, as well as that of the decisive battle. This is the case of T. E. Lawrence, who organized the guerrilla struggle of the Arab tribes with the aim of maintaining a generally hostile situation for the Turks, by harassing their only communication route. He did not cut it off completely, though he could have. Here we see the danger of identifying guerrilla warfare with revolutionary warfare. As soon as the political question, and therefore the question of power, arises, Lawrence's rejection of any Clausewitzian "general battle" ceases to be relevant: in other words, Lawrence is less useful to us than Clausewitz. Lawrence's approach is valid only in situations that are settled by a battle between an enemy and our allies,⁸² or in which the political, human and/or economic cost of war may be sufficient to induce the enemy to give up the struggle. This was the case with Britain's occupation of Ireland: the Irish guerrilla never had to aim at defeating the British army in a great general battle, but rather at making the weight of the war unbearable for Britain, so that for the British bourgeoisie as a whole (since there were contradictions between some factions deeply committed to Ireland and those who had little interest in it), the stakes were no longer worth the effort.⁸³ The IRA's attacks

⁸² Lawrence understood Arab guerrilla warfare as part of the ongoing world war, and his readiness to shy away from a decisive battle in Arabia was explained by the existence of other, larger fronts (such as the Turkish-British fronts in Mesopotamia and the Sinai desert). Without this general framework, where other "decisive battles" were being fought elsewhere, Lawrence would have created a situation that could technically have lasted for centuries.

⁸³ The IRA leadership outlined this strategy perfectly in its interview with R. Faligot: "It [the IRA's strategy] has always been based on three main aspects: firstly, the bombing campaign against economic and commercial targets. The aim is to make the North [of Ireland] too expensive for the British to maintain [figures are given for the cost of British military presence, police and auxiliaries, special subsidies, payment for personal and property damage, and loss of earnings from tourism]. The second part of our strategy involves regular and one-off operations against the British army. We have neither the personnel nor the equipment to drive British soldiers back to their homeland. We have no illusions about that. . . . We have found that British public opinion in favor of disengagement from Ireland is closely proportional to our ability to inflict heavy losses on the British army. The third point is political: our aim is to make the Six Counties of Northern Ireland ungovernable: this we have been doing for ten years. . . . Our military campaign ensured the political destruction and abolition of the Stormont Unionist Parliament in

on economic targets in London in 93–06 are the best example of this. Enormously powerful explosions caused \$5 billion in damage, plunging the insurance industry into crisis and causing the near-collapse of its world leader, Lloyd's of London.⁸⁴

12. "Petty Warfare"

Around 1810 (the start of his seminars on "petty warfare") and 1812 (the drafting of his Manifestos) Clausewitz turned his attention to guerrilla warfare, actively contributing to the work of Gneisenau and Scharnhorst. After the defeat at Jena and the infamous peace of Tilsitt, German patriots threw themselves into resistance. In 1807, Schill, a simple dragoon,⁸⁵ organized a volunteer corps in Kolberg to lead the partisan struggle. With the help of the local population, he carried out surprise attacks on French army patrols, detachments and messengers, seizing their money, supplies, and weapons. He managed to capture the French General Victor and prepare a full-scale uprising at the rear of the front.⁸⁶ Other officers, such as Dörnberg in Westphalia, tried to trigger insurrectionary movements. But only in Tyrol was popular insurrection effectively launched.

Gneisenau (who had Schill under his command at Kolberg⁸⁷) was so impressed by the effectiveness of the people's war in 1807 that he spent several years studying the organization of this resistance. As early as August 1811, Gneisenau, then marshal of the king's camp, devised a plan for gen-

March 1972. The war continued to exacerbate the contradictions and divisions within the loyalist section of the population of Northern Ireland. To this day, it has prevented the development of half a dozen constitutional solutions imposed by London." (Robert Faligot, *Nous avons tué Mounbatten—L'IRA parle* (Paris: Éditions Jean Picollec, 1981), 70–72. Translation from French by the Editors.

⁸⁴ Davis, *Buda's Wagon: A Brief History of the Car Bomb* (New York: Verso, 2007), 136.

⁸⁵ Dragoons were a class of mounted infantry—soldiers who traveled and fought on horseback, but could also fight on foot. Their origins date back to the 16th century, during the Thirty Years' War. At that time, army generals perfected a highly efficient military system based on two riders maneuvering in pairs on the same horse. The name reputedly derives from a type of firearm, called a dragon.

⁸⁶ In 1809, Schill joined the Austrian army on his own behalf alongside his regiment and was killed at Stralsund. Clausewitz approved of and admired Schill. In a letter dated June 9, 1809, he wrote: "Schill's death affects me much. . . just as if I had lost my dearest brother." Roger Parkinson, *Clausewitz: A Biography* (London: Wayland Publishers, 1970), 116.

⁸⁷ Kolberg was a stronghold on the Baltic coast, where Gneisenau had resisted French assaults until Prussia's capitulation.

eral insurrection: a militia was to be formed, tasked with harassing the enemy's rear. Its fighters would wear no uniforms other than a simple kepi⁸⁸ and a black-and-white belt, although Gneisenau did prescribe that:

If the enemy arrives in superior numbers, do away with weapons, kepi and belts, and behave like simple inhabitants of the region.

In 1813, Scharnhorst drafted the Prussian Army Reform, the aim of which was to “torment the invader by all means” with militiamen required to “wear no uniforms of any kind, so that the men of the Landsturm can at any time revert to their civilian status and remain unknown to the enemy.” In 1813, Clausewitz wrote an essay entitled *Über den Partei gäger—Krieg des Major von Balderstein*,⁸⁹ in which he once again emphasized the importance of partisan warfare.

The example of the Spanish guerilla was omnipresent, as Engels remarked:

At that time Spain showed the glorious example how a nation can resist an invading army. The whole of the military leaders of Prussia pointed out this example to their countrymen as the one to be followed. Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Clausewitz were all of one mind in this respect; Gneisenau even went to Spain himself to fight against Napoleon. The whole of the new military system then inaugurated in Prussia was an attempt to organize popular resistance to the enemy, at least as far as this was possible in an absolute monarchy.⁹⁰

But the German volunteer corps action, like that of the resistance fighters in Tyrol, the Spanish guerrilla forces (who held up and occupied half the French army, i.e., 300,000 men, in Spain), and the Russian par-

⁸⁸ A kepi is a round, flat-topped military cap with a short visor, commonly associated with 19th- and early 20th-century uniforms, especially in the French Army. It was also adopted by other forces, such as the Union Army during the American Civil War.

⁸⁹ Werner Hahlweg, *Schriften, Aufsätze, Studien, Briefe: Dokumente aus dem Clausewitz-, Scharnhorst- und Gneisenau-Nachlass sowie aus öffentlichen und privaten Sammlungen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966).

⁹⁰ Friedrich Engels, “The Fighting in France,” in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, November 11, 1870.

tisans, was soon forgotten by military theoreticians.⁹¹ Not by Clausewitz, though, who took up the issue again after 1815.⁹² His papers include a brief account of the Spanish and Vendée wars, and the fate of the militia or territorial reserve troops (Landwehr), over which progressive patriots and reactionaries had begun to quarrel. The revolutionary potential of the armed people led the Prussian monarchy to reverse the military progress accomplished by the reformers by disbanding thirty-four battalions of people's combat troops and incorporating the remaining sixteen brigades into the standing army. Clausewitz tried in vain to oppose these measures: his articles asserted that if the militia increased the danger of revolution, its dissolution increased the danger of invasion, and that this was the only danger to be feared. Moreover, he added, the French people were unarmed in 1789 and the standing army had not saved Louis XVI, while the Tyroleans, who had taken up arms against Napoleon, remained loyal subjects of the Austrian Emperor. In this respect, Napoleon had shown himself to be more reactionary than the most reactionary of the Prussians. When France was invaded in March 1814, the peasants took to the woods and formed groups of "francs-tireurs."⁹³ As a result, at the siege of Longwy, ten

⁹¹ It wasn't until Charles Calwell, author of *Small Wars in 1900*, that military thinking turned its attention to guerrilla warfare. Calwell, who had fought in the British army against the Boers and the Afghans, was also able to draw on French experience in Algeria and American military experience during the French and Indian wars. Yet Calwell remained an exception. "[T]he Prussian army and the German army led by Prussia from 1813 through the early part of World War II furnished the classical example of a military organization that had repressed radically the idea of the partisan. . . . The Prussian-German army. . . marched into Russia on June 22, 1941, did not conceive of partisan warfare. Its campaign against Stalin began with the maxim: troops will fight the enemy; marauders will be handled by the police. The first special directives regarding fighting partisans came only in October 1941; in May 1944, scarcely one year before the end of the four-year war, the first complete regulation of the Supreme Command of the armed forces [regarding partisan warfare] was instituted." Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan: Intermediate Commentary on the Concept of the Political* (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2007), 33. The same was true in Vietnam, where the Americans initially based their strategy on a "*Materialschlacht*," a battle of material forces (equipment, manpower, etc.) in the image of the wars they had waged in Europe, the Pacific, and Korea. This "strategy of means," in which the answer to difficulties was always more means (more planes, more bombs, etc.), was wholly inadequate.

⁹² In fact, *On War* is only the first part of what should have been a three-part series, including a treatise on guerrilla warfare and another on tactics. Of the latter, only the *Principles of War* has been published in English.

⁹³ *Franc-tireur* refers to a civilian irregular or partisan fighter who operates independently or in small groups during a conflict or war, often in resistance against an occupying force.

thousand Bavarians were driven back by these volunteer corps, who captured 1,200 men. But Napoleon abandoned this form of warfare, whose effectiveness he so thoroughly tested, declaring superbly, yet stupidly: "I don't want to be the king of the Jacquerie."⁹⁴

Only those who fear the people's discontent are afraid of arming them, writes Clausewitz, who advises:

let the government gather around it representatives of the people, elected from those who share the true interests of government and are known to the people. Let this be the government's main support, friend, and ally. . . .⁹⁵

Clausewitz's third Manifesto of 1812, his lectures on "petty warfare" at the Berlin War College, his *Observations* on the Tyrolean Rebellion in his analysis of the military campaigns of 1799, and the chapter on "The People in Arms" in his *On War* are the main sources from which his reputation as a theoretician of national people's war has emerged. And yet, Clausewitz himself deplored the inadequacy of his analysis, owing to a lack of experience; those who had observed people's war themselves, he said, had not described it with sufficient precision. This did not prevent him from examining all aspects of military insurrection against occupying forces in the remarkable chapter, and which all European army staffs had been quick to gloss over. However, the entire anti-Nazi resistance, as well as the Indochina and Algerian wars, seem to be described as if they were written in advance:

⁹⁴ Napoleon Bonaparte to Benjamin Constant in 1815.

⁹⁵ Clausewitz, *Historical and Political Writings*, 333.

Even when reformed in a reactionary direction over the years, the Landwehr retained a popular character, which manifested itself in May 1848: in Rhineland Prussia and Westphalia, the Landwehr refused to march against the people in revolt, and instead seized armories and equipped itself to defend the Reich Constitution against Frederick Augustus II. The tenth anniversary of the founding of the NVA (National People's Army of the German Democratic Republic) was an opportunity for the Socialist Unity Party's (SED) Central Committee to outline the German military heritage embraced by the NVA: the Peasants' War of 1525; the history of Prussia as it relates to Scharnhorst's military reforms and the "war of liberation" (as the battles of 1813 against Napoleon are known in Germany); the proletarian uprisings of 1919–1923; the anti-fascist struggle (International Brigades in Spain, the "Free Germany" Committee, etc.). The GDR's highest military decoration was the Order of Scharnhorst.

Scattered resistance will not lend itself to major actions, closely compressed in time and space. Its effect is like that of the process of evaporation: it depends on how much surface is exposed. The greater the surface and the area of contact between it and the enemy forces, the thinner the latter have to be spread, the greater the effect of a general uprising. Like smoldering embers, it consumes the basic foundations of the enemy forces. Since it needs time to be effective, a state of tension will develop while the two elements interact. This tension will either gradually relax, if the insurgency is suppressed in some places and slowly burns itself out in others, or else it will build up to a crisis: a general conflagration closes in on the enemy, driving him out of the country before he is faced with total destruction.⁹⁶

Always concerned with precise definitions, Clausewitz distinguished petty warfare from major warfare by the number of troops involved: battles involving twenty, fifty, one hundred, three hundred or four hundred men, if not part of larger battles, were considered part of petty warfare. Although Clausewitz admitted that his definition might seem mechanical and unphilosophical, he nevertheless asserted that it was the only true definition based on actual practice, and therefore the only one possible. Petty warfare has a number of specific characteristics, which Clausewitz enumerated at length: small troops can pass anywhere, can refuel without difficulty, can conceal themselves, can move quickly, can retreat even when there are no roads, etc. These specific traits determine the moral qualities required for guerrilla warfare, and the spirit in which it must be conducted. Guerrilla warfare belongs to petty warfare in the sense that it is also fought by small detachments, but it is a special form of petty warfare because it is not fought by regular soldiers, but by volunteer troops.

Clausewitz set out the conditions under which the people could be armed: the war must be fought within the confines of one's own country, the outcome must not be decided by a single lost battle, the theater of operations must cover a sufficiently vast area, the people must be sufficiently prepared to sustain the measures required for this struggle, and lastly, the

⁹⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, 480.

terrain must be cut off and difficult to access, due to mountains, valleys, marshes, or even the way the soil is cultivated. By their very nature, guerrilla fighters are destined for strategic defensiveness (they don't attack the enemy's main army, but their messengers, supply convoys, isolated posts, etc.) and tactical offensiveness (they don't defend any particular position, but instead attack many positions of the opponent). Tactical defensiveness is to be avoided at all costs, not only because of the numbers involved, but also because of the specific characteristics of irregular troops themselves. Though capable of great audacity, they lack the qualities of professional soldiers (composure, method, prolonged effort) necessary for a successful defense. In a people's war, the defense consists of troop dispersal.

To win without the intervention of a regular army, whether national or allied, one has to have either an immense area like Russia, or an extraordinary disproportion between the area and the invader's numbers. Clausewitz therefore tended to consider people's wars not in isolation, but as a secondary means of defense linked to the action of a regular army. To this end, he proposed sending small detachments of the regular army to reinforce burgeoning guerrilla forces. This should be done in carefully considered proportions, as it would be unwise to weaken the regular army too much by such troop withdrawals. What's more, too many and too large detachments sent out to the guerrilla front, could trigger a strong reaction from the enemy, exposing the people to full-scale attacks.⁹⁷ Finally, by greatly raising the number of professional soldiers among guerrilla troops, one runs the risk of causing petty warfare to lose its grassroots character, leading to the disaffection of the people, who would then leave matters in the hands of the standing army.

As always, Clausewitz insisted on the moral factor: he noted that the enemy army initially only sent small contingents to fight the first hotbeds of insurrection. In this way, they offered the guerrilleros the opportunity of local successes, which provided powerful encouragement, igniting the fire of proper guerrilla warfare.

⁹⁷ In the third Manifesto (or "Confession") of 1812, however, Clausewitz foresees, with cold rigor, the cruelty of repression and the accompanying escalation of violence: "let us take our chances and answer cruelty with cruelty, respond to atrocities with atrocity." Clausewitz, *Clausewitz on Small War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 205.

13. "Petty Warfare," Guerrilla Warfare and Revolutionary Warfare

Clausewitz had only people's war for national liberation in mind. His *Landsturm* project consisted of arming the entire people for the immediate defense of a country. All able-bodied men between the ages of eighteen and sixty who were not serving in the army were called on to fight. Clausewitz referred to the case of the Vendée and Tyrol:

Two to three communities come together and create a band or a company, however you wish to refer to it. The bands of a county constitute a column or a *Landsturm* and the *Landsturm* of an entire province a small army. At the head of this division stand leaders, who in large part are elected for and from the communities and counties, or are appointed by the king. The commander of the entire *Landsturm* of the province (*Landeshauptmann*) will be selected from the provincial population by the king. From the moment in which they assume their position, all these superiors of the *Landsturm* are official officers of the army.⁹⁸

Clausewitz was also careful to reassure those among his opponents who feared that such a project would lead to revolutionary outbursts, by assuring them that "the government, which itself arouses this storm, remains its master."⁹⁹

Clausewitz was right to distinguish between guerrilla warfare and revolutionary warfare. Guerrilla warfare is a way of waging war and can

⁹⁸ Clausewitz, "Third Confession," *Clausewitz on Small War*, 196.

⁹⁹ Clausewitz, "Third Confession," *Clausewitz on Small War*, 209.

Clausewitz's opposition to the defenders of the absolute monarchy did not make him a democrat; he was hostile to the idea of a constitution or parliament. He belonged to the liberal current, which believed that Germany did not need a revolution comparable to the French Revolution, due to the civil reforms carried out in 1807–1808 by Baron vom Stein (abolition of serfdom, access to free property for the great masses of the people, end of tax exemption for the nobility, abolition of restrictions on the exercise of certain trades, access to any public office for commoners, etc.). Clausewitz approved of these reforms as sufficient. In his view, all that was needed for Germany was good administration, monarchs who respected the rule of law, ministries that were concerned with the general interest, and the participation of German citizens in the major affairs of the state—all of which, in his mind, in no way implied a representative system.

be practiced by revolutionaries, but also by national liberation forces not aiming to change the mode of production (such as the Algerian FLN), by bourgeois armies (such as the British Chindits led by General Wingate against the Japanese rear in Burma) or by counterrevolutionary forces (such as the Nicaraguan *Contras*¹⁰⁰). Revolutionary war is not a war characterized by its form, but by its cause—social contradictions—and therefore its goal: power (over the whole country or part of it) as a necessary means of transforming social relations. Of course, the cause—in other words, the politics—determines the form: unlike the struggle for national liberation, which aims to drive the enemy out of the country, revolutionary war aims to annihilate the enemy. In other words, revolutionary war is a war of annihilation: the defeat of the ruling class means its disappearance; once it is driven to defeat, it cannot negotiate.

There are many forms of revolutionary war: Zapata's differs from Durruti's. As a practitioner and theoretician of revolutionary warfare, Mao Zedong made an essential contribution to Marxism-Leninism by establishing the principles of protracted people's war. In so doing, he endowed the proletariat with a military line, theory, and practice of universal value—applicable everywhere and adapted to the concrete conditions of each situation (for specific conditions give rise to specific forms of tactics, struggle, and organization). Revolutionary war is based on a historical materialist worldview, in which the political line is defined by taking into account the threefold set of contradictions that determine each concrete national situation:

The contradiction between oppressed peoples and imperialism; the contradiction between the international prole-

¹⁰⁰ The misidentification of people's warfare with guerrilla warfare backed up by extensive propaganda campaigns, led imperialist strategists on more than one occasion to attempt to turn the methods of people's war against the very organizations engaged in people's war. In Indochina, the French set up anti-Viet Minh guerrilla zones among minorities in the Vietnamese highlands, and anti-FLN ones among Berber communities in Algeria. The Americans also organized counter-guerrilla operations among Vietnam's highlanders, before investing in Angola's UNITA and Nicaragua's *contra* forces. These initiatives were all failures. They may have caused some military difficulties and many human and economic losses, but they were failures nonetheless, because people's war is not just a method—it is also the expression of historical contradictions that drive the anti-imperialist struggle.

tariat and the imperialist bourgeoisie; and inter-imperialist contradictions);

The politico-organizational heritage of scientific socialism (the need for mass politicization and consciousness-raising, the construction and development of a Leninist-type party, etc.);

And last but not least, the possibility to adopt any form of warfare (terrorism, guerrilla warfare, "grand guerrilla" warfare,¹⁰¹ conventional warfare, secret warfare, psychological warfare) according to the balance of power between revolution and reaction.

This categorization of protracted people's war as a military choice of universal value (in the image of the party of the proletariat as an organizational choice of universal value) runs directly counter to Trotsky's assertion that

[The Marxist method] is a method of thinking scientifically. It is the method of historical social science. . . . There is not and there never has been a military "science". . . . War rests on many sciences, but war itself is not a science—it is a practical art, a skill. . . . War cannot be turned into a science because of its very nature, no more than it is possible to turn architecture, commerce or a veterinary's occupation into a science.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ A useful concept coined by General Beaufre to designate that "form of operation resembling, in terms of its strength, the operations of conventional warfare, but differing entirely from the latter in terms of combat procedures: the 'grand guerrilla' operates with considerable means, but with the same concern for secrecy, surprise and evasion as in ordinary guerrilla warfare." André Beaufre, *La guerre révolutionnaire* (Paris: Fayard, 1972), 68. Translation from French by the Editors. There are many examples, including the famous World War II "Stalin Raid" on Hitler's rearguard led by S. A. Kovpak's partisan group (26 months of fighting, 10,000 km of terrain covered between 1942 and 1944!); the Battle of Sutjeska, fought by four Yugoslav partisan divisions (16,000 men) against seven fascist divisions (German, Croatian and Italian) in May–June 1943; the assault launched by the 22,000 Viet Minh soldiers of divisions 308 and 312 against the city of Vinh Yên in January 1951; and, of course, Mao Zedong's "Long March."

¹⁰² Leon Trotsky, "Our Current Basic Military Tasks," in *Military Writings* (New York: Merit Publishers, 1969), 72–73.

Trotsky's error was long shared by counter-insurgency theorists and practitioners,¹⁰³ who saw revolutionary warfare as nothing more than the communists' use of the old principles of guerrilla warfare. Indeed, there were many similarities: the struggle of the weak against the strong, the tactics of harassment and "tip and run,"¹⁰⁴ the need for the masses to support the guerrilla troops in terms of supplies, concealment, intelligence, recruitment, and so on.

But protracted people's war, the Marxist-Leninist form of revolutionary war, is resolutely specific in that:

1. It is characterized from beginning to end by the practice of guerrilla warfare, but it combines it with conventional warfare, psychological warfare, secret warfare, terrorism and insurrectionary warfare as the struggle develops, with the first guerrilla units effectively constituting a conventional army in the making;
2. It does not have a limited, spontaneous objective (such as national liberation) but a total, precise objective (social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat); it is a war of annihilation, and the nature of the war's goal imposes total military victory over the enemy's armed forces;¹⁰⁵
3. Initially, it is less important to wear down the enemy militarily than to wear it down ideologically and politically, by asserting the legitimacy of the revolutionary struggle and dispelling the

¹⁰³ For more on this subject, see the article "Revolutionary War and Counter-Insurgency" by Eqbal Ahmad, Institute of Policy Studies, Washington.

¹⁰⁴ "Tip and run" refers to a tactic involving quick, surprise attacks on a target, followed by an immediate retreat to avoid sustained engagement. It is often used in guerrilla warfare or by smaller forces aiming to harass or weaken a larger opponent.

¹⁰⁵ A war of national liberation can achieve its aims without a decisive military victory, simply by gaining political ascendancy over the oppressive power, by making the latter feel that it cannot win the war, by rendering the price of war unbearable for its leaders and in public opinion, and so on. The Algerian FLN won the war against France without achieving victory on the battlefield. The Vietnam War had a dual character: national liberation and revolutionary warfare (the Tet Offensive in February 1968 was one of those military defeats that constitute a simultaneous political victory, leading to American disengagement), while victory over the South Vietnamese puppet regime required a genuine military victory, culminating in a battle (or campaign) of annihilation: namely, the one fought in March-April 1975.

political and ideological tricks by which the ruling class claims to underpin its own legitimacy;

4. Each military advance is linked to a political advance that in one way or another consolidates the development of the new power in society (in liberated zones in the Third World, within mass organizations such as the trade unions, in activist networks in the big cities, etc.);
5. A long phase of strategic defense and tactical offensives, characterized by the accumulation of forces and an essentially politico-ideological battle, followed by a shorter offensive phase aimed at the annihilation¹⁰⁶ of the regime's armed forces.

14. The War Plan

In establishing the primacy of the political over the military, Clausewitz based the choice of strategies, tactics, and means (armament, manpower, etc.) on what he called the "war plan." The Nazis are the most remarkable example of a war waged without a proper war plan. Instead of establishing and following a war plan, carefully prepared in its conception and in bringing together of the necessary means, Hitler relied on a series of risky "moves," which sometimes depended on the success of a mere bluff. The Polish campaign, for example, left only 11 German armored divisions in the West to face the 90 divisions and 2,500 tanks of the Anglo-French Allies. The success of the Polish campaign depended on the Anglo-French not attacking Germany. That gamble succeeded, as did a few others afterwards. But one cannot venture into the realm of strategy with impunity, like a casino gambler who places a bet on every win.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Annihilation does not imply shock; proper destruction of enemy forces can be advantageously replaced by their dissolution. The work of army disbanding combines political work (essentially agitprop), psychological warfare (disinformation, demoralization, etc.) and secret warfare (elimination of the solid elements among the enemy cadre, corruption of its cowardly members, etc.). Dissolution alone is rarely enough to destroy the regime's forces, but it can undermine them to such an extent that they implode at the first shock.

¹⁰⁷ The very tactic of *Blitzkrieg*, of "lightning warfare," is a gambler's method which, if not successful on the first try, is doomed to total collapse.

The “war plan” is of vital importance to the revolutionary struggle.

Because of the uncertainty peculiar to war, it is much more difficult to prosecute war according to plan than is the case with other activities. Yet, since “preparedness ensures success and unpreparedness spells failure,” there can be no victory in war without advance planning and preparations. There is no absolute certainty in war, and yet it is not without some degree of relative certainty.¹⁰⁸

Only when the war plan has been properly laid out can tactical, operational, material, and logistical choices be defined. Guerrilla groups tend to have a strong inclination to make decisions about operations on the basis of tactical and technical opportunities—not only on the basis of the overall war plan. The acquisition of particularly effective weaponry will lead a group to be enticed to use it, and if decisions based on such temptations are not entirely in line with the war plan, they constitute a particular form of militaristic deviation, which can have disastrous effects. In 1982, the Palestinian resistance began to convert from guerrilla warfare to conventional warfare, relying on the massive use of anti-tank missiles and rockets (Saggers and RPG7s) and anti-aircraft missiles (SAM7s and SAM11s) to compensate for the fact that Israel, unlike the Palestinian resistance, had armored weapons and an air force.¹⁰⁹ All it took was two Israeli counter-measures¹¹⁰ to win a crushing victory over the PLO forces. Israel was only held in check when the Palestinian resistance regained guerrilla-style fighting conditions in the suburbs of Beirut and in southern Lebanon.

What's true of equipment is also true of tactics. If the revolutionary war plan calls for harassing the enemy with the aim of expelling the government's anchor points from working-class neighborhoods (bourgeois political parties, police, administration), we must fight against the ten-

¹⁰⁸ Mao Zedong, “On Protracted War,” in *Selected Works*, vol. 2 (Paris: Foreign Languages Press, 2021), 154.

¹⁰⁹ In fact, the PLO had begun equipping itself with armored vehicles: T-34, T-54 and T-55 tanks (several dozen) and wheeled armored vehicles (BTR-152, BTR-60).

¹¹⁰ These include reactive armor tiles (composed of shaped explosives which detonate towards the outside of the tank when hit by a rocket, thus canceling out the effect of the rocket's charge), and thermal decoys (released in large quantities by airplanes and helicopters and which, with the same thermal signature as the aircraft's engines, distract SAMs from their targets).

dency to strike spectacular blows against its central facilities simply because a weakness has been found in their defense system. Taking advantage of opportunities is one thing, letting yourself be guided by them is quite another. The room for maneuver in guerrilla warfare, for example, is subject to a "scissor effect" resulting from progress in fortifications¹¹¹ on the one hand, which increases the time needed for the operation—and progress in warning and interception systems¹¹² on the other, which reduces the time available for the operation. It is then tempting to counter this "scissor effect" by various means, in particular by subduing the enemy interception units'¹¹³ eagerness through some form of ambush operation.¹¹⁴ But this loses sight of the revolutionary war plan, for in the latter context, the "scissor effect," however painful it may be at the tactical level, is invaluable at the strategic level; it is precisely in this way that the enemy establishes himself in a position of being besieged and withdraws his tentacles from the fabric of society. Keeping the war plan in mind means encouraging the enemy to do just that. Tactically speaking, the most dangerous type of cop is the interception unit; strategically speaking, the most dangerous one is the district patrol unit.¹¹⁵ As Marshal Rokossovsky used to say: the most important thing is to realize that in the face of tactical superiority, you have to look exclusively for strategic solutions.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Cameras and other means of detection, concrete bollards, steel speed bumps, armored glass, etc., all the way to the building of a moat for INTERPOL's headquarters in Lyon. In London, the city is covered by an extremely dense network of cameras, combined with license plate recognition software and sometimes even facial recognition devices.

¹¹² Prompt police patrols, grids, installation of cameras at crossroads making impractical escape routes necessary, etc.

¹¹³ An interception unit is a military force assigned to detect and stop enemy threats, such as aircraft, missiles, or ground forces, before they reach their target.

¹¹⁴ Think of ETA's counter-tactics, which regularly trapped vehicles used in guerrilla operations.

¹¹⁵ Here, we're talking about protracted revolutionary war. The choice of counter-tactics may be perfectly valid in the context of another war plan. For example, in a national liberation struggle, the aim is not to annihilate the enemy forces, but simply to inflict such losses on them as to make the occupation of the country too costly.

¹¹⁶ The logic at work here is that the "interception" type cop is equipped with the means and knowledge to rapidly eliminate our own local units, while the "district" type cop specializes in locating our positions in a wider area, which he aims to break up and then annihilate completely using his superior intel and planning skills. Whereas the former operates by concentrating his forces on a single spot, the latter functions by strategically attacking the weak points of a wider enemy network in order to disrupt it with relatively few means.

15. Clausewitz and Delbrück

As we have seen, Clausewitz's later work led him to distinguish between two kinds of warfare: one in which the aim is to reduce the enemy to a state of petitioning for mercy (or even destroy it), and one in which the aim is merely to gain some advantage, usually territorial, at its expense. The latter, which moves away from the concept of absolute war to the level of simple "armed observation," is adopted either in situations where the political goals and tensions at stake are of little consequence, or where the military means are insufficient to hope for total annihilation.

Under the influence of Clausewitz's thinking as it was then understood, the vast majority of military minds of the early twentieth century, particularly in Germany, believed that the goal of war was always the complete destruction of the enemy's forces and that, consequently, the "decisive battle" that made this possible was the focus of every strategy.

The research carried out by Hans Delbrück, the founder of modern military historical science, revealed that this view had not always prevailed, and through an in-depth analysis of Clausewitz's texts,¹¹⁷ he demonstrated that Clausewitz himself admitted that there could be more than one strategic system:

One must . . . understand that there exist or have existed two fundamentally different types of warfare, not one perfect and one imperfect, one correct and one incorrect, but two types which, in the course of the different epochs of history, have been valid in turn. Thus, alongside the one that is recognized today, which is the only normal and acceptable one under present-day conditions, there exists a second type which, in other times and historical circumstances was just as much the only normal and acceptable one.

Delbrück explored this distinction between the two types of fundamental strategy and set out the principles inherent in each of them. The first, to which Clausewitz's thought is usually reduced, Delbrück calls the strategy of annihilation. It features a single pole towards which everything

¹¹⁷ Mainly the "Note of 10 July 1827" on the general state of the manuscript, already mentioned.

must bend: the decisive battle. Delbrück calls the second one the strategy of attrition. It differs from the former in that it has two focal points between which the general's decisions evolve: battle and maneuver. To understand the importance of this proposed strategy, we need to understand that the concept of "maneuver" encompasses all movements and operations that neither prepare for nor concern battle—for example, positioning one's troops between the enemy army and its rear bases. Under the strategy of attrition, battle is no longer the sole aim of strategic action; it is simply one of several equally effective means of achieving the political objectives of war. It is not necessarily preferable to the occupation of a territory, the destruction of crops and trade, the establishment of a blockade, and so on.

This second strategy is neither a variant nor an inferior form of the first. Neither type of war is linked to specific eras (in distinguishing these concepts, Clausewitz was not trying to distinguish between the wars of the Ancien Régime and the wars of the 19th century). At certain periods in history, for political reasons or because of the small size of armies available, it was the only form of strategy that could be used. Among the great military leaders of the past who were annihilation strategists, Delbrück listed Alexander the Great, Caesar, and Napoleon. He cited Pericles, Wallenstein, and Frederick the Great among the most remarkable generals who pursued the strategy of attrition.

Without going into the details of a decades-long debate on strategy, it should be noted that Delbrück's thinking differs from Clausewitz's (which is not to say that it betrays it) in at least two ways. First, Clausewitz speaks of two kinds of war, and Delbrück speaks of two kinds of strategy. Far more problematic, however, is the assertion that the strategy of annihilation is concerned only with the decisive battle, while the strategy of attrition tends, depending on the circumstances, towards either battle or maneuver. For instance, the 1812 campaign showed that Kutuzov did not annihilate the Grand Army by fighting, but by playing on time, space, climatic elements, partisan action, etc. This raises the question of the cumulative effect of small, partial successes (battles, maneuvers, occupation of positions). In the case of wars of attrition, each success exists in its own right and will positively influence the negotiated peace, either by amplifying the victory or limiting the defeat. In the case of wars of annihilation, a series of small successes may have been achieved in vain if the war ends in

defeat; the enemy's imposition of demands will have to be endured as if the small successes that preceded the defeat had not existed.

16. Strategy of Attrition and Strategy of Annihilation

The great strategic debate born of Delbrück's work concerns revolutionary military policy. The mechanistic application of foreign and/or past experiences can become counterproductive if one does not fully grasp this issue. There is no doubt that, even today, revolutionaries the world over have much to learn from the people's war in Vietnam. But it's important to realize that the Vietnamese people's war essentially consisted of a war of attrition. The enemy was not Bao-Dai's clique during the "Anti-French Resistance War" or South Vietnamese puppets during the "Resistance war against the United States," but French colonialism and American imperialism.¹¹⁸ Vietnam's People's War did not annihilate the French or American armies; it dealt such heavy blows to the expeditionary forces that it broke the enemy's will to continue the struggle. The enemy became convinced that it would never be victorious, and many indicators¹¹⁹ suggested that a withdrawal from Indochina would ultimately be preferable to continuing the war.

In other words, the Vietnamese forces had a limited military objective (to make the war as costly as possible for the imperialists) in the service of a limited political objective (the departure of the imperialist forces, which was to be achieved not by driving the expeditionary force out of the country, but by pushing the enemy to make the political decision to do so), while the imperialist forces had an absolute military objective (the destruction of the Vietnamese forces).

When foreign military presence reached its peak, there were 500,000 GIs in Vietnam. However, during the Second World War, the US fielded 11,250,000 soldiers in various theaters of operation. If, for the US, the war

¹¹⁸ It was only at the end of the conflict, when the American withdrawal was underway alongside the attempted "Vietnamization" of the conflict (reinforcement and over-equipment of the South Vietnamese puppet army), that the war took on the character of one of annihilation. A pessimistic US officer told a journalist that "the only Vietnamization that succeeds is North Vietnamization."

¹¹⁹ The cost of the war, the development of anti-war mass mobilizations in the metropolises, the fact that the war in Vietnam was absorbing resources originally intended for use against the Soviet Union, etc.

in Vietnam had taken precedence over all their other interests, they would have been able to deploy at least three times as many soldiers as Vietnam had inhabitants!¹²⁰ This is the difference between the war waged by the American imperialists at the time, which they did not perceive as a matter of immediate life and death, and the one fought by the Vietnamese people, for whom it was a matter of survival.

It was this asymmetry that ensured the triumph of the Vietnamese war of attrition over the American war of annihilation. Clearly, if a people's war like the one waged in Vietnam had been conducted at the same time as say, in Mexico, the picture would have been different. The closer one gets to the "belly of the beast," the higher the stakes, the more intense the destructive character of the counterrevolutionary struggle, and the more the liberation struggle is forced to adopt the strategy of war of annihilation itself. As for the revolutionary struggle in the imperialist centers, these are the conditions from the outset.

The natural conclusion would be to equate the strategy of attrition with the strategy of protracted war. But revolutionary strategy is a strategy of deferred annihilation, due to an initially unfavorable balance of power. Revolutionary war therefore borrows all its methods from the strategy of attrition (avoidance of the "decisive battle," use of the full range of indirect actions) until it acquires the means of the war of annihilation, which is its original form.

Finally, Delbrück's distinction between war of annihilation and war of attrition was used in 1910 by Kautsky in his debate with Rosa Luxemburg on the mass strike. According to Kautsky, the defeat of the Paris Commune sealed the fate of the strategy of annihilation for the proletariat. In its place stood the strategy of attrition, where the workers' movement gain positions by developing its unions, sending more and more representatives to parliament, changing laws, etc.¹²¹ Kautsky claimed to have seen this change of strategy first outlined in Engels's Introduction to *The Civil War in France*.¹²²

¹²⁰ "At least," because the US had not yet mobilized all its forces in 1945. If the US mainland had been threatened, other layers of the population were likely to be mobilized.

¹²¹ Karl Kautsky, "What Now?" in *Workers' Action*, nos. 142–143, 1979. Originally published in German under the title "Wass nun?" in *Die Neue Zeit*, 1910.

¹²² For an analysis of the fallacies of this interpretation, see *Marxisme, stratégie et art militaire* ("Marxism, Strategy and Military Art") by Emilio Albamonte and Matias Maiello

17. Clausewitz and Machiavelli

Machiavelli wrote *The Art of War* in 1515, at a time when the conduct of war in Italy was hampered by the country's politico-military system (which resorted to small, risk-averse mercenary armies)¹²³ and medieval traditions (war seen as an ordeal where opponents had to measure themselves against each other in fair competition).¹²⁴ Machiavelli and his Renaissance contemporaries rediscovered the art of war in Vegetius' treatise *De Re militari* (*Concerning Military Matters*).¹²⁵

Machiavelli wrote his essay without ever having actually exercised military command. He defended this lack of experience wittingly:

[Although] it is a daring thing to discuss a subject that others have made a profession, nevertheless I do not believe it is wrong to occupy with words a rank which many with greater presumption have held with deeds, for the errors that I commit in writing can be corrected without harm, but those which others have committed in practice cannot be recognized except through the downfall of their governments.¹²⁶

Machiavelli did, however, have some experience of warfare, having campaigned alongside Caesar Borgia and played a key role in the siege of Pisa,¹²⁷ the surrender of which he was responsible for. He had drafted the bill on the basis of which the *Ordinanza* was proclaimed—the law instituting compulsory military service for all Tuscan men subject to the

(Paris: Éditions Communard, e.s, 2022), 86.

¹²³ At the battle of Anghiari, “which continued four hours, only one man died, and he, not from wounds inflicted by hostile weapons, or any honorable means, but, having fallen from his horse, was trampled to death,” ironizes Machiavelli in his *History of Florence* (Washington: Walter Dunne Publisher), 253. In his aforementioned letter of September 25, 1857 to Engels, Marx refers to Machiavelli's caustic description of the condottieri's fighting style.

¹²⁴ The condottieri (captains of Italian mercenary companies) criticized the use of firearms, one of them going so far as to cut off the hands of captured enemy arquebusiers (early modern carbine-armed cavalry) to punish them for using these “disloyal” instruments.

¹²⁵ Machiavelli's work follows the same structure as Vegetius', with the notable exception of a central chapter on waging battles. Foreshadowing Clausewitz, Machiavelli criticized the strategy, generally adopted in his day, of avoiding combat.

¹²⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Art of War* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), 3.

¹²⁷ The campaign against Pisa lasting from 1501 to 1511, resulted in the annexation of the city to Florence.

Florentine government—and had spent the whole of 1506 and 1507 setting up this new militia: he was in charge of recruitment, organization, equipment, maintenance, payment and discipline.

Machiavelli turned the study of war into a social science, dissociated from all moral considerations and linked to political and economic issues. The place of war in Machiavelli's thought is central, and was clearly articulated by him, most notably in *The Prince*:

The main foundations of all states (whether they are new, old or mixed) are good laws and good armies. Since it is impossible to have good laws if good arms are lacking, and if there are good arms there must also be good laws, I shall leave laws aside and concentrate on arms.¹²⁸

Machiavelli established military thought as its own field, making it possible to rationally assess all military actions in relation to the ultimate political goal.

Machiavelli's *The Art of War* quickly became a classic of military literature, as did his main theses: rejection of mercenaryism (a state that relies on a mercenary army has arguably already lost its independence) and promotion of a people's militia, identification of the main aim of warfare as being the total subjugation of the enemy (a goal in the face of which all means become legitimate, and to which the State must commit all its forces), the primacy of man over weaponry, the vital role of moral forces, the superiority of infantry over cavalry and artillery,¹²⁹ the need for a single unified command, and the subordination of all operations to actual combat. French Marshal Maurice de Saxe drew heavily on these ideas in his *Reveries on the Art of War* (1757). For Clausewitz,

No book on earth is more necessary to the politician than Machiavelli's; those who affect disgust at his principles are

¹²⁸ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 41–42.

¹²⁹ This primacy is partly of a political nature; infantry units are composed of civilians, while artillery and cavalry call for a degree of professionalization. In his chapter on the proportion of arms, Clausewitz sets out several axioms: "1. Infantry is the most independent of the arms. 2. Artillery has no independence. 3. When one or more arms are combined, infantry is the most important of them. 4. Cavalry is the most easily dispensable arm. 5. A combination of all three confers the greatest strength." And concludes: "Infantry is the main branch of the service; the other two are supplementary." Clausewitz, *On War*, 286, 291.

idealistic dilettantes. What he says about the princes' policies toward their subjects is certainly largely outdated, because political forms have changed considerably since his time. Nevertheless, he gives some remarkable rules, which will remain valid forever.¹³⁰

Clausewitz often quotes Machiavelli (including in his *Strategy From the Year 1804*) and, unlike most German historians, he does not take Frederick II's *Anti-Machiavelli* seriously.¹³¹ It is clear, however, from his *Ein ungenannter Militär an Fichte* (*From an Anonymous Soldier to Fichte*) written to the German philosopher Fichte, the author of a study on Machiavelli, that Clausewitz considered Machiavelli's military science to be too dependent on the military art from the Antiquity (this criticism was mainly directed at the tactical aspect of Machiavelli's system, for whom the Roman legion of 6,000 men remained the pinnacle of military organization) and that

we must not stop, as Machiavelli did, at looking to improve the past and its ways, and approaching a particular form, but we must instead seek only to restore the true spirit of war. We must therefore begin, not with the question of form, but with the spirit itself, and wait with confidence for this spirit to destroy the old forms and replace them with more appropriate ones. In my opinion, the true spirit of war consists in utilizing, as much as possible, the strengths of each individual in an army and instilling in him a warlike temperament, so that the fighting spirit sets all the elements of the army ablaze, and so that there is not, in its great mass, a multitude of burnt-out elements. . . . The history of almost all national wars, particularly the Swiss War of Independence and the wars of the French Revolution, proves that by invigorating

¹³⁰ Clausewitz, *Historical and Political Writings*, 268, 269.

¹³¹ Voltaire's comment on the *Anti-Machiavel* written by the Prussian king is well known: "He spits in [Machiavelli's] face to disgust others." The comment is reported by Nicolas Chamfort in his *Maximes, pensées, caractères et anecdotes* (Paris: Garnier-Flammarion, 1968), 211. Translation from French by the Editors.

individual forces we gain infinitely more than by using all tactical forms.¹³²

Clausewitz developed this idea by asserting that the new weapons and types of masses available¹³³ were completely in line with this principle, which placed essential importance on individual courage.

But Clausewitz's criticisms and respectful hesitations towards Machiavelli's thinking did not in any way mean to call into question its value: in his *Strategy from the Year 1804*, Clausewitz wrote that he found Machiavelli "to be a very sound judge of military matters."¹³⁴ Clearly, Clausewitz's thinking progressed on the heels of Machiavelli's—and in the broadest possible sense, since Clausewitz's dialectical method borrowed heavily from Machiavelli.¹³⁵

18. Clausewitz and Jomini

Antoine-Henri Jomini, baron of the French Empire, was born in 1779 in the Swiss canton of Vaud. As a young bourgeois man with a passion for military affairs, he worked his way into the supply department of the French armies, eventually joining Marshal Ney's military staff. Ney, a hardened war practitioner and admirer of his protégé's theoretical skills, allowed the young Jomini to publish his first studies on the campaigns of Frederick the Great. Napoleon was impressed by these writings, and in turn became interested in Jomini, whom he summoned and promoted to the rank of colonel, then general, without ever entrusting him with a real operational position of command. Jomini, who had a very high opinion of himself, took offense and defected to the enemy in 1813, concluding his military career as general-in-chief of the Russian army in 1826. In addition to his works on military history, Jomini wrote a *Treatise on Grand Military*

¹³² This letter is included as an appendix to J.G. Fichte, *Machiavelli et autres écrits philosophiques et politiques de 1806–1807* (Paris: Payot, 1981), 200. Translation from French by the Editors.

Fichte's study had appeared in June 1808, and in a letter dated January 12, 1809, Clausewitz advised Marie to read it.

¹³³ Referring to masses of "individuals," national citizens inherited from the French revolution, which was the first to give birth to the national mass army.

¹³⁴ Clausewitz, "Letter to Fichte," in *Historical and Political Writings*, 281.

¹³⁵ Hegel, in *The German Constitution*, also acknowledged the importance of Machiavelli. See G. W. F. Hegel, *Political Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Operations (1803), in which he theorized the concept of the interior line, and his famous *Summary of the Art of War* (1838), which was translated and published countless times.

Jomini always believed that it was possible to develop a comprehensive theory of fixed methods and principles, independent of time and place, that could be used to win wars. It was not a question of proposing ready-made solutions, but of affirming the existence of

a small number of fundamental principles of war, which could not be deviated from without danger, and the application of which, on the contrary, has been in almost all time crowned with success.¹³⁶

Essentially, this meant

to bring, by means of strategic combinations, the bulk of an army's forces to the decisive points of the theater of war, and as far as possible to the enemy's lines of communication without compromising one's own . . . [to] maneuver in such a way as to engage this bulk of forces against only fractions of the enemy army. . . on the day of battle, [to] also direct, by tactical maneuvers, the bulk of his forces to the decisive point on the battlefield, or to the part of the enemy line which has to be attacked. . . [to] ensure that these forces are not only present on the decisive point, but that they are put into action energetically and collectively, so as to produce a simultaneous effect.¹³⁷

Having developed a full-blown theory on the "lines of operation" (single and double, internal and external) based on these principles, Jomini concluded that the army general's task consisted of identifying, from the different possible paths to take in reality, those that coincide with

¹³⁶ Antoine-Henri de Jomini, "The Present Theory of War and Its Utility," in *Summary of the Art of War* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1862).

¹³⁷ *Revue militaire suisse* ("Swiss Military Review"), no. 6 (Lausanne, 1866), 123. Translation from French by the Editors.

the ideal paths and lines of maneuver proposed by theory. As Debord put it: "Jomini bases his work on maps, Clausewitz on action."¹³⁸

While Jomini appears to be closer to Clausewitz in his assertion that the object of war is not the conquest of strongholds or the acquisition of territory to be used as a *glacis*,¹³⁹ but the destruction of the enemy's armed forces (and this was a lesson not lost on those who witnessed the Napoleonic wars), in reality he deviated from this principle in his own theories, which placed central importance on achieving control over "operation areas"—in other words, control over territory. On the basis of these theses, Jomini developed a theory of strategic lines and points, and a theory of maneuver along internal lines¹⁴⁰ as meticulous as von Bülow's theory of the relationship between the base and the lines of operation.

Unlike Clausewitz, who began by studying the nature of warfare, Jomini stands out exclusively as a strategic thinker. His undialectical mindset, entirely determined by 18th-century mechanistic rationalism, limits his thinking, leading him to neglect any factor that is not strictly a function of strategic thought, such as morale or historical factors.¹⁴¹ Yet Clausewitz is insistent on precisely the factors that prevent strategy from being reduced to a simple exercise in geometry. Clausewitz learned the lessons brought about by the changes resulting from the wars of the Revolution and the Empire, starting with the first lesson that war is always changing, whereas Jomini remained at the level of operational manifestations of theoretical principles. Indeed, Jomini's claim to have systematized Napoleonic

¹³⁸ Guy Debord, *Stratégie* (Paris: Éditions L'Échappée, 2018), 184. Translation from French by the Editors.

¹³⁹ In military theory, a *glacis* refers to any terrain that offers defensive advantages, historically characterized by a gently sloping or advantageous landscape designed to impede enemy advances and enhance the defensive position, often around or in front of a military fortress.

¹⁴⁰ Maneuvering by inner lines involves the attack by a single force on several separate opposing forces one after another; maneuvering by outer lines involves the convergence of several forces on a single, united opponent.

¹⁴¹ Jomini's approach often perpetuates the formalist shortcomings of classical military thought. Jomini's naturally classificatory spirit indulges in this with relish. He lists twelve types of battle order; defines four variants of parallel order (simple; with an offensive or defensive angle; reinforced on one wing or on both; and reinforced on the center); two oblique orders (a simple one and one reinforced on the advanced wing); two perpendicular orders (the concave order and the convex order); the order of the staggered column (either on one or two wings, or on the center) and a combined order on the center and on one wing. . .

warfare is all the more abstract in that he believed that he had extracted trans-historical strategic principles from it, principles that were as valid for Caesar as they were for Frederick.

For Clausewitz, the art of war differs from any mechanical art—architecture, for example—in that war is based on the constant action that both sides exert against each other. It is a complex interaction in which each protagonist combines purely rational calculation (albeit handicapped by the inability to accurately foresee the infinite consequences of the opponent's possible responses) with irrational elements, fears, errors due to misinformation, and so on. In his *Remarks on the Pure and Applied Strategy of Mr. von Bülow*, Clausewitz wrote:

The sole purpose of all development in the art of war is to subject the events (in general: the effects of forces) ever more closely to the deliberate direction of a reasonable will, to make them more and more independent of chance.¹⁴²

This skepticism was to grow, and *On War* aimed not so much at repelling chance but dealing with it. According to him, doctrinal thinkers who present themselves as scientific philosophers of war commit three errors:

They aim at fixed values; but in war everything is uncertain, and calculations have to be made with variable quantities.

They direct the inquiry exclusively toward physical quantities, whereas all military action is intertwined with psychological forces and effects.

They consider only unilateral action, whereas war consists of a continuous interaction of opposites.¹⁴³

This feature of Clausewitz's thought was perceived by Jomini as intolerable skepticism:

One cannot deny to General Clausewitz great learning and a facile pen; but this pen, at times a little vagrant, is above all too pretentious for a didactic discussion, the simplicity and

¹⁴² Clausewitz, *De la Révolution à la Restauration – Écrits et lettres* (Paris: NRF Gallimard, 1976), 278. Translation from French by the Editors.

¹⁴³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 136.

clearness of which ought to be its first merit. Besides that, the author shows himself by far too skeptical in point of military science; his first volume is but a declamation against all theory of war, whilst the two succeeding volumes, full of theoretic maxims, proves that the author believes in the efficacy of his own doctrines.¹⁴⁴

Clausewitz's verdict on Jomini is equally clear: "I don't think Jomini claimed anything that wasn't true, strictly speaking, but he often passed off as essential what was merely accidental."¹⁴⁵ And essential is precisely that which cannot be locked into an infallible recipe for success: it's the interplay of moral forces, interaction, friction, and so on.

Jomini and Clausewitz seem inseparable. Equally committed witnesses to the same events, their work left an indelible mark on the military thinking of their successors. They were certainly not the first to write about war; they had great predecessors such as Guibert, Bülow and Frederick the Great himself, but the systematic nature of their work makes them the founders of modern military thought. Not only were Jomini's theories taught in all schools of war, but the very existence of his thought (the affirmation of the existence of immutable strategic principles, and therefore the possibility of theorizing and teaching them) contributed to the creation of schools of war in every country. Jomini's fame as a military theorist reached its peak during the Crimean War, and for a long time eclipsed that of Clausewitz. However, unlike Clausewitz, Jomini's thinking has aged terribly, and many of Jomini's supposedly general principles were disproved before the end of the 19th century, not least by the progress made in technology. As early as 1866, the Austro-Prussian War demonstrated the superiority of external lines of operation.

¹⁴⁴ Antoine-Henri de Jomini, "The Present Theory of War and Its Utility," 1838.

¹⁴⁵ Clausewitz, *De la Révolution à la Restauration—Écrits et lettres*, 56.

19. Clausewitz and Engels

Engels, who was an attentive reader of Clausewitz, called him “a star of the first magnitude”¹⁴⁶ and “pure genius.”¹⁴⁷ He became familiar with his writings through the first edition of his works published (in eight volumes) between 1832 and 1837. Engels himself was a great military writer. Just think of his article published in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on the June Revolution (“The Course of the Paris Uprising”), of his articles on the 1870 war, his pamphlet *Po and Rhine* (which demonstrated such a mastery of strategic problems that it was attributed to the Prussian general von Pfuell. . .), his articles in the *New York Tribune* on the Crimean War (which were attributed to General Winfield Scott, then Supreme Commander of the US Army and presidential candidate!), as well as his “Force Theory” published as a chapter of his *Anti-Dühring*,¹⁴⁸ etc. Engels’s military background (he joined the Prussian artillery, the Kupfergraben, in Berlin in 1842, and took part in the Baden insurrection in 1848 as deputy to August Willich, the insurgent leader) and his interest in military matters earned him the nickname “The General” among his friends.

The quality of Engels’s military work is primarily due to his traditional intellectual qualities (his writings on certain military campaigns are meticulous, his studies on military techniques precise, his biographical portraits

¹⁴⁶ “Like any other large social organization, a great army is never better than when it turns in upon itself after a major defeat and does penance for its past sins. This was the fate of the Prussians after Jena, and again after 1850. In the latter case, even though they had not suffered a major defeat, their total military decline became palpably clear both to themselves and to the whole world in a series of minor campaigns—in Denmark and South Germany—and in the first large-scale mobilization of 1850, when they only averted a real defeat by the political humiliations of Warsaw and Olmütz. They were forced to subject their own past to ruthless criticism in order to learn how to repair the damage. Their military literature, in which Clausewitz had brought forth a star of the first magnitude, but which had since sunk to unbelievable depths, arose once more under the necessity for this self-examination.” Friedrich Engels, “Introduction to Sigismund Borkheim’s Pamphlet, ‘In Memory of the German Blood-and-Thunder Patriots,’” in *Collected Works*, vol. 26, 349–450.

¹⁴⁷ Frederick Engels, “Letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, April 12, 1853,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 39, 303. Weydemeyer was an outstanding correspondent on this subject. An early supporter of Marx and Engels, he had been an artillery officer in the Prussian army, then a remarkable proletarian military leader during the 1848 Revolution, before distinguishing himself in the American Civil War as a colonel in the Northern army.

¹⁴⁸ And also the remarkable essay entitled *Infantry Tactics, Derived from Material Causes. 1700–1870*, included in the manuscripts for *Anti-Dühring*.

of war leaders and his reviews of books on the science of war concise and penetrating). But above all, his work was innovative in that it was based on scientific socialism, which enabled him to develop a thoroughly modern and up-to-date approach to war, in that he considered war in its multiple (diplomatic, economic, psychological, military) and indivisible nature.

The value of Engels as a military writer is recognized by those "in the trade," even when they are militantly anti-communist:

Clausewitz had certainly foreseen total war, but on the scale of the means of his time. Engels wrote fifty years later, in the 1870s, when technical developments were proving limitless. And this civilian writer. . . was the first to predict the influence of technical progress on military art. According to Engels, the introduction of these advances brings about a complete transformation and revolution in the way war is waged. He who takes advantage of the new technological means to develop new methods of warfare superior to those of his adversary is destined to prevail. Engels also emphasized the development of moral forces through revolutionary ideology. His little-read work, *The Role of Violence in History*, written 80 years ago, remains relevant today. A synthesis of Marx and Clausewitz, a precursor of Lenin and Stalin, Engels foresaw the war of the future with an insight all the more remarkable in that no professional military man—Schlieffen, Foch, or Bernhardt—would elevate the art of war beyond its purely military factors prior to 1914. . . . In future warfare, says Engels, political, social, technical, economic, and psychological factors will be of prime importance. Engels thoroughly studied military history parallel to political, economic and social history.¹⁴⁹

In the chapter called "Force Theory," a section of *Anti-Dühring*, Engels develops the link between economic, political, and military phenomena. In it, he criticized the idea, typical of Dühring's idealism, that

¹⁴⁹ Colonel Henri Bernard, *La guerre et son évolution à travers les siècles* ("War and its Evolution Through the Centuries"), vol. 1 (Brussels, 1955), 418–419. Translation from French by the Editors.

if anyone thinks that the new strategy has developed of its own accord on the basis of a new situation and thus represents a natural product, he is making a grave mistake. Only the creative genius of a great personality has, in fact, created this new phenomenon.

On the contrary, says Engels,

Armament, composition, organization, tactics and strategy depend above all on the stage reached in production at any particular time as well as on communications. It is not the “free creations of the mind” of generals of genius that have had a revolutionizing effect here, but the invention of better weapons and the change in the human material, the soldiers; in the best of cases, the part played by generals of genius is limited to adapting methods of fighting to the new weapons and combatants.¹⁵⁰

In a letter to Marx, Engels referred to his reading of Clausewitz:

I am reading, *inter alia*, Clausewitz's *Vom Kriege* [*“On War”*]. An odd way of philosophizing, but *per se* very good. On the question as to whether one should speak of the art or the science of war, he says that, more than anything else, war resembles commerce. Combat is to war what cash payment is to commerce; however seldom it need happen in reality, everything is directed towards it and ultimately it is bound to occur and proves decisive.¹⁵¹

This comparison between war and commerce, between the decisive battle and cash payment, which Engels observed in Clausewitz, is also mentioned by Raymond Aron, quoting Talcott Parsons. The latter developed this idea (probably without knowing Clausewitz) to characterize the internal order of society: the state possesses the instruments of coercion,

¹⁵⁰ Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (Paris: Foreign Languages Press, 2021), 181.

¹⁵¹ Letter from Engels (Manchester) to Marx (London), January 7, 1858. Marx's reply (letter of January 11, 1858) is somewhat less enthusiastic: “I hunted through Clausewitz, more or less, when doing Blücher. The fellow possesses a common sense bordering on the ingenious.”

but rarely uses them; the “credit” of these instruments—the fact that the state disposes of said instruments of repression—is generally sufficient to ensure that individuals behave in accordance with the state’s expectations, without the necessity to “honor the drafts,” that is, without the actual use of violence. This twofold association is not surprising: for a long time, trade was seen as a struggle in which one side lost what the other gained—this was the essence of seventeenth-century mercantilist thinking.

Engels’s direct references to Clausewitz are, however, rare. In an article from 1855, he wrote:

Prussian military literature holds a very high rank; the works it has furnished for the last twenty-five years sufficiently prove that their authors not only perfectly understood their own business, but could challenge, for general scientific information, the officers of any army. In fact, there is almost too much of a smattering of metaphysics in some of them, and this is explained by the fact that, in Berlin, Breslau, or Königsberg, you may see officers taking their seats among the students at the university lectures. Clausewitz is as much a standard author in his line, all over the world, as Jomini; and the works of the engineer Aster mark a new epoch in the science of fortification.¹⁵²

In *Savoy, Nice, and the Rhine* (a pamphlet published in 1860 that follows and completes *Po and Rhine*) Engels denounced Napoleon III’s expansionist aims. In his view, Napoleon’s justification for annexing Savoy and Nice as necessary for the defense of France was flawed, because Italy, even if reunited, could only pose a threat if allied with Germany, and in that case the offensive could only be carried out via Belgium—or, if Belgium’s neutrality was maintained, via the left bank of the Rhine. To support this analysis, Engels referred directly to Clausewitz.¹⁵³ In chapter

¹⁵² “The Armies of Europe—Second Article: I. The Prussian Army,” published in Putnam’s Monthly, no. 33, September 1855. Also published in Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 40, 197. In 1855, Jomini was universally recognized as the greatest strategist and theorist of war, while Clausewitz was known only to a few specialists. When Engels placed Clausewitz on the same level as Jomini, he paid him tribute in the most spectacular way. . .

¹⁵³ Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 16, 599.

23 of Book VI of *On War*, a solid and severe critique is made of the erratic way in which the coalition army marched into France in 1814: instead of advancing towards Paris, the army instead found itself on top of the Langres plateau, after having made a detour via Switzerland. Engels would return to Clausewitz one last time when studying the prospects of France, defeated on the battlefields in 1870.¹⁵⁴

20. Clausewitz and Jaurès

In *The New Army* (*L'Armée nouvelle* in French), Jaurès commented on and attempted to popularize the concept of national defense that underpinned his parliamentary bill for a territorially-inspired, militia-based, defensive army.¹⁵⁵ Bebel had published a major study on the subject in 1898, while Franz Mehring wrote his famous work, *Militia and Professional Army*¹⁵⁶ in 1913.

It was in August 1904, at the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International, that Jaurès set out to study military questions in depth. He expanded his wide-ranging knowledge by reading about Condé, Turenne, d'Aubigné and many others. He read the *Reveries of Marshal Maurice de Saxe*. He studied the wars and military organization of the First and Second French Empire. He read the most influential writers of the time, both in France (General Langlois, Captain Gilbert, Henri Mordacq, professor at the École supérieure de guerre, etc.) and in Germany (von Bernhardt, von der Goltz, von Falkenhausen, von Moltke, etc.), as well as a large number of other studies and articles. In addition, he undertook a remarkable study of Clausewitz's *On War*. While contemporary military theorists were betraying Clausewitz's thinking by developing the theory of the offensive at all costs, which led to the pointless massacres of 1914 and 1915, Jaurès understood *On War* admirably well.

Indeed, Jaurès noticed the extent to which the writings of the German General Staff,¹⁵⁷ as well as its practical arrangements (building rail-

¹⁵⁴ Friedrich Engels, "The Fighting in France," published in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, November 11, 1870.

¹⁵⁵ The bill would be discussed and rejected in December 1912.

¹⁵⁶ Published as a series (five issues) from July to August 1913 in *Die Neue Zeit*. See *Die Neue Zeit: Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 8, pages 223–286.

¹⁵⁷ Which he had read about in the *Revue militaire des Armées étrangères* ("Military Review of Foreign Armies").

road stations near the borders to concentrate troops), showed that the choice had been made for an absolute, massive and immediate offensive in the event of war. This choice betrayed not only Clausewitz's thinking, but also that of von Moltke. The offensive had brought victory to Germany in 1870, but that was against a corrupt and weak French army. Von Moltke himself wrote:

I am convinced that improvements in firearms have given the tactical defense a great advantage over the tactical offense. It is true that we were always on the offensive in the campaign of 1870 and that we took the enemy's strongest positions. But with what sacrifice! Taking the offensive only after having defeated several enemy attacks appears to me to be more advantageous.¹⁵⁸

And yet, commented Jaurès:

"What gives lasting value to his work," say the Prussian General Staff, ". . . is his constant insistence on the idea of annihilation, as the dominating principle in strategy and tactics. . . ." Thus Clausewitz's emphasis on the value of the defensive is swept away, and the offensive is the only thing in his teaching to which the Prussian General Staff clings, to that and to the great weight which he attaches to moral forces.¹⁵⁹

Even so, Germany did have a certain number of reasons to opt for the offensive: it possessed a demographic superiority that gave it a larger standing army, the angled shape of its frontier with France was ideal for a maneuver of annihilation, a single command in the person of the Kaiser offered it the possibility of deciding quickly on a war and taking the lead, and so on. Conversely, France had no reason to maintain the "immediate and superficial offensive bias" of which Captain Gilbert, by extolling Napoleon's military doctrine, had been one of the initiators of the "offen-

¹⁵⁸ Helmuth von Moltke the Elder, "Defensive and Offensive," in *Moltke On the Art of War: Selected Writings* (Novato: Presidio Press, 1993), 52. That's how the battle of Austerlitz played out, and that's how the battles of the Marne, El Alamein, and Stalingrad would unfold in later times.

¹⁵⁹ *An abbreviated Translation of the Armée Nouvelle of Jean Jaurès* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., Limited, 1916).

sive" doctrine. Jaurès drew on Clausewitz's analysis to advocate the national defensive as the starting point, and if necessary, a vigorous counteroffensive. Jaurès demonstrated that taking the initiative of the offensive was not the right thing to do for France—that it could only be a weak counterweight to the German offensive, which is exactly what the First World War proved; the disastrous impact of the French offensive of August 1914 on France's border defenses could only be compensated for by a thoroughgoing defensive effort involving not just the active army, but all the nation's human and economic resources. Jaurès saw France's true strength in these reserves, which could only be generated by a defensive strategy.

The New Army is an unbalanced book. Jaurès's analysis is often flawed; his introduction of the problems of class and nation, for example, is in no way comparable to that adopted by Lenin. Nevertheless, Jaurès' understanding of Clausewitz was far superior to that of the military theoreticians of his time, and it seemed as if Clausewitz had been condemned to be understood only by politicians.

21. Clausewitz and Mehring

Franz Mehring paid such attention to the problems of war and the military, that he remains one of the leading Marxist theorists in this field. His work as a historian confronted him with these issues from an early stage, since the history of Prussia is so closely linked to that of its army. As Mirabeau summed up on a diplomatic mission to the Berlin court: "[Prussia] is not a state that has an army, it is an army that has conquered the nation."¹⁶⁰

Mehring rigorously applied the methods of historical materialism to questions of war and the military, which until then had been treated in a highly subjective manner in the socialist press and its publications.

It is largely thanks to Mehring's studies that Engels's military work has been lifted out of obscurity. At the time, Engels's work was the subject of numerous falsifications, the most brazen of which was his Introduction to Marx's *Civil War in France*, in which Engels purportedly claimed that the workers' movement benefited so much from the legalist strategy that it was the only way to go.

¹⁶⁰ This comment was made in 1786, on the death of Frederick II.

Mehring was to rediscover and deepen Engels's work. On the question of "military geniuses," addressed by Engels in *Anti-Dühring*,¹⁶¹ Mehring believed that the great warlords (such as Frederick II or von Moltke) were distinguished by the fact that they were able to grasp the newly emerging elements of their time, theorize new practices on their basis, and ultimately transform their insights into military power. Mehring unreservedly acknowledged the creative contribution of progressive military reformers like Scharnhorst and Clausewitz. But, as Mehring emphasized, it's not progressive ideas in and of themselves that make great war leaders, as the case of von Moltke shows. A reactionary monarchist, Moltke freed himself from the narrow-minded viewpoint of the Junkers¹⁶² in his field, forging new strategic principles on the basis of new techniques, starting with that of modern railroads. What's more, Moltke was able to put Clausewitz into practice, combining all the parameters considered decisive by the great German military thinker in a "concrete analysis of a concrete situation."

In 1914–15, after reading Delbrück, Mehring wrote *Kriegsgeschichtliche Streifzüge*¹⁶³ and *Kriegsgeschichtliche Probleme*,¹⁶⁴ in which he reiterated his distinction between limited and total war.¹⁶⁵ In Mehring's eyes, this was a great theoretical advance, and Delbrück's *History of the Art of War* seemed to him the most important contribution by a bourgeois author to the study of war. But while Mehring considered not only Delbrück's theoretical production, but also his rigorous use of sources remarkable, he criticized the schematic (and ultimately idealistic) way in which Delbrück tried to fit history's countless strategic forms into his own bipolar model of total and limited war. Delbrück differentiated between strategies aimed

¹⁶¹ "Armament, composition, organization, tactics and strategy depend above all on the stage reached in production at any particular time as well as on communications. It is not the 'free creations of the mind' of generals of genius that have had a revolutionizing effect here, but the invention of better weapons and the change in the human material, the soldiers; in the best of cases, the part played by generals of genius is limited to adapting methods of fighting to the new weapons and combatants." (Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, 181.)

¹⁶² The Junkers were the Prussian aristocratic landowning class, historically associated with the military elite and significant political influence in Prussia.

¹⁶³ Published in serial form (seven issues) between December 1914 and January 1915 in *Die Neue Zeit*. See *Die Neue Zeit. Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, 303.

¹⁶⁴ Published in serial form (four issues) between August and September 1915 in *Die Neue Zeit*. See *Die Neue Zeit. Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 8, 368.

¹⁶⁵ A distinction he found insufficiently developed by Clausewitz.

at battle and strategies based on maneuver, but Mehring emphasized and studied the inextricable link between maneuver and battle.

Mehring paved the way for Lenin by rejecting the concept of “defensive war” in favor of the concept of “just war.” The concept of “defensive war” may indeed conceal the imperialist character of a war. It was in the name of self-defense that Germany mobilized against Russia and France against Germany in 1914; it was on this basis that the German and French social-chauvinists rallied their bourgeoisie. Just war, revolutionary wars, and wars of national liberation, in which peoples fight for their genuine collective interests, are quite different concepts.

Mehring's first references to Clausewitz date from 1892, but Mehring really started to appreciate the importance of *On War* beginning with his writings of 1907. Mehring seems to have read Clausewitz long before he read Marx and Engels,¹⁶⁶ and he later discovered that Engels also had a high opinion of Clausewitz.¹⁶⁷

Mehring credited Clausewitz with a decisive contribution to military theory in general, an original and distinctive contribution to people's war, and a contribution to the renaissance of Prussian military power:

The Napoleonic strategy became second nature to the Prussian army only decades later through the classics written by Clausewitz.¹⁶⁸

He recounted the anecdote of the Prussian general who, in response to gossip about the “Prussian schoolteacher” to whom Prussia was supposed to owe victory at the battle of Sadowa,¹⁶⁹ replied, “Yes indeed, and

¹⁶⁶ Olaf Rose, *Carl von Clausewitz—Wirkungsgeschichte seines Werkes in Rußland und der Sowjetunion 1836–1991* (Munich: Oldenburg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1995), 92.

¹⁶⁷ Mehring mentions this in an article on Engels called “An Unusual Friendship” (published in May 1919 in the New York based journal *Class Struggle*): “He [Engels] studied everything about army administration, down to the most technical details: elementary tactics, Vanban's system of fortification, and all other systems, including the modern system of detached forts, bridge construction and field works, fighting tools, down to the varying construction of carriages for field guns, the *ravitaillement* of hospitals, and other matters; finally he passed on to the general history of war, in which connection he paid particular attention to the English authority Napier, the French Jomini, and the German Clausewitz.”

¹⁶⁸ Franz Mehring, *Die Lessing-Legende* (“The Lessing Legend”) (Berlin: Ullstein Verlag, 1972), 180. Translation from German by the Editors.

¹⁶⁹ This theme, which permeated the discourse of that era, attributed the decisive factor in the Prussian victory to the fact that, thanks to the so-called “Prussian schoolteacher,”

that schoolteacher was called Clausewitz.”¹⁷⁰ Mehring was the first Marxist to base his theoretical work on Clausewitz. He recognized Clausewitz as a genius theoretician but exposed his limitations and helped to overcome them. Hence, Clausewitz's theses on the relationship between politics and war were deepened by Mehring and the relationship between economics and politics.

Lenin was a great reader of Mehring and references to his work abound. In his preparatory notebook to *Imperialism*, Lenin referred to the polemic between Delbrück and Mehring on the right of nations to self-determination published in *Die Neue Zeit*.¹⁷¹ While it is certain that Lenin was familiar with Mehring's *Kriegsgeschichtliche Streifzüge* and *Kriegsgeschichtliche Probleme*, whether it was Mehring's writings that led Lenin to read Clausewitz is still debatable. Clearly, though, Lenin read the pages in which Mehring praises Clausewitz before reading Clausewitz himself, and through Mehring, Lenin was able to form a Clausewitzian vision of war¹⁷² even before reading *On War*.

22. Clausewitz, Lawrence, and Liddell Hart

Lettow-Vorbeck and Thomas Edward Lawrence are the only European military figures to have studied and practiced guerrilla warfare during the First World War. Unlike his German counterpart, Lawrence was not a career soldier, but always had an interest in the East and military affairs. As a teenager, he read the Ancients (Thucydides, Xenophon,

all Prussian soldiers spoke the same language (while some 20 languages and dialects coexisted within the Austro-Hungarian army), and that Prussian conscripts had been prepared for war at an early age through school activities (gymnastics) and extracurricular activities (shooting). This theme of the “Prussian schoolteacher” was echoed in the political debates in France following the defeat of 1870, which were instrumental in banishing regional languages and dialects from French schools. Indeed, back in 1870, some French regiments still spoke regional languages (Flemish, Picard, Occitan, Provençal, etc.).

¹⁷⁰ Franz Mehring, *Historische Aufsätze preussisch-deutschen Geschichte*, (Berlin: Verlag JHW Dietz Nachf., 1946), 110.

¹⁷¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 39 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1968), 581.

¹⁷² Schössler already points to this influence in Mehring's 1904 articles on the Russo-Japanese War. Dietmar Schössler, *Clausewitz—Engels—Mahan: Grundriss einer Ideengeschichte militärischen Denkens* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2009), 388, 393. In addition, Mehring was not the only major socialist commentator to refer to Clausewitz; Kautsky's speech on May 1, 1911 makes extensive reference to *On War* (and reveals a good knowledge of it). See Karl Kautsky, “Krieg und Frieden. Betrachtungen zur Maifeier” in *Die Neue Zeit*, 1911.

Caesar, Procopius, Demetrius), as well as the historians of the Crusades, and had run away from home to enlist in the army, from which he was soon discharged for lying about his age. Lawrence was one of the first volunteers for the Oxford University Officers Training Corps, where he received a fairly comprehensive military training,¹⁷³ which he supplemented with extensive reading:

In military theory I was tolerably read, my Oxford curiosity having taken me past Napoleon to Clausewitz and his school, to Caemmerer and Moltke, and the recent Frenchmen. They had all seemed to be one-sided; and after looking at Jomini and Willisen, I had found broader principles in Saxe and Guibert and the eighteenth century. However, Clausewitz was intellectually so much the master of them, and his book so logical and fascinating, that unconsciously I accepted his finality, until a comparison of Kuhne and Foch disgusted me with soldiers, wearied me of their officious glory, making me critical of all their light. In any case, my interest had been abstract, concerned with the theory and philosophy of warfare especially from the metaphysical side.¹⁷⁴

Later, he would emphasize that his strategic thinking and approach to military command had not come to him by instinct, but by analysis backed up by years of military reading:

With 2,000 years of examples behind us we have no excuse, when fighting, for not fighting well.¹⁷⁵

Having been to the Middle East twice, Lawrence was assigned to the British General Staff in Cairo as an intelligence officer when war broke out.

¹⁷³ See Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia—The Authorized Biography of T.E. Lawrence* (New York: Atheneum, 1990), 52. Lawrence attended the Oxford OTC's 1910 summer camp, and took part in maneuvers that included a mock battle whose opponent was (of course) the Cambridge OTC. . .

¹⁷⁴ T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* [Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1955 (reset of the 1940 edition)], 193.

¹⁷⁵ T. E. Lawrence, "Letter to Liddell Hart (June 26, 1933)," in *The Letters of T. E. Lawrence* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1938), 769.

On June 5, 1916, the Arab tribal chiefs of Hejaz¹⁷⁶ launched an uprising against the Turks. At its head was Hussein, Sherif of Mecca and head of the Hashemite family. Lawrence was sent on a mission to meet the rebel leaders, who had just failed in an attack the Turkish garrisons in Medina and Mecca. The ensuing siege did result in the surrender of Mecca, but Turkish forces subsequently marched on the city, threatening to annihilate the young Hashemite army. On Lawrence's advice, the Arabs turned their backs on Mecca and the Turks, and headed 300 km north. This non-conventional maneuver (which only an irregular army with no supply lines to worry about could afford) threatened Medina and its precious railroad. Destabilized, the Turks turned back.¹⁷⁷ This was the moment of Lawrence's strategic "revelation": the Arabs had won the war. Their aim was not the destruction of the Turkish army, but the liberation of their territories. Yet the Arabs occupied 99 % of them.

The Turks were welcome to the other fraction till peace or doomsday showed them the futility of clinging to the window pane.¹⁷⁸

Considering the thousands of Turks trapped in Medina, eating the camels that should have carried them to Mecca and which they were unable to let out to graze, Lawrence pushed the point home:

They were harmless sitting there; if taken prisoner, they would entail the cost of food and guards in Egypt: if driven out

¹⁷⁶ Hejaz is a region in western Saudi Arabia. It includes the cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jeddah.—Ed.

¹⁷⁷ In describing this maneuver in his article "The Evolution of a Revolt," published in *The Army Quarterly* in October 1920, Lawrence invokes Clausewitz: "This eccentric movement acted like a charm. Clausewitz had said that rearguards modulate the enemy's action like a pendulum, not by what they do, but by their mere existence. We did nothing concrete, but our march recalled the Turks (who were almost in Rabegh) all the way back to Medina, and there they halved their force." The exact quote from Clausewitz is: "an advanced corps derives its operational value more from its presence than from its efforts; from the engagements it might offer rather than from those it actually fights. It is never intended to stop the enemy's movements, but rather, like the weight of a pendulum, to moderate and regulate them so as to make them calculable." See Clausewitz, *On War*, 311. Lawrence speaks of "rearguards," while Clausewitz refers to "advanced corps." This is not a contradiction: the advanced corps form the rearguard in the event of a retreat—something Clausewitz analyzes in detail in chapters XIII of Book IV and VIII of Book V.

¹⁷⁸ T. E. Lawrence, "Guerrilla warfare," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. X, London, 14th edition, 1926.

northward into Syria, they would join the main army blocking the British in Sinai. On all counts they were best where they were¹⁷⁹

In his analysis, Lawrence quite consciously departs from the principle, formulated by Clausewitz, that the main objective in war is the destruction of the enemy army:

The text books gave the aim in war as “the destruction of the organized forces of the enemy” by “the one process battle.” Victory could only be purchased by blood. This was a hard saying, as the Arabs had no organized forces, and so a Turkish Foch would have no aim: and the Arabs would not endure casualties, so that an Arab Clausewitz could not buy his victory. These wise men must be talking metaphors, for the Arabs were indubitably winning their war. . . and further reflection pointed to the deduction that they had actually won it. . . . Thus the “absolute war” seemed only a variety of war; and beside it other sorts could be discerned, as Clausewitz had numbered them, personal wars for dynastic reasons, expulsive wars for party reasons, commercial wars for trading reasons.¹⁸⁰

Indeed, unlike Foch, Clausewitz knew that real wars are more or less removed from the concept of “absolute war,” due to the “vast array of factors, forces and conditions in national affairs that are affected by war.”¹⁸¹ When he entered into correspondence with Liddell Hart, who had been attacking the “Napoleonic conception” of warfare since 1924, Lawrence conceded that “The logical system of Clausewitz is too complete. It leads astray his disciples—those of them, at least, who would rather fight with their arms than with their legs.”¹⁸² But Lawrence was also well aware that Clausewitz’s followers had transformed his analysis of “chameleon warfare” into a narrow, one-sided doctrine.

¹⁷⁹ T. E. Lawrence, “Guerrilla warfare.”

¹⁸⁰ T. E. Lawrence, “Guerrilla warfare.”

¹⁸¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 579.

¹⁸² T. E. Lawrence in a letter to Basil Liddell Hart. See *The Liddell Hart Memoirs*, vol. 1 (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1965), 85.

Lawrence fought on a battlefield that represented but a tiny fraction of the massive combat areas of the First World War. Had he been required to develop his strategic thinking within another context (if the Ottoman army did not also have to fight in Palestine and the Caucasus, if its fate was not linked to that of the central empires), sooner or later he would have had to consider the necessity of annihilating the Turkish army in Medina or driving it back to Turkey. Eventually, the Arab rebellion would have been able to liberate the Hejaz on its own. But to liberate all of the Arabic Middle East from Turkish domination, it would have been necessary to renounce to the type of indirect action his guerrilla strategy was based on, and to ask the question of starting a war of annihilation (or, at the very least, driving back) the Turkish army's main forces. In such a case, it would have been imperative to conclude the guerrilla war by winning an Arab Dien Bien Phu. As such, Lawrence did not rule out, as a last resort, the use of a strategy tending towards the Clausewitzian concept of "absolute war" (which Lawrence called "murder war"¹⁸³).

His biographer and intellectual heir, Sir Basil Liddell Hart, strongly opposed Clausewitz, arguing that strategy should reduce fighting to the bare minimum, and instead place the enemy in a position of inferiority by influencing psychological and economic factors. Liddell Hart even argued that as few forces as possible should be devoted to action at the decisive point, and as many as possible to distracting enemy forces. Liddell Hart's seminal *Strategy*¹⁸⁴ is a blatantly anti-Clausewitzian apology for indirect warfare, rooted in what he called the "British Way of Warfare." It is true that the insular nature of Great Britain, with little exposure to invasion and a low propensity for direct occupation of continental territories, dictated a specific military culture. During the French Revolution and Empire wars, for example, unlike the Austrians, Russians, and Prussians, who marched straight up against the French army, England multiplied its indirect operations, sending expeditionary corps to Malta and the Iberian Peninsula; financing and arming Napoleon's enemies; waging naval war; conquering

¹⁸³ T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 196.

¹⁸⁴ Basil Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1967).

or blockading France's colonies; and so on. Britain's thalassocratic¹⁸⁵ character led it to rediscover the strategic principles of ancient Athens.¹⁸⁶

Liddell Hart often invoked Lawrence in his anti-Clausewitzian crusade, leading Lawrence to respond:

He is a very good and keen military writer—but unfortunately my tactics and principles happen to support the theory of war which he urges, in and out of season. So he uses me as the stalking horse to air the merits of his ideas and this makes even the well-founded parts of his book feel improbable.¹⁸⁷

Lawrence openly defended Clausewitz against him:

[Liddell Hart] lives for the avoidance of battle and murder, and for winning campaigns by wise dispositions. A tenuous sincerity about him. Good, I think, within reason. He carries his revulsion against Clausewitz too far.¹⁸⁸

In addition to this direct and well-known intellectual filiation between Hart and Lawrence, the latter produced a number of less expected heirs. During the 1946 talks on the basis for the return of French authority in Indochina, General Salan, the future commander of the French Expeditionary Corps in Vietnam, met with General Giáp. Salan reported how struck he was by Lawrence's influence on Giáp. According to Giáp,

Lawrence combined wisdom, integrity, humanity, courage and discipline with empathy—the ability to identify emotionally with subordinates as well as superiors.

Giáp, who was, as we shall see, an attentive reader of Clausewitz, told him that *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* was his “gospel of combat,” and that the book never left his desk.

¹⁸⁵ A thalassocracy—from the Greek “thalassa” meaning “sea,” and “kratein” meaning “to rule”—is a form of society where maritime dominance plays a central role in its governmental, economic, and military structures.—Ed.

¹⁸⁶ Liddell Hart himself was a seminal figure, and Montgomery adopted his analysis of Clausewitz without change.

¹⁸⁷ T. E. Lawrence to his mother, in Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia—The Authorized Biography of T.E. Lawrence*, 909.

¹⁸⁸ Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia—The Authorized Biography of T.E. Lawrence*, 907.

23. Clausewitz and Lenin

Clausewitz's influence on Marxism-Leninism did not end with Engels's writings. Clausewitz's thought had a profound impact on Lenin as well. The notes he took when reading *On War* and the frequent references to Clausewitz's thinking¹⁸⁹ bear witness to this. Because, more than wars between nations, wars between antagonistic classes require that moral forces be taken into account; that the military be subordinated to the political; that war be seen as having multiple fronts, yet being, at its core, one and indivisible; that it is important to understand why and how a war can be won or lost before the first shot is fired; that it is essential not to attach great importance to so-called "key positions," but to encourage and organize partisan warfare; that the aim should be to annihilate the enemy's vital forces in such a way that he cannot recover; and so on. It's not enough to say that Clausewitz was important for Lenin—one must likewise add that Lenin was important for Clausewitz: for Lenin was the first statesman to put Clausewitz's thinking into practice in the field of political action.

In Bern, between Fall 1914 and Spring 1915, Lenin read *On War* with the utmost attention, copying large excerpts (in German) into his notebook ("*tetradka*"¹⁹⁰) along with a few remarks (in Russian). Lenin was interested in the relationship between war and politics (Books I and VIII), in questions of morality (boldness, "*esprit de corps*"¹⁹¹), in the dialectics of attack and defense—in short, in all the ideas he could apply to political and politico-military strategy. From Clausewitz's famous formula linking war to politics, the people retained only the primacy of political authority over the military. Lenin added a new dimension: by examining the political nature of a war—in the final analysis, its class character—we can identify its historical and moral character, and thus distinguish between just and unjust wars. This is a significant expansion of Clausewitz's approach, since the latter, with the exception of the moral advantages he attributed

¹⁸⁹ Particularly in *Socialism and War*, where he calls Clausewitz "one of the profoundest writers on the problems of war." See also "The Collapse of the Second International" and "Left-Wing' Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality," in *Collected Works*, vol. 21.

¹⁹⁰ The "*Leninskaya Tetradka*" is a notebook by Lenin dedicated to the study of Clausewitz's texts and thought.—Ed.

¹⁹¹ "*Esprit de corps*" refers to the spirit of unity, camaraderie, and collective pride among members of a military unit or organization.—Ed.

to the attacked nation, only put forward moral advantages unrelated to the nature of the war itself, and therefore could be equally held by any of the belligerents (e.g., “military virtue”).

As early as May–June 1915, in his pamphlet directed against the leaders of social chauvinism, Lenin drew on his understanding of Clausewitz:

[To] be able to assess the concrete situation, [Plekhanov] says, we must first of all find out who started it and punish him; all other problems will have to wait until another situation arises. . . . Plekhanov has plucked out a quotation from the German Social-Democratic press: the Germans themselves, before the war, admitted that Austria and Germany had “started it,” he says, and there you are. He does not mention the fact that the Russian socialists repeatedly exposed the tsarist plans of conquest of Galicia, Armenia, etc. He does not make the slightest attempt to study the economic and diplomatic history of at least the past three decades, which history proves conclusively that the conquest of colonies, the looting of foreign countries, the ousting and ruining of the more successful rivals have been the backbone of the politics of both groups of the now belligerent powers.

With reference to wars, the main thesis of dialectics, which has been so shamelessly distorted by Plekhanov to please the bourgeoisie, is that “*war is simply the continuation of politics by other [i.e., violent] means*”. Such is the formula of Clausewitz,¹⁹² one of the greatest writers on the history of war, whose thinking was stimulated by Hegel. And it was always the standpoint of Marx and Engels, who regarded any war as the *continuation* of the politics of the powers concerned—and the *various classes* within these countries—in a definite period.

Plekhanov's crude chauvinism is based on exactly the same theoretical stand as the more subtle and saccharo-conciliatory chauvinism of Kautsky, who uses the following arguments

¹⁹² Here, Lenin inserts the entire passage from *On War* and its associated references as a note.

when he gives his blessing to the desertion of the socialists of all countries on the side of their "own" capitalists:

It is the right and duty of everyone to defend his fatherland; true internationalism consists in this right being recognised for the socialists of all nations, including those who are at war with my nation. . . (See *Die Neue Zeit*, October 2, 1914, and other works by the same author).

. . . True internationalism, we are told, means that we must justify German workers firing at French workers, and French workers firing at German workers, in the name of "defence of the fatherland"!!

However, closer examination of the theoretical premises in Kautsky's reasoning will reveal the selfsame idea that Clausewitz ridiculed about eighty years ago, viz., that when war breaks out, all historically created political relations between nations and classes cease and that a totally new situation arises! There are "simply" those that attack and those that are defending themselves, "simply" the warding off of the "enemies of the fatherland"! The oppression of a number of nations which comprise over half the population of the globe, by the dominant imperialist nations; the rivalry between the bourgeoisie of these countries for a share of the loot; the desire of the capitalists to split and suppress the working-class movement—all these have suddenly disappeared from the pen of Plekhanov and Kautsky, although they themselves were describing these very "politics" for decades before the war.¹⁹³

By copying paragraph 24, entitled "War is the Continuation of Politics by Other Means," as well as extensive sections of the following paragraphs in his notebooks, Lenin also marked his interest in this text's demonstration that the political cause determines either the ascent to the most extreme forms of conflict or their de-escalation, since weak motives for war and low levels of tension keep war away from its "ideal" model, that is, absolute war. And if absolute war (or the war that comes closest

¹⁹³ V. I. Lenin, "The Collapse of the Second International," in *Collected Works*, vol. 21.

to it) seems less political because of the outburst of passions and violence, this very level of passion and violence can only be explained by its political character: the high stakes and tensions involved. Thus, even when appearances present the image of an absurd and pointless war, deriving its rise to such extremes from its own motives and internal dynamics, launching frenzied populations against each other, politics remains the decisive factor in war—in fact, it then appears more apparent than ever. It is when war openly allows itself to be moderated by politics that it betrays the weakness of those political stakes and determining factors.

Lenin re-transcribed the passages in chapter 3B of Book VIII of *On War* dealing with the changing nature of warfare as a function of historical change and, in particular, the changes in the art of warfare brought about by the French Revolution. Lenin added one restriction: where Clausewitz asserted that “The people became a participant in war; . . . the full weight of the nation was thrown into the balance.”¹⁹⁴ it would be more accurate to speak of the war “of the French bourgeoisie and perhaps of the whole bourgeoisie”—even if the wars of the Revolution and Empire may have had a certain national character insofar as they also expressed the struggle of the popular masses against absolutism, national oppression, and feudalism.

Lenin's emphasis on the class character of politics is, of course, a fundamental difference from Clausewitz. Although he referred in one paragraph to the private interests of rulers, Clausewitz spoke of politics “in general,” as if all national interests could be considered equal.¹⁹⁵ Lenin argued that a given political outlook (and the war it determines) serves the interests of one class and undermines the interests of another. This view is in stark contrast to the social chauvinist stance adopted by the leading members of the Second International, who were quick to emphasize the “national” character of war. Even if war “seems” to have a national character because part of the masses is enthusiastic about it, the real character of war is to be found in its political cause—and in this case in the imperialist aims of the belligerent great powers. Imperialist politics are the main cause

¹⁹⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, 592.

¹⁹⁵ Clausewitz, *On War*, 606–607: “It can be taken as agreed that the aim of policy is to unify and reconcile all aspects of internal administration. . . . That it can err, subserve the ambitions, private interests, and vanity of those in power, is neither here nor there. In no sense can the art of war ever be regarded as the preceptor of policy, and here we can only treat policy as representative of all interests of the community.”

of war; they give it a specific meaning and determine its nature. The question of popular enthusiasm for war, that of the “instigator of war” (i.e., which powers “provoked” the inter-imperialist war), or that of the justifications for war invoked by the various powers (the fight for freedom, for civilization, etc.), obscure rather than illuminate the real character of war.

Lenin paid particular attention to a number of questions regarding revolutionary politico-military strategy: the defense-attack dialectic, the general staff, criticism of the doctrine of key positions, the conduct and character of a regular army, etc. He also dwelled on Clausewitz's observation, in chapter 30 of Book VI of *On War*, that the general staff tends to overemphasize matters that are directly under its control (such as the topography of the theater of war) and that, since military history is written by the general staff, it is these aspects that are generally emphasized at the expense of others that are no less important.

He also examined Clausewitz's ideas on “military virtue,” those qualities which, it should be emphasized, are specific to a regular army hardened by victory and defeat, and which differ from the qualities of the people at arms.¹⁹⁶ To the extent that the conditions determining the terms of confrontation are never freely chosen, certain situations demand that the revolutionary forces equip themselves with the qualities of a standing army with its “military virtue,” since the specific qualities of a people at arms are unable to solve all problems. Lenin was the first to understand that within proletarian military thought, the mobilization of the masses could be insufficient under certain conditions, and that the revolution might have to equip itself with a standing army. This went against many prejudices stemming from the anti-militarist tradition of the workers' movement and brilliantly anticipated the military requirements of people's power faced with a conventional war (Russia 1918–21, Spain 1936, etc.).

Lenin also dwelled on the role of audacity: he copied excerpts from Book III, chapter 6 of *On War*, discussing the importance of audacity, exem-

¹⁹⁶ “People at arms” refers to the concept of a citizen-soldier, embodying the principle that the defense of the nation is a collective duty of its citizens. Rooted in the military traditions of the French Revolution, this idea signified a departure from reliance on professional mercenary forces toward a mass, conscripted army composed of ordinary people. This approach democratized military service, aligning it with revolutionary ideals of equality and the nation-state's sovereignty, as exemplified by the *levée en masse* of 1793, which mobilized the entire French population for the war effort.

plified by Clausewitz's witty observation that among the immense crowd of far-sighted people, the vast majority act with precaution simply out of fear. Lenin's interest in the question of audacity and courage (that of the soldier in the face of physical danger, and that of the military commander in the face of responsibility) is also reflected in his reading of Napoleon's *Pensées* (collected "Thoughts"). Lenin copied only two of the latter's thoughts into his notebooks (also in 1915). The second reads as follows:

In every battle there comes a moment when the bravest soldiers, after the greatest tension, feel inclined to take to flight. This terror arises from a lack of confidence in their courage: it needs only an insignificant event, some pretext, to return this confidence to them: the great art consists in bringing this about¹⁹⁷

But it is the conception of war as an instrument of politics that most interested Lenin. Chapter 6B of Book VIII, which deals with this question, is described by Lenin as "the most important chapter," and extensive parts of it were re-transcribed by him.

Many of Lenin's writings bear the mark of his study of Clausewitz: "The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution" (written in September 1916), "The Collapse of the Second International," etc., are just a few examples. Lenin's series of articles "'Left-Wing' Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality," published in *Pravda* on May 9, 10, and 11, 1918, are outstanding because they contain not only Lenin's main critique and theoretical surpassing of Clausewitz's thought (i.e., the importance of the class character of war), but also an example of how Lenin assimilated Clausewitz's ideas and put them into practice.

To recognise defense of the fatherland means recognizing the legitimacy and justice of war. Legitimacy and justice from what point of view? Only from the point of view of the socialist, proletariat and its struggle for its emancipation. We do not recognize any other point of view. If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its rule as a class, *such* a war is a criminal war, and "defensism" in such a

¹⁹⁷ V. I. Lenin, "Napoléon. 'Pensées,'" in *Collected Works*, vol. 38 ("Philosophical Notebooks"), 334.

war is a base betrayal of socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after it has conquered the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strengthening and developing socialism, such a war is legitimate and "holy."

We have been "defencists" since October 25, 1917. I have said this more than once very definitely, and you dare not deny this. It is precisely in the interests of "strengthening the connection" with international socialism that we *are in duty bound* to defend our *socialist* fatherland. Those who treat frivolously the defense of the country in which the proletariat has already achieved victory are the ones who destroy the connection with international socialism. When we were the representatives of an oppressed class we did not adopt a frivolous attitude towards defense of the fatherland in an imperialist war. We opposed such defense on principle. Now that we have become representatives of the ruling class, which has begun to organize socialism, we demand that everybody adopt a *serious* attitude towards defense of the country. And adopting a serious attitude towards defense of the country means thoroughly preparing for it, and strictly calculating the balance of forces. If our forces are obviously small, the best means of defense is *retreat into the interior of the country* (anyone who regards this as an artificial formula, made up to suit the needs of the moment, should read old Clausewitz, one of the greatest authorities on military matters, concerning the lessons of history to be learned in this connection). The "Left Communists", however, do not give the slightest indication that they understand the significance of the question of the balance of forces.

When we were opposed to defensism on principle we were justified in holding up to ridicule those who wanted to "save" their fatherland, ostensibly in the interests of socialism. When we gained the right to be proletarian defensists the whole question was radically altered. It has become our duty to calculate with the utmost accuracy the different forces involved,

to weigh with the utmost care the chances of our ally (the international proletariat) being able to come to our aid in time. It is in the interest of capital to destroy its enemy (the revolutionary proletariat) bit by bit, before the workers in all countries have united (actually united, i.e., by beginning the revolution). It is in our interest to do all that is possible, to take advantage of the slightest opportunity to postpone the decisive battle until the moment (or *until after* the moment) the revolutionary workers' contingents have united in a single great international army.¹⁹⁸

At the time Lenin wrote this article, revolutionary Russia was in a difficult situation. On March 3, 1918, it had signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, through which Germany seized Poland and the Baltic states, and imposed independence on Ukraine, Finland, and the three Transcaucasian republics.¹⁹⁹ The creation of the Red Army on January 15, 1918 led to initial victories over the White armies in the Urals, on the Don, Donets and Kuban rivers, and in Crimea. But in May 1918 (at the call of bourgeois nationalists threatened by the development of Ukrainian and Finnish revolutionary movements), the German and Austrian armies penetrated overwhelmingly into the Ukraine and Finland. Lenin wrote these lines at a time when the balance of power was largely to the disadvantage of the Soviets: the German and (to a lesser extent) Austro-Hungarian²⁰⁰ armies were clearly stronger, better armed, more experienced, and better trained than the young Red Army.

In applying the principle of retreat to the heart of the territory, Lenin opted for the superior form of the defense.²⁰¹ He knew that defensiveness

¹⁹⁸ V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality," in *Collected Works*, vol. 27, 331–333.

¹⁹⁹ In April 1918, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan seceded from Russia as a democratic federative republic. One month later the federation collapsed, which gave rise to three independent republican states.—Ed.

²⁰⁰ Austria-Hungary was a dual monarchy in Central Europe from 1867 to 1918, consisting of the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Hungary, ruled by a common monarch.—Ed.

²⁰¹ The sequence of one of the main defense strategies used in wartime: waiting for the enemy to attack; waiting for the enemy to reach a position where the defender can counter the attack favorably; waiting not only for the enemy to reach a position favorable to the defender, but also waiting for the enemy to attack this position, and then retreat; con-

would enable the revolution to develop its forces (the Red Army was in the process of being trained), that the Red Army would be able to operate along the interior lines (units could be sent from north to south, from east to west, according to needs and priorities, and thus obtain the superiority needed to win a decisive battle), as German forces slowly moved away from their supply bases and became increasingly exposed to the intense activity of the Ukrainian Red Partisans—and as pacifist and revolutionary theories spread throughout Germany and the German army. Lenin relied primarily on the latter factor. By January 1918, revolutionary political strikes and the creation of workers' soviets had already broken out in Berlin, Vienna, Hamburg, Kiel, Düsseldorf, Leipzig, Essling, and elsewhere. But it wasn't until November that the revolutionary wave set Germany ablaze: over 10,000 workers' and soldiers' soviets were formed and took control of Berlin. The revolution was crushed, but its effects, combined with those of the armistice,²⁰² led to the withdrawal of German troops from the Ukraine and Crimea. Clausewitz's thinking was present not only in the choice of the defensive position, but also in the way in which the "decisive battle" was conceived. In order to win the war as a whole, Lenin advocated defensiveness as a means of overcoming an unfavorable balance of forces.

The importance of Lenin's military work cannot be underestimated: between December 1, 1918 and February 27, 1920, in the course of one hundred and one meetings of the Defense Council, two thousand three hundred questions were discussed. Lenin personally chaired all but two of the meetings and sent out at least six hundred letters and telegrams on defense issues. In her memoirs, N. K. Krupskaya recalled Lenin's dedication to the study of military art:

He had given more thought to this than people know, and his talk about fighting squads in partisan war, about the squads

tinue retreating until the enemy offensive reaches its limit due to exhaustion, stretched lines of communication, partisan warfare and so on. This is the extreme form of defense advocated by Lenin.

²⁰² And the subsequent peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918.—Ed.

of “five and ten,” was not just the idle talk of a layman, but a well-thought-out plan.²⁰³

24. Clausewitz Taught at the Comintern Schools

Clausewitz's influence on Lenin and the Red Army shaped the Communist International's extensive cadre training program. In 1921, on the model of the Sverdlov Communist University, which trained Russian political cadres, the Soviet Communist Party and government created the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West (KUMNZ)—for students from minorities in Russia and the Ukraine, such as Poles and Volga Germans—and the Communist University of the Workers of the East (KUTV). Beginning in 1923, these two schools began enrolling foreign Communists.²⁰⁴

In 1925, the Sun Yat-sen University opened for Chinese students, and in 1926 another school opened: the International Lenin School, which trained 3,500 cadres from 59 countries until its closure in 1938. The Lenin School's academic level was superior to that of other schools. Its students were introduced to the tactics and strategies of revolutionary struggle, methods of agitation and organization, covert operations, and the principles of insurrectional action. Training on military and insurrectional issues was given by Yemelyan Yaroslavsky, a leading expert in these fields.

In 1920, the Comintern opened its first purely military training center: the German Military School near the Red Army General Staff. Attended only by KPD members, the M-Schule was closed in 1922 (and its best students sent to Soviet military schools),²⁰⁵ before being reopened

²⁰³ N. K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959), 114.

²⁰⁴ The KUTV (Communist University of the Toilers of the East, later renamed the Stalin School) hosted activists from the East and the Balkans (including Liu Shaoqi, future President of the People's Republic of China, and N. Zachariadès, who would go on to become General Secretary of the Greek Communist Party for 25 years), while the KUMNZ (Communist University of the National Minorities of the West, later known as the Marchlewski-Karski School) attracted Baltic, Scandinavian and German activists. Branko Lazitch, “Les écoles de cadres du Comintern,” in *Contribution à l'histoire du Comintern* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1965), 233.

²⁰⁵ Decision of the bureau of the Comintern's Executive Committee of August 26, 1922, archival document RGASPI 495/2/6a, collected by David François.

in 1930.²⁰⁶ Located some twenty kilometers (twelve miles) from Moscow, it was directed by Tuure Lehén and assisted by Wilhelm Zaisser, two veterans of earlier revolutionary struggles, who had undergone training at Soviet military schools themselves.²⁰⁷ In addition to the training provided by the Comintern institutions, activists also attended Red Army schools and academies, such as the Tolmachev Military-Political Academy in Leningrad and the highly Clausewitzian Frunze Military Academy.²⁰⁸

The military training given to communist cadres was put into practice in Germany (1923 and 1926), Bulgaria, China, Brazil, and Asturias (1934),²⁰⁹ with varying degrees of success. The communists who formed the senior staff of the International Brigades in Spain had all gone through these schools: General Gómez (the German Wilhelm Zaisser), General Lukács (the Hungarian Maté Zalka), General Walter (the Polish Karol Świerczewski) and General Klébert (the Bukovinian Manfred Stern).²¹⁰ But Tito proved to be the most outstanding example of their teachings in the field of people's warfare. He arrived in Moscow at the beginning of February '35, after his release from a Yugoslav prison. He remained in the Soviet capital where he studied until October '36:

²⁰⁶ Germans were in the majority, but the *M-Schule* (German Military School) had opened up to other nationalities; from 1931 to 1936, 149 students were German, 56 Polish (11 Ukrainians and 2 Byelorussians also attended classes in Polish, to carry out revolutionary work in Poland), 35 Finnish, 21 Chinese, 14 Spanish, 10 French, 10 Czech, 7 Italian, 2 Brazilian and one Swedish. Hermann Weber, Jakob Drabkin, Bernhard H. Bayerlein, *Deutschland, Russland, Komintern—II. Dokumente (1918–1943)*, vol. 2, (Berlin-München-Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 925.

²⁰⁷ It was the teachers at this school who wrote *Victory: the Art of Armed Insurrection*. Published illegally in Germany in 1928 under the pseudonym Langer, and republished in 1931, this book served as the basis for Neuberger's famous work, *Armed Insurrection*.

²⁰⁸ The Moscow Military Academy, renamed Frunze Military Academy in 1925, was the leading Soviet military academy. Headed by Marshal Shaposhnikov, it trained a large number of Soviet officers, including the future Marshals Zhukov and Vasilyevsky.

²⁰⁹ The Asturian miners' strike of 1934 was a violent uprising in northern Spain, led by revolutionary miners and other workers, against the conservative catholic government, and was marked by significant clashes and brutal suppression, killing many insurrectionists.—Ed.

²¹⁰ Stefanie Prezioso, Jean Batou, Ami-Jacques Rapin, *Tant pis si la lutte est cruelle—Volontaires internationaux contre Franco* (Paris: Sylapse, 2008), 42–46. German Lenin School students who volunteered to go fight in Spain attended a school in Ryazan, part of the Frunze Academy. Heinz Hoffmann, "Mannheim Madrid Moskau—Erlebtes aus drei Jahrzehnten," in *Militärverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (Berlin, 1981), 315–317.

I devoted most of my attention to economics and philosophy, but I also made a serious study of military art, especially Frunze among the Russian writers, and Clausewitz among the German classics. This considerably enriched my knowledge of military problems.

He put this knowledge into practice in Yugoslavia, where, at the head of a partisan army that numbered 300,000 fighters in 1944, he defeated the fascist occupiers and their collaborators, waging a war of which the Clausewitzian character was obvious.²¹¹

25. Clausewitz, Losovsky and the Strike Strategy

Alexander Losovsky was one of the prestigious speakers who discussed Clausewitz's theses at the Lenin School. Along with Tomsy, he was the Bolshevik party's main trade union leader. Despite strong disagreements with Lenin, his union experience and knowledge of Western Europe had him naturally appointed president of the Red International of Labor Unions, the Profintern. Losovsky wrote most of its reports and resolutions, as well as its Program of Action. In it, he called for the creation of a science of strike-based struggle drawing on the methods, achievements, and categories of military science.

In 1923, on Losovsky's initiative, the Profintern set up a "Special Commission for Strike Strategy" and, in the course of its congresses, collected and produced reports on the subject. After the major social conflicts of autumn 1928, in mid-January 1929 it organized an "International Conference on Strike Strategy," officially held in Strasbourg (but in fact held in Berlin).

In October 1929, Losovsky presented a report on the subject at the 10th session of the Comintern Executive Committee. In it, he set out four "fundamental principles," which he attributed to Clausewitz and deemed applicable to economic battles: stretch all forces to the limit, concentrate

²¹¹ This character is the subject of Frank Gorenc's study "Tito's Victory: Theory into Reality," (Washington: National War College, 1995). Unaware that Tito had read Clausewitz, Gorenc explains this character in terms of Engels himself being influenced by Clausewitz: "To achieve victory, Tito prosecuted the war with the practical revolutionary principles of Engels and provided history with a clear validation of Clausewitz' theory on the purpose, nature, and conduct of war."

the maximum forces at the decisive spot, waste no time, and use every success achieved with the maximum energy.²¹²

In listing these strategic platitudes, Losovsky betrayed his unfamiliarity with *On War*. There are many Clausewitzian concepts that could have been appropriately applied to the strike movement (superiority of the defensive,²¹³ fog of war and friction, ascent towards extreme forms of struggle and the mechanisms that temper it, etc.). Losovsky did not do much better in what remains the most accomplished expression of his thinking on strike strategy: the series of five lectures he delivered in early 1930 under the title *A Strike Is a Battle*.²¹⁴

Losovski remained General Secretary of the Profintern until it ceased activity in 1937 (in the face of the fascist threat, the Popular Front policy adopted by the Comintern called for a strategy of international trade union reunification). He went on to work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in 1949 fell victim to the central committee's purge of members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee.

Apart from Losovsky, the only Profintern leader to claim Clausewitz as his inspiration in the strike movement was Arthur Horner. Co-founder of the Communist Party of Great Britain, he led Welsh miners in the 1926 general strike. Imprisoned several times, he read *On War* in Cardiff prison in 1932, which made a great impression on him.²¹⁵

26. Clausewitz and the KPD's Military Apparatuses (1920–1945)

The KPD's politico-military force consisted of paramilitary mass organizations—the Roter Frontkämpferbund and the Roter Jungsturm,²¹⁶ its youth organization—and one clandestine entity, the Militär-Apparat

²¹² A. Losovsky: "The World Economic Crisis, Strike Struggles, and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement" (State publishers, 1931).

²¹³ All things being equal, it's easier to wage a social struggle to defend what's already been achieved than to obtain new gains.

²¹⁴ Alexandre Losovsky: *A Strike is a Battle*. Lectures given at the Lenin School were not reproduced, and this brochure is one—if not the only—rare exception.

²¹⁵ Arthur Horner, *Incorrigible Rebel* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1960), 141, 152.

²¹⁶ The "Red Front Fighters' League" and the "Red Youth Assault" (40,000 fighters in 1925, 106,000 in 1928). After its ban, the Red Front Fighters' League was transformed in 1930 into the *Kampfbund gegen den Faschismus*, the Anti-Fascist Combat League (250,000 members in 1930).

(military apparatus). The M-Apparat, with its extensive resources and hand-picked cadres, acted as the secret headquarters, security and intelligence service of the German communist movement, in close liaison with the underground structures of the Comintern.²¹⁷

The training of military cadres covered not only military issues, but also political and politico-military problems. Through conferences and discussions, they studied the military works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, the operations of the First World War, the military forces and organization of class enemies, and the theories of Clausewitz.

The KPD military leadership was responsible for producing the content of, as well as for distributing, the politico-military magazine *Oktober*. The magazine addressed the KPD's need to provide activists with military training and to constantly evaluate concrete revolutionary military experiences. Subtitled "Militärpolitische Mitteilungsblatt," the magazine appeared from 1926 to 1931 as a follow-up to the earlier *Vom Bürgerkrieg* (*On Civil War*), dating back to 1923. Printed illegally in Berlin, *Oktober's* copies increased from 3,200 to 5,000. The police, who failed to stop its publication (only a few stocks were seized), eventually became convinced that the magazine was produced in Switzerland. . . .²¹⁸ The highest-ranking M-Apparat officials wrote in *Oktober* (usually under a pseudonym): Albert Schreiner, Wilhelm Bahnik, Otto Braun, Hans Kippenberger, Ernst Schneller, and others.

To mark the 100th anniversary of Clausewitz's birth, Issue No. 4 (1931, with the title "Sondernummer zum Antikriegstag," or "Anti-War Day Special issue") contained an article by Andrei Bubnov, former head of the Red Army's political department, entitled "Lenin über Clausewitz" ("Lenin on Clausewitz"). This article was actually the introduction written the previous year for the first edition of Lenin's notes on Clausewitz.

Another KPD journal, *Aufbruch*, was primarily oriented towards anti-Nazi activities, but also addressed the politico-military problems of the anti-fascist and class struggle. The ideas of Clausewitz and Gneisenau were

²¹⁷ In particular, the *Westeuropäisches Büro der Komintern* ("West-European Bureau of the Comintern"), the "West Büro."

²¹⁸ Edgar Doepler & Egbert Fischer, *Revolutionäre Militärpolitik gegen faschistische Gefahr, Nationale Volksarmee Militärgeschichtliches Institut der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Militärhistorische Studien 22 Neue Folge* (Berlin: Militärvelag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1982), 111.

also presented. At the same time, John Sieg, editor of the *Rote Fahne* (KPD organ), wrote a series of serious politico-military studies on Clausewitz.²¹⁹

After the Nazis seized power, the KPD organized underground bases in the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, Sweden, and Switzerland. It continued the political-military training of its cadres, notably by means of *tarnshriften*, i.e., publications (pamphlets, books, magazines) with innocent-looking or misleading covers. A 1939 *tarnbroschüre*, published in Bern and smuggled into Germany, was entitled *Clausewitz: Thoughts on War and Warfare*. It contained the text of a KPD conference on Clausewitz and Lenin regarding the relationship between politics and war as applied to fascism in Germany.

Clausewitz also came up in internal debates on military training. Karl Retzlau referred to him, saying that theory must be a guide to action,²²⁰ while Karl Volk argued, on the contrary, that to be sufficiently trained, members of the paramilitary organization should neither have read Clausewitz, nor have thoroughly studied the Army Service Regulations.²²¹

Like General Yorck, Gneisenau, and Schill, the figure of Clausewitz as an uncompromising defender of national independence and advocate of people's war in the face of foreign occupation was also widely featured in the propaganda of the underground KPD. A leaflet in the form of an *Open Letter to the Eastern Front* denounced the war crimes committed by the SS in the Soviet Union and invoked the example of Prussia in 1812. The figures of Clausewitz, Gneisenau, and Schill were put forward to affirm the legitimacy of the Soviet partisans' struggle, and it was pointed out that Engels had admired the Prussian *francs-tireurs* for being true patriots. The open letter was a *prosopopea*²²² in which Gneisenau addressed the reader. In it, he declared that he recognized his ideal of national popular resistance in the struggle of the peoples of the USSR against Hitler's invasion:

²¹⁹ See Greta Kuckhoff's testimony in *L'URSS dans la seconde guerre mondiale* ("The USSR in the Second World War"), vol. 3 (Paris: Témoignages-Éditions-Diffusions, 1967), 533. Greta Kuckhoff met John Sieg in the Berlin Communist resistance, before his arrest in 1942.

²²⁰ Hermann Weber, Jakov Drabkin, Bernhard H. Bayerlein, *Deutschland, Russland, Komintern—II. Dokumente (1918–1943)*, 393 (note no. 103).

²²¹ Hermann Weber, Jakov Drabkin, Bernhard H. Bayerlein, *Deutschland, Russland, Komintern—II. Dokumente (1918–1943)*, 299.

²²² Prosopopeia, as a rhetorical device, involves speaking in the voice of another person, object, or abstract concept.—Ed.

If one must choose between death and death, is it so difficult to choose the positive heritage of the Prussians, which appeals to their conscience, rather than the bestiality of the SS who terrorize and massacre Russian patriots? I [Gneisenau] choose the partisans. We must find the means and the path to take away the possibility of Hitler's war continuing.

On July 12, 1943, in Krasnogorsk, a large number of German war prisoners were allowed to gather and meet their anti-fascist compatriots who had emigrated to the USSR. Following this convention, the National Committee for a Free Germany was formed, and addressed a *Manifesto to the Wehrmacht and the German People*, which concluded:

One hundred and thirty years ago, when German troops had come as enemies to Russian soil, the best Germans—vom Stein, Arndt, Clausewitz, Yorck and others—spoke to the conscience of the German people and called upon them to fight for freedom. Like them, we are going to do everything we can to develop the liberating struggle of our people, to hasten Hitler's downfall.²²³

27. Clausewitz, Körner, and the Schutzbund

Theodor Körner was born into a family of officers and civil servants in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A distinguished graduate of the Technical-Military Academy, he pursued a career in the army, becoming a general and taking part in the First World War as chief of staff of the armies engaged in the battles of Isonzo. As Ilona Duczynska showed,²²⁴ Körner's military studies, from his earliest years, were essentially based on a sound knowledge of Clausewitz's work. In 1918, Körner was in the Office for Military Affairs, but was forced into retirement (with a promotion to the rank of army general) in 1924, due to his political positions: Körner defined himself as a "democratic Bolshevik," and that same year, 1924, he joined the Social Democratic Party (SDAPÖ), to which he had long been close.

²²³ *Manifest an die Wehrmacht und das deutsche Volk*. Translation from French by the Editors.

²²⁴ Ilona Duczynska, *Theodor Körner—Auf Vorposten, Ausgewählte Schriften 1928–1938* (Vienna: Europaverlag, 1977).

In Austria, as elsewhere in Europe,²²⁵ the socialists set up a paramilitary group, the Republikanischen Schutzbund (Republican Protection League), following the example of the communists and fascists. Its purpose wasn't to overthrow the established order, but rather to protect it, in order to guarantee a peaceful electoral conquest of power. Under the command of Julius Deutsch, it even collaborated with the police during the proletarian uprising of 1927, leading to the departure of many revolutionary workers. On a day-to-day basis, the Schutzbund served to protect demonstrations and social-democratic buildings and spaces.

Körner soon joined the Schutzbund Central Committee, but clashed with the other members of the leadership, particularly Julius Deutsch and Alexander Eifler. Unlike them, Körner believed that the Schutzbund could only function successfully in close liaison with the entire workers' movement (i.e., the communists), and he recommended training the Schutzbund in guerrilla warfare rather than traditional methods, as Julius Deutsch wanted. Körner was sidelined from the Schutzbund, after which he turned his attention to his work in the Bundesrat (the Federal Council, Austria's main parliamentary body), over which he presided in February 1934 at the time of the fascist coup de force.

The Schutzbund's defensive, legalist nature put it at a disadvantage when the fascists seized power in full compliance with the rule of law and set out legally to destroy the labor movement.

On March 1, 1933, Chancellor Dollfuss sidelined parliament and ruled by issuing decrees. Initially, he outlawed strikes, the Communist Party, its press and paramilitary organization. The SDAPÖ was not banned, but the Schutzbund was—while social democratic mayors were stripped of all authority over the police. The reactionary Heimwehren militia, close to Dollfuss, attacked workers' locals.

At this point, Körner recommended armed resistance and unsuccessfully sought to take command of the Schutzbund. But the social democratic leadership refused to provide instructions on strike action, mobilization, and resistance. The Linz-based section of the Schutzbund spontaneously stood up to the fascists, who were supported first by the police and then by

²²⁵ In Germany, the *Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold, Bund deutscher Kriegsteilnehmer und Republikaner*, in short *Reichsbanner*, organized three million members, mainly from the ranks of the SPD.

the army. During this period, the working-class districts of a dozen major cities took part in the insurrection. Weeks of fierce fighting, during which the army opened cannon-fire on working-class dwellings in Vienna, ended in the brutal suppression of the workers' movement.

Körner was imprisoned for 11 months without trial. On his release, he worked as a researcher at the War Archives. In his *Clausewitz-Studien* ("Clausewitz Studies"), Körner tried to demonstrate as early as 1937 that a war against the USSR could not be won. He continued to work at the Archives after the *Anschluss*,²²⁶ but was eventually expelled in 1943 (and removed from the army high command's list of jubilees and official congratulations), and was not given a reason even though his predictions were coming true on the Eastern Front.

After the attempted assassination of Hitler in July 1944, Theodor Körner was temporarily arrested. On liberation, the Socialists recommended him to the Soviet authorities as temporary mayor of Vienna, which they accepted. "He was by nature a very active man, well versed not only in military matters but also in the most complex political problems," wrote General Sergei Shtemenko.²²⁷ The municipal elections confirmed Körner in this position, which he held for six years.

28. Clausewitz and Soviet Military Theory

Soviet military doctrine was thoroughly inspired by Clausewitz, Engels, and Lenin. Taught to all future officers at imperial war academies,²²⁸ and later in the USSR, Clausewitz was the most widely read foreign military author in the USSR throughout the '20s and '30s. His works were republished almost every year in Russian and were translated into Ukrainian and Belorussian. When a delegation of Soviet officers visited German military installations in September 1925, General von Stülpnagel wrote in his diary that they had all studied the works of Clausewitz.²²⁹

²²⁶ The *Anschluss* refers to Germany's annexation of Austria in 1938, uniting the two countries under Nazi rule.—Ed.

²²⁷ Sergei Matveevich Shtemenko, *The General Staff in the War Years*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Progress Publisher, 1973).

²²⁸ As early as 1836 or 1837, Generals Medem and Bogdanovich were talking about Clausewitz in their lectures at St. Petersburg Military University.

²²⁹ Heinrich Bücheler, *Carl-Heinrich von Stülpnagel: Soldat, Philosoph, Verschwörer—Biographie* (Berlin: Verlag Ullstein, 1989), 104.

Molotov himself was a member of the committee which published Lenin's notes on *On War* in 1931. In addition, Lenin's analyses of the Napoleonic campaigns were translated and published. Marshal Shaposhnikov, who headed the Frunze Academy and was Chief of Staff from May 1937 to November 1942,²³⁰ was an avowed disciple of Clausewitz; two of the three volumes of his major work, *The Brain of the Army* (i.e., the General Staff), start with quotations from *On War*. We know that Marshal Timoshenko was also a great admirer of Clausewitz. Official tributes to Clausewitz's thought are to be found throughout Soviet military literature of the 1930s; as late as 1939, Voroshilov referred to Clausewitz as the great, classical military thinker and writer of the 19th century, and Stalin, when extolling the theoretical qualities of the future Marshal Rokossovsky, often compared him to Clausewitz. . .

The depth of Clausewitz's imprint on Soviet military thought is generally underestimated, and even disputed by a few essayists who draw on the countless Soviet texts of the 40s and 50s in which Clausewitz's thought is described as outdated "German military thought," the ultimate bankruptcy that Hitler's defeat is said to have confirmed. Stalin himself set the tone in a letter dated February 23, 1946, to which we shall return later. In reality, we can truly criticize the military leadership of the Second and Third German Reich precisely by applying Clausewitz's principles. As Pierre Naville rightly pointed out:

As for the successes of the Soviet generals in resisting the Wehrmacht, and subsequently in their counteroffensive, we find their principles, and one could almost say, their description in Clausewitz.²³¹

The strategists of the Red Army were the only true heirs of Clausewitz.

Those who claim there is a disconnect between Clausewitz's theories and Soviet military thought point to the latter's denial of the Clausewit-

²³⁰ A life-threatening illness forced him to cease all activity at that time.

²³¹ Pierre Naville, "Carl von Clausewitz et la théorie de la guerre," introduction to the Éditions de Minuit edition of *On War* (Paris, 1955). Translation from French by the Editors.

zian thesis of the intrinsically superior nature of the defensive.²³² Generals Verkhovsky and Svechin—author of an essay on *Clausewitz*²³³ published in 1935—both of whom came from the Imperial Army, taught Clausewitz's thesis at the Moscow War Academy in 1925, and were dismissed (and their writings condemned) for this reason. In fact, Frunze, who was supported by Voroshilov but also by Tukhachevsky on this issue, established the primacy of the offensive. But their approach, based on the innovative concepts of "deep operations," was based on their belief in the revolutionary potential of the USSR's neighboring peoples. According to Clausewitz, what disadvantages the attacker (hostility of the population, extended lines of communication, etc.) does not apply to revolutionary armies, as they are bound to receive a warm welcome and help from the people. The Red Army's wartime offensives were therefore directly linked to the prospect of insurrections in the enemy's rear. In 1921, in the book *War of the Classes*, Tukhachevsky even proposed the creation of a unified staff for the Comintern and the Red Army.

For Frunze, the need "to prepare for partisan warfare [in] territories that could become the scene of possible military activity" was second only to the need to train the masses "in the spirit of offensive valor."²³⁴ Frunze's theses continued to be central in the works of Triandafilov (1929)²³⁵ and Marshal Vasilevsky's *New Military Doctrine* (1934):

²³² The question of reserve forces is occasionally brought up as an argument in favor of this theory. But this represents a misconception. As we have seen, Clausewitz believes that keeping troops in a state of strategic reserve stems from a miscalculation: engaging said troops once a major battle has been fought doesn't make up for defeat, but instead undermines victory. The Soviet military school, on the other hand, insists on the importance of strategic reserves, but in the context of a war that is no longer settled by a single great battle like Austerlitz or Waterloo, but by extensive campaigns. The Soviet doctrine of strategic reserves would be fundamentally anti-Clausewitzian only if they were not committed when and where the decisive battle is being fought. Yet it is precisely for this occasion that large forces must be kept in reserve according to Soviet doctrine, thereby perfectly applying the Clausewitzian principle of concentration of forces.

²³³ A. Svechin, *Clausewitz* (Moscow: Journal-Gazette Association, 1935). *On War* is described as "the ultimate achievement of bourgeois thought in the field of military strategy."

²³⁴ Quoted by Claude Delmas in *La guerre révolutionnaire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965). Translation from French by the Editors.

²³⁵ In 1929, Triandafilov published *Characteristics of the Operations of the Modern Armies*, a synthesis of Soviet military doctrine: "The offensive is advocated as an axiom. The author does not believe in a war of positions, but in a series of methodically prepared and executed maneuvers. Nor does he believe in a 'blitzkrieg'. . . . While equipment and

The proletarian masses must synchronize their class demonstrations with the purely military operations in which the Red Army is involved. For this reason, the High Command of this army must be made up, along with the most highly qualified military personnel, of Party members chosen from among those occupying the highest positions.

It is clear that the USSR's military structure in June 1941, with its armies concentrated on the borders, was based on an offensive logic. This system naturally proved disastrous when the initiative was taken by Hitler's forces. In the spring of 1942, the Soviet offensives launched in Crimea, in the Demiansk region and, above all, in the direction of Kharkov,²³⁶ are other examples. But these are not enough to settle the issue and conclude that the Soviet military school entirely devoted itself to the "offensive at all costs" thesis. In particular, it should be noted that

- first*, the 1942 offensives were launched after a great deal of study and discussion (against the advice of Shaposhnikov and Zhukov);
- second*, they were based on an inadequate analysis of the balance of forces (both Stalin and the Soviet high command still had a lot to learn); and
- third*, even in the minds of their promoters, they had been designed as "active defense" measures to disrupt Hitler's offensive preparations, in order to avoid another devastating Blitzkrieg like the one that occurred the year before.

While the choice of the defensive at Stalingrad was largely dictated by events, the example of the battle of Kursk shows the extent to which the importance of the defensive had never been forgotten within Soviet military thinking. In the spring of 1943, evidence suggested that Hitler was

technology have gained in importance, the concept of the 'masses' and the decisive role of ideology remain. Triandafillov's ideas may not seem original. At the time, Western military thought was divided between the proponents of attrition warfare and the proponents of blitzkrieg. *In medio stat virtus* ['As virtue lies in moderation'], Triandafillov was undoubtedly right in 1929." Michel Garder, *Histoire de l'Armée soviétique* ("History of the Soviet Army") (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1959), 89.

²³⁶ Kharkiv is Ukrainian.—Ed.

planning an offensive against the Kursk salient.²³⁷ Marshals Zhukov and Vasilyevsky along with the Voronezh Front Command were all in favor of wearing down the enemy through a defensive battle within the salient, followed by a general counteroffensive supported by the reserve forces built up for this purpose. It should be noted that when the Soviet command adopted this defensive approach, its forces were superior to those of the enemy. In the sectors where Hitler's offensive was to take place, the Soviet army outnumbered the enemy by 40% in terms of manpower, 90% in terms of artillery, 30% in terms of tanks, and 60% in terms of aircraft. What's more, the Soviet command had built up far greater reserves than Hitler's forces. This superiority also applied to the equipment used (the Soviet army had acquired a large number of new models of La-5 and Yak-9 fighters, Pe-2 and Tu-2 bombers, T34-85, SU-85, SU-122, and SU-152 armored vehicles, etc.); the army's morale (Soviet soldiers were galvanized by the victory at Stalingrad and were waging a war of liberation); the quality of its command (the Soviet command was constantly gaining in experience and competence, unlike the German command whose strategists were ousted one after the other by members of the German civil government); the solidity of its rear (whereas the Wehrmacht's rear was plagued by partisan fighting, and Germany itself was being heavily bombed by the Anglo-Americans); and so on. Yet despite this general superiority, the choice was made to fight a defensive battle.

However, it seems that the exceedingly Clausewitzian character of this practice could not be acknowledged, since as late as the 1950s, the future general Grigorenko, who was then a student at the Frunze Academy, was denied permission to submit his doctoral thesis on the grounds that it was too overtly Clausewitzian and referred to the works of Svechin. . . . In 1956, Zhukov, a great reader of Clausewitz, proved unsuccessful in his renewed attempt to rehabilitate Clausewitz: he was not allowed to deliver a speech in which "Western"²³⁸ military theories were given due consideration.

²³⁷ In military theory, a salient refers to a protruding or bulging front line or position in the battlefield, often forming a vulnerable point that can be targeted by enemy forces.—Ed.

²³⁸ Zhukov's personal library contained Clausewitz's meticulously commented works.

29. Clausewitz and Stalin

Stalin himself spoke out against Clausewitz, as evidenced by his letter of February 23, 1946 to Colonel Razin a Soviet professor and military historian. Drawing on Lenin's esteem for Clausewitz, the latter was astonished by the tendency in Soviet military circles to equate Clausewitz's thought with that of Hitler's general staff:

For the most advanced Soviet military science in general and for our military-historical science, in particular, the essential question is the attitude to the theoretical inheritance of the past. The classics of Marxism-Leninism have clear and precise guidelines in this respect—the complete assimilation of all that the former science has given, the critical reformulation of all that has been created by human thought, and the verification in practice. . . . This also applies entirely to military culture.

Consequently, we do not discard the achievements of bourgeois culture, for example, on the grounds that these achievements were used by the fascists for the purpose of the most savage barbarism. We use the achievements of bourgeois culture for socialist construction, for building a communist society. At the same time, we do not mechanically assimilate the entire sum of knowledge of bourgeois science, as we critically process it all and move science forward on a new socio-economic and political basis.

There are two main forms of criticism:

1. the lowest form—filtering out overdeterminations, idealism, mechanical thought, reactionary views, etc., and discarding the whole thing altogether;
2. the highest form—critical revision, and looking for the seeds of positive content behind incorrect ideas, preserving them, and developing them further.

. . . Our military-theoretical thought should be based on this highest level of criticism. Meshcheryakov's²³⁹ article pulls us backwards. And this, as I think, is its theoretical harm.

Am I right in thinking that the author of the article did not understand Clausewitz, and therefore recommends us to abandon this military-theoretical inheritance?

. . . Would it be right to throw out, along with idealism, metaphysics, etc., everything positive in the development of military theory that Clausewitz gave? . . . Or maybe in the light of the experience of the Great Patriotic War,²⁴⁰ the whole military-theoretical work of Clausewitz is evaluated completely differently than we see from Lenin?²⁴¹

Stalin answers in the affirmative, and argues as follows:

Unlike Engels, Lenin did not believe himself to be an expert on military matters. This explains why Lenin, in his judgment on Clausewitz and his remarks on Clausewitz's works, does not touch upon solely military aspects such as questions of military strategy and tactics and their relation to each other, the relation between attack and retreat, defense and counter-offensive and so on.

²³⁹ "Clausewitz and the German Military Ideology" by Lieutenant-Colonel G.P. Meshcheryakov appeared in No. 6–7 (1945) of the Soviet Army's leading military theoretical journal *Military Thought*. The author concludes that "reactionary views predominate in Clausewitz's works" and asserts that Clausewitz "did not understand the nature and essence of war." Translation from French by the Editors.

²⁴⁰ The Soviet name for what is known elsewhere as World War II.—Ed.

²⁴¹ E. Razin, "Letter from Comrade Razin to Comrade Stalin," in *Military Thought*, No. 1, 1947, 3–4. Translation from Russian by the Editors.

Colonel Razin's letter was published, along with Stalin's reply, in the theoretical review *Bolshevik* No. 3, in 1947. Following this controversy, Razin was arrested and brought before an investigator dealing with "especially important cases." Razin was beaten up and sentenced to ten years in prison camp, while all his books (except those from Stalin's personal library) were destroyed. In January 1950, Stalin freed and rehabilitated Razin, who was made a general, received an apology from Beria for what he called a "misunderstanding," regained his position at the Frunze Academy and resumed publication of his works. . . See "Generalissimo Stalin, general Clausewitz and colonel Razin" by Roy Meydvedev, in Zhores A. Meydvedev and Roy Aleksandrovich Medvedev, *The Unknown Stalin* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003), 174–180.

What was Lenin's interest in Clausewitz and why did he acknowledge him?

Lenin acknowledged Clausewitz who was not a Marxist, and who was recognized as an authority in the field of military theory because in his works he confirmed the known Marxist theory that there is a direct relation between war and politics, that politics can engender war and that war is the continuation of politics by force. Here, Lenin needed Clausewitz to prove that Plekhanov, Kautsky and others had fallen once more into social chauvinism and social imperialism. He further acknowledged Clausewitz in that he confirmed the Marxist viewpoint in his works that under certain unfavorable conditions—retreat is as justifiable a military action as is attack. Lenin needed Clausewitz to disprove the theory of the “left” Communists who denied that retreat could be a justifiable military action.

In this way, not as a military expert, but as a politician, Lenin used the works of Clausewitz, and was mainly interested in those questions in the works of Clausewitz which showed the relation between war and politics.

Thus, as successors of Lenin, there are no restrictions on us in the criticism of the Military doctrine of Clausewitz, as there are no remarks of Lenin that could hinder us in our free criticism.

Thus, your judgment, on the article of Comrade Meshcheryakov. . . which criticizes the military doctrine of Clausewitz, regarding it as a “Revision” of Lenin's judgment is completely unjustified.

. . . Do we have reason at all to criticize the military doctrine of Clausewitz? Yes, we have. In the interests of our cause and the modern science of war, we are obliged not only to criticize Clausewitz, but also Moltke, Schlieffen, Ludendorff, Keitel and other exponents of German military ideology. During the last thirty years Germany has twice forced a bloody war on the rest of the world and twice has suffered defeat. Was this

accidental? Of course not. Does this not mean that not only Germany as a whole, but also its military ideology has not stood the test? Obviously. It is well known that the military of the whole world, also our Russian military, looked up to the, German military authorities. Is it not time to put an end to this undeserved respect? Absolutely. So, this can only be done by criticism, especially from our side, especially from the side of those who have won the victory over Germany.

Concerning Clausewitz, as an authority in the field of military authority, he is of course out of date. On the whole, Clausewitz was a representative of the time of manufacture in war, but now we are in the machine age of war. Undoubtedly the machine age of war requires new military ideologies. Thus, it would be ridiculous to follow the teachings of Clausewitz today. One cannot make progress and further science without a critical analysis of the antiquated theories of well-known authorities. This applies not only to the authorities in war theory but also to the Marxist classics. Engels once said of the Russian Commanders of 1812, that Gen. Barclay de Tolly was the only one of any relevance.²⁴² Engels was of course wrong, as Kutuzov was of greater importance by far. Nevertheless there are people in our time who did not hesitate to defend this wrong judgment of Engels.²⁴³

By the time Stalin launched this harsh attack on Clausewitz, he had an excellent grasp of strategic issues. He had impressed Western delegations at the Inter-Allied Conferences with his insightful questions and analyses, and, *in tempore non suspecto*,²⁴⁴ i.e., at the end of the 1960s, Marshal Zhu-

²⁴² Engels's article on Barclay de Tolly was written in September 1853 for Ripley and Dana's *New American Cyclopædia*. The article by Engels distinguishes Barclay de Tolly among the Russian military leaders of 1812. Field Marshal Prince Barclay de Tolly was Minister of War and Supreme Commander of the Russian Armies from 1810 to September 1812; under the pressure of Russian chauvinism, exacerbated by the French invasion of 1812, Alexander I replaced this descendant of a Scottish clan with the Russian commander Kutuzov.

²⁴³ Joseph Stalin, "Answer to a letter of 30 January, from Col.-Professor Razin," in Works, Vol. 16 (London: Red Star Press Ltd., 1986).

²⁴⁴ *In tempore non suspecto* means "at an unsuspected time," emphasizing that something happens unexpectedly or when least expected, often in situations where the consequences or importance of the timing are not that significant anymore.—Ed.

kov, Red Army Chief of Staff and later USSR Minister of Defense, had this to say about Stalin's credentials as a military strategist:

Stalin mastered the technique of the organization of front²⁴⁵ operations and groups of fronts and guided them with skill, thoroughly understanding complicated strategic questions. He displayed his ability as Commander-in-Chief beginning with Stalingrad. In guiding the armed struggle as a whole, Stalin was assisted by his natural intelligence and profound intuition. He had a knack of grasping the main link in the strategic situation so as to organize opposition to the enemy and conduct a major offense operation. He was certainly a worthy Supreme Commander.²⁴⁶

Stalin had read *On War*²⁴⁷ in depth and had attended Shaposhnikov's classes on Clausewitz before the war (as had Molotov). He could not have been unaware that to equate Clausewitz's thinking with a specifically and typically German theoretical outlook was a gross misrepresentation. Clausewitz had drawn his experience from all the conflicts of his time. The French Revolution, the Spanish, and Russian Resistance taught him as much as the work of Gneisenau, Scharnhorst, or Schwartzenberg—so did Napoleon, who taught him far more than Frederick. To characterize Germany's military policy in the two world wars as Clausewitzian was even more misleading. The meaning of Stalin's charge against Clausewitz²⁴⁸ must therefore not be sought in the strategic realm, but in the ideological realm, at a time when Soviet patriotic values were being promoted by the CPSU(b) in ways that sometimes echoed the old, loathsome tunes of Great Russian chauvinism. Stalin's somewhat artificial attempt to supplement his comments on Clausewitz with a criticism of Engels's judgment

²⁴⁵ A Soviet "Front" was equivalent to a Western "Army Group."

²⁴⁶ *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1971), 285.

²⁴⁷ The copy in his personal library was transcribed and fully commented on by his own hand.

²⁴⁸ A charge that was not uncommon in Stalin's rhetoric: as late as 1949, at a meeting on the organization of air defense, General Sergei Shtemenko, then Chief of the General Staff, heard Stalin explain that Hitler's military adventurism was based on "the dogmas of Clausewitz and Moltke." Army General Sergei Shtemenko, *The Soviet General Staff at War 1941–1945. Book Two* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976).

on Barclay de Tolly, and his demonstrative preference for Kutuzov, are by no means innocuous.

30. Clausewitz and Prussian-German Military Thought

While the Soviet military policy was able to reconcile a publicly voiced critique of Clausewitz with an eminently Clausewitzian practice, the Prusso-Germanic school succeeded in combining its worship of Clausewitz with a practice that was increasingly divorced from Clausewitzian principles. . .

The official bastion of Clausewitzian thought, the German War College, moved further and further away from the precepts of its most brilliant theorist. And while the German military leaders of the war of 1870 (mainly von Moltke) could still lay claim to the (already distorted) ideas of the author of *On War*, the manner in which Germany waged the First World War represented an even greater divergence, even if official tributes to Clausewitz did not diminish. As for Hitler's military campaigns, they were as anti-Clausewitzian as they could possibly be.

The Prussian-Germanic school inherited the ideas of the three men who had built the Prussian military of the 19th century: Frederick II, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau. Frederick the Great had given the Prussian army a tradition of hard-won victories through perseverance, cohesion, and preparation in peacetime, against numerically superior enemies. But while the Prussian army had brought the Ancien Régime's military model to perfection, it was just as unprepared as any other army to withstand the shock of the modern national armies that Napoleon inherited from the French Revolution. It was Napoleon who inspired the two reformers of the Prussian army—both of whom were not actually Prussian—one was a native of Hanover, and the other of Austria. Amid the lengthy debates over the respective merits of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, Clausewitz, their friend and pupil, favored the former on the grounds that he combined a deeply contemplative spirit with an intense passion for action. But Scharnhorst was never able to take command of a campaign: his death in the summer of 1813 prevented him from doing so. In contrast, Gneisenau was chief of staff of the Prussian army from Fall 1813 to Summer 1815.

Scharnhorst and Gneisenau's reform of the Prussian Army, which was reflected in *On War* and whose fundamental aim was to give the

army a national character, also concerned matters of strategy. This new school of thought created its own organizational body, the General Staff, which became the brain and nerve center of the Prussian army. In 1806 that Scharnhorst, when reorganizing the Ministry of War, created this special division charged with drawing up organization and mobilization plans, overseeing the training and instruction of the army in peacetime, preparing for possible future military operations by means of intelligence and topographical studies, defining tactics and strategies, and training the officer corps through the institution of "General Staff maneuvers" and *kriegspiel*.²⁴⁹

In 1814, the Prussian Military Code designed by Scharnhorst's pupil, War Minister von Boyen, gave the Prussian army its new character. While conscription had become commonplace in Europe, in Prussia it differed in that it did not provide any way for the wealthy to exempt themselves by paying or hiring a stand-in. However, the reformers' plan to introduce a true national draft was hampered by the reactionary, absolutist character of the Prussian state; the landed nobility continued to monopolize the officer ranks (there were only twenty-two commoner officers in the army), and supreme command of the army was vested in the king himself. Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were both civil and military reformers; both conceived of war in terms of the peace that would result from it and aspired to a more liberal Prussia.

Clausewitz's thinking met with strong resistance within the Prussian army, bastion of the aristocracy. But the year 1843 saw the publication of *Lettres d'un mort à un vivant* ("Letters from a Dead to a Living Man"), a successful defense of Clausewitz that was followed by a number of imitations.²⁵⁰ Despite the "old-timers," new ideas made their way into the army.

After several decades of peace, the Prussian army's dazzling victories in the wars against Denmark (1864), Austria (1866) and France (1870) were entirely due to Von Boyen's work in analyzing, organizing, and preparing the General Staff. One of the most remarkable aspects of this preparatory work was the plan to mobilize, transport, and concentrate the army by

²⁴⁹ A "kriegspiel" (literally "war game") is a type of war game that simulates military operations, originally developed in 19th-century Prussia for training officers.—Ed.

²⁵⁰ This was the case in 1846, with *Lettres d'un vivant à son ami Clausewitz dans l'Olympe* ("Letters from a living man to his friend Clausewitz on Mount Olympus").

rail. Having recognized the strategic potential of a good railroad network, the General Staff (headed by Helmuth von Moltke from 1857 and assisted by an outstanding logistician, Albrecht von Roon) not only encouraged its development, but also influenced its layout. In the war against Austria, Moltke was able to concentrate his forces in enemy territory and prepare for the crushing victory at Sadowa, as he made use of five railroad lines running to the enemy's frontier, when Austria had only one. The large size of the armies meant that they had to "march separately but fight together," as Moltke explained:

Incomparably more favorably will things shape themselves if on the day of battle all the forces can be concentrated from different points towards the field of battle itself—in other words, if the operations have been conducted in such a manner that a final short march from different points leads all available forces simultaneously upon the front and flanks of the adversary.²⁵¹

This quote from Moltke, written the day after Sadowa, is an important measure of Clausewitz's teaching. Here, it all comes together: the search for the decisive battle, the ability to take into account all the "friction" that reduces the boundaries of simple calculation and opens up the realm of the "*coup d'œil*,"²⁵² of courage and decisiveness.

In 1823, Moltke had attended the Berlin War College, which at the time was run by Clausewitz, although he was no longer teaching there. *On War* nevertheless had an immense influence on Moltke; he went so far as to declare that the only three books worthy of his interest were the *Illiad*, the Bible, and *On War*! Indeed, only after Moltke's victories did Clausewitz become the main authority in the Prussian-Germanic school of thought. The first edition of Clausewitz's *Collected Works*, printed in a run of 2,000 copies, had not sold out for twenty years, as his successors relied more on Jomini than on him.²⁵³ Only after Helmuth von Moltke was Clausewitz

²⁵¹ Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London: Routledge, 1983), 97.

²⁵² Clausewitz uses the French term "*coup d'œil*" to refer to the ability of a commander to quickly and intuitively grasp the complex and dynamic nature of a battlefield situation, enabling effective decision-making and adaptation during warfare.—Ed.

²⁵³ In the 1930s, the Berlin School of War was dominated by the theses of Karl Wilhelm von Willisen (*Die Theorie des großen Krieges*, "The Theory of the Great War"). Others

recognized as a major theoretician, leading prominent strategists such as von der Goltz and von Caemmerer to draw on his work. From that point on, publications, tributes, and commentaries began to proliferate—and so did the distorted interpretations of his work.

Moltke accepted that the military was subordinated to politics as natural, or in other words, subordinated to Bismarck's authority. But his understanding of the principle of subordination already fell short of what Clausewitz put forward. According to Moltke,

Politics uses war for the attainment of its ends; it operates decisively at the beginning and at the end of the conflict by claiming the right to increase its demands during war or to be satisfied with a minor success. In view of this uncertainty, strategy can only strive at achieving the highest aim possible with the given means. Thus it is of best assistance to politics by acting for its aim, but completely independent of it in its actions.²⁵⁴

included Colonel Wilhelm Rüstow (*Die Feldherrenkunst des 19. Jahrhunderts*, "The Art of War in the 19th Century") and General Wilhelm von Scherff (*Von der Kriegsführung*, "On the Conduct of War"). Rüstow, the Prussian colonel who took part in the 1848 Revolution and was forced into exile in Switzerland, said that Clausewitz was better known than he was read. . .

²⁵⁴ Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke, *Werke* ("Works"), vol. 2, 291. In Günter Roth, "Field Marshal von Moltke the Elder His Importance Then and Now," *Army History*, No. 23, 1992.

Notably, American political leaders during the Second World War adopted this position: they established a clear objective for the war (to defeat the Axis), but believed they could preserve the pure (and imaginary) rationality of military choices by sparing their war leaders any political intervention. Indeed, their commanders shared this vision: Eisenhower stated that "Military factors, when the enemy was on the brink of final defeat, were more important in my eyes than the political considerations involved in an Allied capture of the capital. The function of our forces must be to crush the German armies rather than to dissipate our own strength in the occupation of empty and ruined cities." General Dwight Eisenhower, in *Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Force. June 6, 1944 to 8ay 8, 1945* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1994), 107.

However, Eisenhower considered Clausewitz to be the greatest of military thinkers, in contrast to an American military culture rooted in the ideas of Jomini. As for MacArthur, who, like Ludendorff, believed that everything in war should be subject to the demands of military leaders, he would have scoffed at "Clausewitzian politicians." His inability to recognize and accept a limited military result in Korea, which was a political necessity, led to his suspension by the Truman administration.

Lincoln had said to his commander-in-chief, General Grant: "The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. You are vigilant and self-reliant; and, pleased

This subordination of the military to political was of a reactionary nature; the Prussian officer corps would not have accepted it from a democratic parliament, but only from the Kaiser. And this same form of subordination gradually took on a purely formal character: the militarism of the Prussian monarchy would turn Clausewitz's best-known axiom on its head by reasoning that the interdependence between war and politics meant that the State should be subordinate to the army.²⁵⁵ The War Ministry (whose activities were under the supervision of the Reichstag parliamentarians) saw its powers diminish in favor the Military Cabinet and the General Staff, who were answerable only to the Kaiser. The Kaiser, who was ultimately more of a warlord than a head of state, saw the Chairman of the Military Cabinet three times a week, but his Minister of War only once. What's more, the representative of the Military Cabinet was always present when the emperor received the Minister of War, but the latter was not allowed to attend the former's audience.

Clausewitz's emphasis on the "war plan" is well known. Nevertheless, the "Schlieffen Plan" implemented by the German military command in 1914 was never discussed as a joint project by the different civilian and military authorities. This plan, which anticipated the French armies' encirclement by the advance of a strong military right flank passing through Belgium, may have been an excellent military plan, but it presupposed political implications (primarily the entrance of England into the war, as the result of the violation of Belgian neutrality), which in turn had strategic implications (the struggle against a British embargo, naval warfare, etc.). The Schlieffen Plan could have been a Clausewitzian plan if it had been the subject of this general discussion, and if, for example, the German shipbuilding program had been designed in the light of England's

with this, I wish not to obtrude any restraints or constraints upon you." (A. Lincoln, Letter to U. S. Grant," April 30, 1864) As for Secretary of War Baker, he boasted in 1917 that he had given only two orders to General Pershing, who commanded the US Expeditionary Force in Europe: "I will give you only two orders, one to go. . . and the other to come home."

²⁵⁵ The second German edition of *On War* contains a falsification typical of the Prussian ultra-militarist ideology. Clausewitz writes in chapter 6B of Book VIII that when the warlord and the head of state are not the same person, it is appropriate for the warlord to be a member of the Cabinet so that the Cabinet can take part in the warlord's major decisions. By a simple play on pronouns, Clausewitz was made to say that it was necessary for the war chief to be a member of the Cabinet so that the war chief could take part in the Cabinet's major decisions. . .

foreseeable entry into the war, or if the German economy had been organized to overcome the effects of an embargo, etc.²⁵⁶

Instead, the reactionary, militaristic approach contributed decisively to Germany's defeat in the First World War. However, the Prusso-Germanic school pretended that this defeat was not the result of a betrayal of Clausewitz's principles, but rather the failure of Clausewitz's thought itself. The result was a headlong rush, first into theory, which was most fully expressed in Ludendorff's book *The "Total" War*, and then in practice, culminating in Hitler's wars.

For Ludendorff,

All the theories of Clausewitz must be thrown overboard. War and politics serve the self-preservation of the people. War is but the highest expression of the people's will to live (*Lebensvillen*). Hence politics must serve the conduct of war.²⁵⁷

According to Ludendorff, population growth could only lead to the violent confrontation between peoples, and since technological progress is bound to give war a total character, these new conditions result in a form of warfare that is not simply an instrument of politics, but one that assimilates politics into itself.

Ludendorff therefore demanded that all political affairs (in the broadest sense, that is, economic, etc.) should be placed under the complete authority of the supreme military leader. He adds:

I can already hear politicians fretting about such an opinion, just as the general idea that politics should serve the conduct of war will fret them, as if Clausewitz had not shown that war is merely the pursuit of politics by other means. Whether politicians get irritated and regard my views as those of an inveterate "militarist" does not alter the demands of reality.

²⁵⁶ This contradiction between the way in which the Prussian-German military tradition laid claim to Clausewitz and the way in which it actually betrayed his principles is illustrated by the fact that in the same year (1905), von Schlieffen put the finishing touches to his plan (first drawn up in 1898) and prefaced the fifth German edition of *On War*. . .

²⁵⁷ E. Ludendorff, in General Herbert Lawrence, *"The 'Total' War" by General Ludendorff* (London: Friends of Europe Publications, 1936), 10.

Ludendorff's reference to Clausewitz's axiom should not mislead us, for he understood it (or rather, failed to understand it) in his own way. Ludendorff claimed that by "politics," Clausewitz meant only foreign policy—that which regulates relations between states—and that, as such, he went beyond Clausewitz by asserting that "politics," and therefore war, must change its nature and concern itself with the people. War would become total by binding the people inextricably to war, a war in which men, women, children, and resources of all kinds were to be variable components of war, and in which, consequently, the enemy's men, women, children, and resources of all kinds became objects of destruction.

As Pierre Naville rightly observed:

Ludendorff's conception of the people is that of a medieval squire turned into a modern industrialist. It's the Volk of the Pangermanist reactionaries, dominated by a hierarchy of castes, a community based on "soul" and "blood," a kind of historical race. This people, as "domestic politics," was above all destined to serve as an instrument of foreign policy. From this point of view, Ludendorff exaggerated Clausewitz's aforementioned assimilation of politics and foreign policy. In fact, Clausewitz's assessment of domestic politics, i.e., national popular life, is much more liberal than Ludendorff's. It was Clausewitz who showed the crucial role of domestic politics in the Spanish War (1808–1810) and the Russian War (1812). But he did not conceive that this policy, when it came to war, could be translated into anything other than government action on the international field, i.e., as the foreign policy of the state.²⁵⁸

The theoretical foundations of Nazi militarism are found within this supposed transcendence of Clausewitz. As early as 1933, the Nazis developed a true *Wehrwirtschaft*, a military-economic science whereby all aspects of national life were defined, in the last analysis, by the needs of the army. The 1936 *Four-Year Plan Memorandum*, written by Hitler and delivered by Göring to the Council of Ministers, concluded:

²⁵⁸ In his presentation of *De la guerre* ("On War") in the French Éditions de Minuit edition from 1955.

I thus set the following task:

- I. The German army must be ready for deployment [*einsatzfähig*] within four years.
- II. The German economy must be ready for war [*kriegsfähig*] within four years.²⁵⁹

This mobilization of domestic policy in the service of a war, a war determined by an imperialist foreign policy, led to the disaster we all know—a disaster on which Clausewitz sheds a striking light.

Indeed, in his writings, Clausewitz offers the most profound critique of the basic premise of the Blitzkrieg—the failure of which highlighted the thesis of the intrinsic superiority of the defensive. But that's not all. When Hitler's *panzers*²⁶⁰ entered Dunkirk, the Reich realized that it did not have the means to conclude the war against the Anglo-French forces; it had never built up the air and naval resources to invade—or even blockade—England. The German general staff did not even have a plan for such an eventuality. The brilliant operational victory of May–June '40 ended in a strategic impasse, because Hitler had shown himself to be as anti-Clausewitzian as one can be:²⁶¹ he had no real war plan.

Throughout the entire war, Hitler would turn his back on Clausewitz's teachings, while at the same time laying claim to them.²⁶² The problem lay at its root; Hitler was among those who turned Clausewitz's formula on

²⁵⁹ "Unsigned Memorandum" (August 1936), in *Documents on German Foreign Policy: From the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry*, Series C (1933–1937), *The Third Reich: First Phase*, Volume 5: March 5–October 31, 1936 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1957–1964), 853–862.

²⁶⁰ *Panzer* refers to armored vehicles, especially tanks. The term became widely known during World War II with the development of the *Panzerkampfwagen* series, central to the German Blitzkrieg strategy. Today, *panzer* units are still a key part of the Bundeswehr's mechanized forces.

²⁶¹ This truth is sometimes obscured by the Clausewitzian orthodoxy of von Manstein's famous "Case Yellow" plan for May–June 1940, which exploited the breakthrough at Sedan not in order to march on Paris, but to make a "false move" towards Abbeville, thus encircling and destroying the bulk of the Allied armies massed in Belgium. Hitler did not reap the full benefits of this plan, however, as he allowed the British army to reembark at Dunkirk.

²⁶² Hitler read Clausewitz early on: *On War* was one of the few books in his library in 1921. Hitler's study of Clausewitz is limited to the "Political Declaration" and *On War*. Clausewitz's collection of essays called *Staatsdiskurse* ("The State and War") was in his library, but had not been read.

its head. At the heart of *Mein Kampf* is the idea that between different peoples (the term “races” people understood not as nations, but as a group of individuals with the same “blood”), war is primary and politics its continuation.

Yet Hitler believed himself to be a Clausewitzian, which is why, when Guderian expressed his doubts about the potential efficiency of the Ardennes offensive, he burst out:

There's no need for you to try to teach me. I've been commanding the German Army in the field for five years and during that time I've had more practical experience than any gentleman of the General Staff could ever hope to have. I've studied Clausewitz and Moltke and read all the Schlieffen papers. I'm more in the picture than you are!²⁶³

Yet his conception of war, fought as a series of surprise attacks (as a succession of rolls of the dice) towards a goal presented as the “key position in the enemy's territory,” was fundamentally anti-Clausewitzian. We need only think of his famous Munich speech of November 11, 1942:

So if Mr. Stalin expected that we would attack in the center, I did not want to attack in the center, not only because Mr. Stalin probably believed I would, but because I didn't care about it any more at all. But I wanted to come to the Volga, to a definite place, to a definite city. . . But only because it is an important point, that is, there 30 million tons of traffic can

²⁶³ William R. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 1091. Hitler read Clausewitz in Munich in 1913–1914, but he referred more often to the “Political Declaration” than to *On War*, more often to Clausewitz as a patriot than as a theoretician. Thus, when describing the Weimar Republic he was working to overthrow, he wrote: “And today. Same situation—same misery—same spirit. Or rather. Same spirit—same misery—same situation. The same spirit. Indifference. Fatherland.” Werner Maser, *Hitler's Letters and Notes* (New York: Bantam Books, 1976), 313. As for his political testament, on April 29, 1945, the day before his suicide: “My wish [is] that they do not abandon the struggle but that, no matter where, they continue to fight the enemies of the Fatherland, faithful to the ideas of the great Clausewitz.” Werner Maser, *Hitler's Letters and Notes*, 350. Hitler's tributes to Clausewitz were ceaseless, but purely formal. In early April 1945, for example, the Nazi general staff formed a Panzer Division Clausewitz by combining the remnants of units that had been defeated elsewhere and dubbed the preparations for the defense of Berlin “Operation Clausewitz.” By the end of April, the new Clausewitz Division had been annihilated on the Elbe, and on May 2, the red flag flew over the Reichstag. . .

be cut off, including about 9 million of oil shipments. There all the wheat pours in from those enormous territories of the Ukraine, of the Kuban territory, then to be transported to the North. There the manganese ore was forwarded. A gigantic terminal was there; I wanted to take it. And do you know, we're modest: that is, we have it; there are only a couple of very small places left there.²⁶⁴

A week later began the Soviet counteroffensive, encircling three hundred thousand German soldiers in the Stalingrad pocket. Unlike the German offensive, which was directed at a "key position," the Soviet counteroffensive had targeted the real "key" to the enemy's territory: its army.

31. Clausewitz and Mao

As his notebook reveals, Mao first began reading *On War* on March 18, 1938. He read a few dozen pages a day, a sign of attentive study.²⁶⁵ Shortly after this reading, Mao organized and led a seminar on *On War* in Yanan. Among the participants, who met once a week in Mao's living quarters, were several of the Red Army's leading political-military leaders, such as Xiao Jinguang and Luo Ruiqing. At the start of the anti-Japanese war, Zhou Enlai called on Fu Daqing to act as a translator to the Soviet military advisors. Seeing that Mao regretted not having a good translation of *On War*, Fu worked on translating it from Russian into Chinese. His work was recognized as "the best translation of the text available in China" by Zhu De, who had studied in Germany and was Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army. Before its publication as a book, several chapters appeared in the magazine *Popular Masses*, and between July 1939 and August 1941,

²⁶⁴ "Adolf Hitler: Speech on the 19th Anniversary of the 'Beer Hall Putsch' (November 8, 1942)," Jewish Virtual Library, consulted on June 5, 2024, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/adolf-hitler-speech-on-the-19th-anniversary-of-the-lldquo-beer-hall-putsch-rdquo-november-1942>.

²⁶⁵ Zhang Yuan-Lin's meticulous research has established which of the four possible Chinese editions of *On War* Mao read in 1938. It was Liu Shaoqi's two-volume edition, published in Shanghai in 1934 by Xinken Editions. However, this translation was not based on the German text, but on the Japanese edition of *On War*. It's understandable that the effect of successive translations may have blurred references, for to top it all off, while the first two volumes of the Japanese edition were translated from the German original, the last six were translated from. . . the French publication. Zhang Yuan-Lin, *Mao Zedong und Carl von Clausewitz: Theorien des Kriegeres, Beziehung, Darstellung und Vergleich*, Mannheim, 1995.

the Communist politico-military press published articles and pamphlets on Clausewitz and *On War*.

Prior to his 1938 reading, Mao had been engaged with Clausewitz in several ways. First, through Lenin's favorable comments on the subject. Second, through modern Chinese military studies, which were directly influenced by Clausewitz. Chiang Kai-shek claimed to be a student of Clausewitz,²⁶⁶ as did Jiang Baili, who directed the Huangpu Military Academy.²⁶⁷ The German military advisors to the Kuomintang army were familiar with Clausewitz, and in some cases were even prominent Clausewitzians, starting with their leader, Colonel-General Hans von Seeckt. As a result, Clausewitz's theses were deeply imprinted in the Kuomintang's military training and rules. . . which were carefully studied by Red Army cadres. Communists who had studied in Europe and the USSR also became acquainted with Clausewitz, including Otto Braun, the Komintern's military advisor to the CPC, who was a leading Clausewitzian.

The influence of Clausewitz's theses can be seen in the 1936 essay "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War."²⁶⁸ In a lecture given on March 13, 1961 in Guangzhou, Mao said that in preparing this essay, which was his first major military writing, he had studied bourgeois military science. In the chapter on the "Strategic Defensive" we find this passage:

It has been said by a foreign military expert that in strategically defensive operations, decisive battles are usually avoided in the beginning, and are sought only when conditions have become favorable. That is entirely correct and we have nothing to add to it.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁶ Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek] acknowledged in an article on Clausewitz that *On War* was one of his main influences and invited all Kuomintang cadres to study it. Clausewitz is said to have influenced the Kuomintang's military line in the war against Japan (retreat to the interior of the country, etc.).

²⁶⁷ The Huangpu Military Academy was founded by Sun Yat-sen in 1924 near Guangzhou [Canton]. Thousands of students were trained there, often by Soviet advisors, and went on to form the cadres of the National Revolutionary Army that led the Northern Expedition. Numerous communist military cadres, starting with Lin Biao, also studied there. After the breakup of the KMT and the CPC, the school was moved to Nanjing.

²⁶⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Paris: Foreign Languages Press, 2021).

²⁶⁹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol. 1, 193.

Here we have a typically Clausewitzian thesis, which runs counter to the cult of the offensive that prevailed everywhere, and which is set out in the chapter "Retreat to the Interior of the Country."²⁷⁰ The famous "foreign military expert" mentioned in Mao's essay is, if not Clausewitz, one of his disciples.

Shortly after studying *On War* and organizing the seminar on Clausewitz, Mao, who was still based in Yanan, wrote a series of lectures from May 26 to June 3, 1938 that would become a classic text of Marxist-Leninist military policy: *On Protracted War*.

The chapter on "War and Politics" opens at point 63 with a quotation without any reference: "War is the continuation of politics."²⁷¹ However, this reference alone is not enough to establish Mao's reading of Clausewitz, because the quote had already been put forward by Lenin. In the same chapter, Mao writes:

In a word, war cannot for a single moment be separated from politics. Any tendency among the anti-Japanese armed forces to belittle politics by isolating war from it and advocating the idea of war as an absolute is wrong and should be corrected.²⁷²

The criticism of the conception of "war as an absolute" derives from a Clausewitz formula.

In the chapter "The Object of War" Mao writes:

The object of war is specifically "to preserve oneself and destroy the enemy" (to destroy the enemy means to disarm him or "deprive him of the power to resist," and does not mean to destroy every member of his forces physically). . . . It should be pointed out that destruction of the enemy is the primary object of war and self-preservation the secondary, because only by destroying the enemy in large numbers can one effectively preserve oneself.²⁷³

²⁷⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 469–479.

²⁷¹ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, 139.

²⁷² Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, 139.

²⁷³ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, 142.

This excerpt contains two uncredited quotations, and the difference in wording has long prevented their identification. By comparing Mao's text with the wording of Liu Ruoshui's translation of *On War*, Zhang Yuan-Lin was able to establish that Mao was quoting Clausewitz directly:

The fighting forces must be destroyed: that is, they must be put in such a condition that they can no longer carry on the fight. . . . The negative side of destroying the enemy's forces [is] the preservation of our own.²⁷⁴

Thus, on the question of the aims within the war (*Ziel*), Clausewitz and Mao are very close: destroying the enemy's forces and conserving one's own are intrinsically linked objectives, of which the first is primary and the second secondary. Mao, however, places greater emphasis on the conservation of one's own forces.

Another direct influence of *On War* in the pages of *On Protracted War* is Mao's emphasis on the concept of "probability." Mao:

We admit that the phenomenon of war is more elusive and is characterized by greater uncertainty than any other social phenomenon, in other words, that it is more a matter of "probability."²⁷⁵

Mao puts the term "probability" in quotation marks, and refers to the term used in Liu Ruoshui's translation. Indeed, it was at this point in his speech that both the term and the concept first appeared—shortly after having read *On War*. Its application to the field of military theory was new and striking for China, which explains the use of quotation marks. Clausewitz wrote:

In short, absolute, so-called mathematical, factors never find a firm basis in military calculations. From the very start there is an interplay of possibilities, probabilities, good luck and bad that weaves its way throughout the length and breadth of the tapestry.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, 90, 98.

²⁷⁵ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, 149.

²⁷⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, 86.

Another of Mao's direct references to Clausewitz, disguised up until today by the liberties taken by Liu Ruoshui in his translation, can be found in *On Protracted War's* chapter on "Initiative, Flexibility and Planning." Where Clausewitz writes "war is such a dangerous business that the mistakes that come from kindness are the very worst,"²⁷⁷ Liu Ruoshui translates and adapts: "in the dangerous affairs of war, mistakes which, like that of Duke Xiang of Song, stem from kindness, are simply the worst." Duke Xiang's example is, of course, a contribution by Liu Ruoshui. And Mao writes: "We are not Duke Xiang of Song and have no use for his asinine ethics."²⁷⁸ . . .

Mao's strategy is based on the Marxist-Leninist/Clausewitzian heritage and on his criticism of the mechanistic application of the Leninist heritage, which led to the failure of the insurrections in Guangzhou, Nanchang, and Wuhan in December 1927. He also drew on the revolutionary legacy of peasant uprisings, particularly the Great Taiping Revolt, and even on Chinese cultural classics such as *Water Margin*, his favorite literary work.²⁷⁹

While this legacy dated back to ancient times, it was particularly relevant during Mao's years in training: between 1901 and 1910, nearly a thousand uprisings involving tens of millions of peasants set China ablaze. In the end, Mao was able to draw on China's rich strategic culture: between the Qin dynasty (221–206 BC) and the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), over 2,000 important military works were published in the country. Mao often quoted classical military historians and strategists, starting with the most famous of them all: Sun Tzu.

Classical Chinese philosophy aims to be macroscopic and universal, so that every particular art and science is merely its application to a specific field. As Chinese philosophical treatises aim to interpret reality in con-

²⁷⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, 75.

²⁷⁸ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol. 2, 152.

²⁷⁹ These are classical epic tales in the style of the *Iliad*, based on real events that took place during the Northern Song dynasty (12th century). *Water Margin* tells the story of 108 individuals (robbers, dignitaries, brawlers, intellectuals, etc.) who tolerated neither injustice nor arbitrariness. They rose up against the emperor and became so powerful that the latter had to satisfy their demands. Records are kept of these outlaws who defied imperial authority and were eventually executed. These stories were written down in the 14th century.

crete terms, they have, like the *I Yijing* [*Book of Changes*], a direct military dimension. This is why, as early as the Tang dynasty (618–007 BCE), the *Daodejing* [*Tao Te Ching*] by Laozi [Lao Tzu] was used by military strategists, and why the classics of the Chinese art of war have the particularity of being derived from philosophy; in essence, they transpose philosophy to the military domain.²⁸⁰ Thus, the term Xu, which has the general meaning of weak, bad, false, empty, has the particular military meaning of a poorly defended position.

The strategic ideal thus coincides with the philosophical ideal. As Jean Lévi explains:

In the Chinese system of representations, the formless is at the origin of that which has form, and can dominate and control the latter. The supreme state of being of a military formation, in order not to flank an enemy, is to present itself to said enemy in an amorphous fashion, just like water, which reacts to exterior shapes without ever exhausting its capacity for renewed transformations. The vocabulary plays on both a figurative and literal level, designating real configurations that battalions can adopt. The term “pien” [*bian*] (transformation, reversal) is applied in literature to the maneuvering skill of a battalion that offers the enemy a body in perpetual motion, just as water provides the transposition of the Tao's terrible efficiency into the realm of forms.²⁸¹

Thus, when Sun Tzu writes: “The ultimate in disposing one's troops is to conceal them without ascertainable shape. Then the most penetrating spies cannot pry nor can the wise lay plans against you,”²⁸² he transposes the formulas of the *Daodejing* onto a properly military terrain:

Look at her and you do not see her: name her invisible;

Listen to her and you do not hear her, name her inaudible;

Touch her and you do not feel her, name her intangible.

²⁸⁰ This is a fundamental difference with Western military theory, which is based not on philosophy but on military history, Clausewitz being a major exception.

²⁸¹ Jean Lévi is a French translator and commentator of Sun Tzu. See Sun Tzu, *L'art de la guerre* (“The Art of War”) (Paris: Hachette Littératures, 2000), 38.

²⁸² Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1993) 112.

. . . She is called “the shape without a shape”; “the image of what is not a thing.”

. . . Welcoming her you do not see her head;

Following her you do not see her tail;

Grasping the Way of old so as to guide the beings of today. . . .²⁸³

An essential feature of classical Chinese thought is its dialectical character. It is based on interacting conceptual pairs, such as giving and receiving, strength and weakness, or appearance and reality.

The constant shift from philosophical generality to concrete, often military, applications—a feature of Chinese culture—can also be found in Mao's philosophical writings, such as *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*, where Mao makes regular use of military examples and parables. This aspect of Chinese culture, this dialectical philosophical thinking as the starting point of all specific reflections, is stripped of all its mystical dimensions, thanks to Marxism through Mao's work.

The proximity of Mao's and Clausewitz's theses is therefore not solely due to the former's reading of the latter. Mao and Clausewitz developed similar theses because they had similar methods of thinking and theorizing. Clausewitz's Hegelian-Kiesewetterian heritage and Mao's Marxism, nourished by classical Chinese culture, led both men to take a dialectical approach to issues that Western military culture dealt with unilaterally. Thus, instead of opposing the defensive and the offensive, both Mao and Clausewitz argued that the former (the strongest form of warfare) must create the conditions for the latter (the most decisive form of warfare).²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Laozi, *Daodejing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 31.

²⁸⁴ Raymond Aron noticed this, and while he claimed not to know whether Mao had read Clausewitz, he asserted: “the teaching implicit in the Treatise to a simplified, parodistic version. The Maoist theory of prolonged warfare and strategic defense may be derived as much from Book VI of [*On War*] as from the ‘invincibility’ of defense—the oscillation and complementary nature of opposed terms, the truth at the higher level that becomes falsehood at the lower, all of this Clausewitzian dialectic must be apparent to a reader of Mao Zedong who is acquainted with the German theorist.” Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz, Philosopher of War*, 115. His disciple from back in the day, André Glucksmann, summed it up in the following words: “The Maoist theory of protracted warfare and strategic defense is just as much derived from Book VI of [*On War*] as from the ‘invincibility’ of defense.” André Glucksmann, *Le discours de la guerre* (“The Discourse of War”) 376. Translation from French by the Editors.

Mao and Clausewitz both founded a theory of war and a strategic doctrine on a philosophical basis. But they also intensively studied both history in general and the history of war in particular, actively lived through a period of great upheaval, took part in the struggles that shaped that period, and fought their country's invaders.

These similarities also explain why many of their theses are so similar. For both men, practice constitutes the decisive criterion for any genuine theory and both opposed formalism and dogmatism. Practice takes precedence over "system-building." For both of them, war has no intrinsic nature, but instead takes on the nature of politics; it has no intrinsic logic, but rather follows the logic of politics. For both Clausewitz and Mao, war and peace are not absolute opposites, but different manifestations of political relations.²⁸⁵

In fact, Mao was a politician who had to wage war as "the continuity of politics," while Clausewitz was a military man concerned with politics as the main determining factor in warfare. While Mao did speak of the laws of war "in general," he mainly glossed over this question to dwell at length on the specifics of revolutionary warfare in China. Clausewitz, on the other hand, devoted *On War* to the laws of war "in general," and only touched on concrete situations to illustrate his point.

We have already mentioned Stalin's 1946 criticism of Clausewitz in his letter to Colonel Razin. In 1957, Mao attacked Stalin's position head-on, proving Razin right:

[Marx, Engels and Lenin] made great efforts to learn and study all sorts of things, contemporary and past, and taught other people to do likewise. The three component parts of Marxism came into being in the course of their study of, as well as their struggle with, such bourgeois things as German classical philosophy, English classical political economy and French utopian socialism. In this respect Stalin was not as good. For instance, in his time, German classical idealist philosophy was described as a reaction on the part of the German aristocracy to the French revolution. This conclusion totally

²⁸⁵ The difference between Clausewitz's and Mao's notions of "politics" is an important one: it's the one we've seen separating Lenin from Clausewitz.

negates German classical idealist philosophy. Stalin negated German military science, alleging that it was no longer of any use and that books by Clausewitz should no longer be read since the Germans had been defeated.

Stalin had a fair amount of metaphysics in him, and he taught many people to follow metaphysics.²⁸⁶

Mao continued to criticize what he saw as the weaknesses of Stalinist dialectics. Among other examples, he mentions the case of war and peace, which, in Soviet discourse, were fundamentally opposed and mutually exclusive. Mao criticized this thesis, drawing on Lenin and Clausewitz:

Struggle in peace-time is politics, so is war, though certain special means are used. War and peace are both mutually exclusive and interconnected and can be transformed into each other under given conditions. If war is not brewing in peace-time, how can it possibly break out all of a sudden? If peace is not brewing in wartime, how can it suddenly come about? . . . Stalin failed to see the connection between the struggle of opposites and the unity of opposites. Some people in the Soviet Union are so metaphysical and rigid in their thinking that they think a thing has to be either one or the other, refusing to recognize the unity of opposites.²⁸⁷

32. Clausewitz at the Heart of the Sino-Soviet Split

During the 1957 Moscow Conference of Communist Parties, the first disagreements arose between Khrushchev and Mao. They concerned peaceful coexistence and the inevitability of war. The Communist Party of China launched its political battle against the Khrushchevite USSR on these issues in July 1960, with the document entitled *Long Live Leninism*.

By this time, Soviet military thought had undergone a major transformation. Between 1954 and 1964, the foundations of its Stalinist military outlook (the theory of the two periods of warfare—manufacturing and industrial—the theory of “permanent factors”) were discussed, while the

²⁸⁶ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol. 5, 350.

²⁸⁷ Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, vol. 5, 352.

growing power of the nuclear arsenal (warheads and launch platforms) called for a general reassessment.²⁸⁸ The result was a strategic manual published under the supervision of Marshal Sokolovsky, and in which Clausewitz once again found his place.²⁸⁹

The “Sokolovsky Doctrine” always anticipated total war,²⁹⁰ unleashing such massive strikes in its opening stage that subsequent operations would be reduced to a simple territorial occupation by the armies of the power that had best withstood the nuclear fury—that is, the USSR, thanks to the superiority of its social system. At this point, the *Ziel* merges with the *Zweck*: the collapse of the imperialist system. This doctrine on the use of military force was complemented by a policy of conflict avoidance. Khrushchev argued that imperialism was in trouble: decolonization, the wave of national liberation struggles and the crises they were provoking in its centers were considerably weakening it. The socialist camp was therefore advancing through “peaceful coexistence,” and if the threat of war persisted, it was because imperialism, in its doldrums, might provoke the outbreak of war.

However, Khrushchev, who pursued a policy of political bluff, claimed a striking capacity that was far from what he had; while in 1960 he stated that the USSR was producing missiles “like sausages,” it actually had only four to ten intercontinental missiles. . . .²⁹¹ In 1962, at the time of the Cuban

²⁸⁸ For a long time, the Soviet authorities considered atomic weapons to be merely a quantitative advance in means of destruction. Conversely, as the USSR expanded its nuclear arsenal, the US developed new conceptual tools: “deterrence,” “graduated deterrence,” “graduated retaliation,” “mutually assured destruction,” and so on. In the West, Clausewitz’s theses were widely referred to (in various senses) in the nuclear debate.

²⁸⁹ V. D. Sokolovsky, *Military Strategy: Soviet Doctrine and Concepts* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963). Sokolovsky quotes Clausewitz on page 18.

²⁹⁰ To such an extent that Jean-Christophe Romer equates it with Clausewitzian “absolute war,” thus vindicating Terray’s argument against Aron’s as to the historical (rather than purely theoretical) nature of the concept of absolute war. Jean-Christophe Romer, *La guerre nucléaire de Staline à Khrushchev—Essai sur la constitution d’une culture stratégique en URSS (1945–1965)* [“Nuclear War from Stalin to Khrushchev—Essay on the Emergence of A Strategic Culture in the USSR (1945–1965)”] (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1991), 250.

²⁹¹ This was the rocket engine that brought Sputnik into orbit. As a strategic weapon, this technological prodigy was riddled with shortcomings: its range of just 6,000 km required a polar trajectory and a launch site in the far north—conditions that affected its reliability. The missile could not be fired from a silo, and the launch procedure took 12 hours, making it vulnerable to an American first strike. In addition, its radio guidance system could be jammed.

crisis, the first real intercontinental missiles had barely entered the Soviet arsenal, and the USSR was in a clear state of inferiority in terms of nuclear armament.²⁹² Chinese criticism came at a time of strategic uncertainty for the Soviet Union. The "Sokolovsky Doctrine" was maintained until 1964–66, but the arms race generated such massive nuclear armories that it eventually led to a "qualitative leap": the adoption of the doctrine of deterrence, and the renunciation of the idea of winning a general nuclear war.

The question of a limited nuclear war remained. In 1965, a well-known, albeit often heterodox, Soviet military analyst went so far as to write:

In our days, there is no more dangerous illusion than the idea that thermonuclear war can still serve as an instrument of politics, that it is possible to achieve political aims by using nuclear weapons and at the same time survive, that it is possible to find acceptable forms of nuclear war. . . . War with the use of thermonuclear weapons has outlived itself as an instrument of politics, turning into a weapon of national and social suicide, war has ceased to be a political means and has been transformed into an instrument of national and social suicide. . . .²⁹³

This thesis was promptly and officially condemned as confusing

the social nature of war with the question of the rationality or irrationality of the use of nuclear weapons, of the capacity or otherwise to achieve that political goal by virtue of which an imperialist state can launch a war.²⁹⁴

This reaffirmation of Clausewitz's formula was not just theoretical in nature: the possibility of a nuclear war limited to Europe was asserting itself, even if the official discourse of the USSR held it to be impossible due to the tendency towards extremes.

²⁹² The first SS7 with a range of 12,000 km was tested at the end of 1961, making the installation of missiles in Cuba (SS4s with a range of 2,000 km) of real strategic interest.

²⁹³ Nikolay Talensky, "The Late War: Some Reflections," *International Affairs*, No. 5 (Moscow, May 1965), 15.

²⁹⁴ A. S. Zheltov, T. R. Kondratkov, *Methodological Problems of Military Theory and Practice* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1969). Translated from French by the Editors.

The return of Clausewitz to Soviet military thought remained limited, often reduced to the history of ideas²⁹⁵—his authority was minimized first because he was a reference for NATO strategists,²⁹⁶ and second, and primarily, because of the new problems arising from nuclear warfare (the revaluation of the surprise factor, the reappraisal of the notion of “concentration of forces”).²⁹⁷

33. Clausewitz and Giáp

The People's Army, the armed wing of the Viet Minh was officially founded in September 1944 and was placed under Giáp's command from the outset. Taking advantage of the general weakening of the Japanese army in 1945, it went on the general offensive. On August 28, Giáp led his soldiers into Hanoi, and the following day Ho Chi Minh formed the first government of independent Vietnam. In early October, French units landed in Saigon and set about reconquering the country. The Viet Minh were defeated first in the South, and later in the North. The battle for Hanoi was an exceptionally violent one. On February 18, 1947, regular Viet Minh units fought their way out of the city and into the guerrilla bases prepared in advance, deep in the Viet Bac mountains.

When Giáp read Clausewitz, he had been in command of the People's Army for several years. For many months, the General Secretary of the Indochinese Communist Party, Trường Chinh, had urged all military cadres to read *On War*, but Giáp, by his own admission, only became interested when the outbreak of armed resistance approached:

²⁹⁵ “The classics of Marxism-Leninism, having preserved all that was valuable in the philosophy of war, predating their own achievements, and in particular in the works of the German military theorist of the last century Carl Clausewitz, have come up with a fundamentally new doctrine of war.” T. R. Kondratkov, “War and its nature,” in *Soviet Military Review*, No. 42, June 1968. Translated from French by the Editors: “The progressive and well-founded ideas of the great captains and thinkers of the past, such as Suvorov, Napoleon, Clausewitz [are] creatively assimilated into the new conditions [by Soviet military science].” P. Derevianko, “Soviet Military Science,” in *Soviet Military Review*, No. 22, October 1966, 3. Translated from French by the Editors.

²⁹⁶ Such as in the article on “Troop morale” by Lieutenant-Colonel O. Chizhevsky, *Soviet Military Review*, No. 12, December 1965, 8.

²⁹⁷ On this subject, see *Marxism-Leninism on War and Army: A Soviet View*, which is a joint publication by fourteen Soviet academics specialized in philosophical or military sciences. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976, 42–48.

Before that day, I thought that Clausewitz had dealt with the war of the last century, and I didn't quite agree with his judgment that "the people's war must have wide spaces which do not exist in any country in Europe except Russia."²⁹⁸

Indeed, when addressing the capacity of people's warfare "driving [the invader] out of the country before he is faced with total destruction,"²⁹⁹ Clausewitz had added this major caveat:

For an uprising by itself to produce such a crisis presupposes an occupied area of a size that, in Europe, does not exist outside Russia, or a disproportion between the invading army and the size of the country that would never occur in practice. To be realistic, one must therefore think of a general insurrection within the framework of a war conducted by the regular army, and coordinated in one all-encompassing plan.³⁰⁰

At his base in the Viet Bac mountains Giáp had certain passages from *On War* read to him by his private secretary and his wife.

Listening to them, I often had the impression that Clausewitz was sitting in front of me, disserting on current events. Clausewitz had a deep understanding of the extremely complex and changing nature of war. Indeed, war involves so many elements of chance that he likened it to a game. According to Clausewitz, "no human activity depends so completely and so universally on chance as war. . . war becomes a game by its subjective as by its objective nature." I particularly liked the relatively short chapter entitled The Arming of the People. I kept asking myself: How could an officer of the Prussian Empire pass such a judgment on this popular form of armed struggle? Surely this was due to his strong love of his homeland and his refusal to live as a slave. His theory corresponded strangely to what our forefathers advocated: confronting an opponent

²⁹⁸ Giáp, *Mémoires* ("Memoirs"), vol. 1 (Fontenay-sous-Bois: Éditions Anako, 2003), 105–106. Translated from French by the Editors.

²⁹⁹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 480.

³⁰⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 480.

superior in arms and numbers with one's own means. Some military writers have discussed the "small war" (as opposed to the "big war") using small fractions that can pass everywhere, supply themselves without difficulty, maintain secrecy, move swiftly and withdraw in the same way, even in the absence of roads, and so on. Didn't everything we were doing at the moment resemble in part the "small war"?³⁰¹

While Trường Chinh, the Party's General Secretary, and Hoàng Văn Thái, Giáp's Deputy Chief of Staff, had read Clausewitz, many Viet Minh cadres were introduced to his thought through training courses given in Moscow at the Communist University for Toilers of the East, the KUTV known as the "Stalin School," or at the Huangpu Military Academy, where over 200 Viet Minh cadres were trained in 1926–27 by Soviet instructors.

In 1950, a condensed version of *On War* was translated into Vietnamese and published in the Viet Bac maquis.³⁰² This edition was produced in very precarious conditions, printed using a countryside letterpress, onto handmade paper made from mulberry leaves. From then, Clausewitz was studied by all military and political officers of the People's Army.³⁰³

Giáp's military culture was self-taught. He had studied the French Empire's military campaigns in far greater depth than was required for the history courses he taught at a Hanoi high school in 1938. It was also then that he read T. E. Lawrence, although his main educational sources remained the writings of Engels and Lenin on insurrection, Mao Zedong and Zhu De's documents on revolutionary struggle—or at least the ones that had reached Indochina—and the tradition of Vietnamese national warfare.

³⁰¹ Giáp, *Mémoires*, 105. Translated from French by the Editors. Giáp claims in his *Mémoires* to have read *On War* through Denise Naville's translation, which he took with him from Hanoi in 1947, but this must be a mistake, as the translation was not published until 1955. Giáp also discussed his reading of Clausewitz in his interview with Alain Ruscio: *Võ Nguyên Giáp—une vie* (Paris: Éditions Les Indes savantes, 2010), 48, 72.

³⁰² The Maquis originally referred to rural guerrilla bands of French fighters during World War II, known for their sabotage and resistance activities. The term has since been used more broadly to describe guerrilla movements or insurgent groups operating in rugged or remote areas.

³⁰³ From T. Derbent's personal interview with General Hong Cu.

Apart from the legendary battles under the Hùng kings, the Vietnamese people led thirteen major national resistance movements,³⁰⁴ from the time of the Chinese Qin dynasty (at the end of the 3rd century BC) to the time of the French reconquest. Giáp knew this history inside out and devoted the most important chapters of two of his most important books to it: "National Liberation War in Vietnam," "General line, strategy, tactic" (1969) and "To Arm the Revolutionary Masses, To Build the People's Army" (1972). From 1935 to 1940, Giáp wrote a column in the journal *La Voix du Peuple*, regularly reporting on the activities of the Chinese Red Army, and wrote a book entitled *Pour connaître la situation militaire en Chine* ("To know the military situation in China"), with the aim of encouraging the Vietnamese people to apply the experiences of the Chinese communists' revolutionary struggle. He also translated Zhu De's "On Anti-Japanese Guerrilla War."³⁰⁵ In 1942, Giáp stayed for a short time in China at the Communist Party of China's political and military school, Kangda, in Yanan.³⁰⁶ At the time, Giáp only knew Clausewitz from discussions he'd had in the early 1940s, when the French colonialists were planning a retreat into the interior of the country in the event of a Japanese invasion, with the aim of waging a guerrilla war similar to that of the Chinese. This plan was severely criticized using the authority of Clausewitz, for whom, as we have seen, a considerable expanse of territory was necessary to win a guerrilla war.

It was in these terms that the debate resumed within the Viet Minh's ranks, a debate that proved fierce, as Giáp himself would attest:

³⁰⁴ The Vietnamese people resisted against the Qin dynasty, against Nan Yue, Nan Han (twice), against the Song dynasty (twice), against the Mongols and its Yuan dynasty (three times), against the Ming dynasty, against the Siamese, the Qing dynasty, and the French. See Professor Phan Huy Lê's paper entitled "Diễn Biên Phu dans l'histoire et l'identité de la nation vietnamienne," presented at the Paris colloquium of November 21–22, 2003 on the topic: *The Battle of Diễn Biên Phu Between History and Memory*. Not covered here are the conflicts between Vietnam and its southern neighbors.

³⁰⁵ Zhu De, "On Anti-Japanese Guerrilla War," 1938, in *Selected Works of Zhu De* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1983), 41–65.

³⁰⁶ In May 1940, Hồ Chí Minh urged Giáp and Pham Van Dong to complete their political and military training in China, in the ranks of the Chinese Red Army. Neither Dong nor Giáp reached their destination; news of the fall of Paris to the German army prompted Hồ Chí Minh to order them back to Vietnam. Hồ Chí Minh himself had spent more than a year, in 1938–39, in the Red Army.

When our Party chose guerrilla warfare, it received the support of the entire people. . . . However, some of our commanders wondered: "Our country is small and the theater of operations small, so is it possible to wage a victorious guerrilla war?" Sustained discussions were held, within a restricted circle, without arriving at an identity of views or a unanimous conclusion, but without ever calling into question the Party's policy.³⁰⁷

Indeed, Vietnam was small, the enemy was already present in several areas, and its modern military resources had reduced the space available for the guerrilla to operate. The most remote resistance bases were only a day's drive (or half an hour's flight) away from the enemy. In their war against the French, the Viet Minh had no secure rearguard where there could be total quiet. Its retreats could only consist of cyclical changes of encampment, like a game of hide-and-seek.

In both the French and the American wars that were soon to follow, Giáp displayed all the qualities of a Clausewitzian military commander, displaying the same courage in the face of danger³⁰⁸ as he did/would in the face of responsibility. Self-controlled and energetic, he possessed the "*coup d'œil*"—the ability to see the main aspects of a course of action in confused and uncertain situations; the determination ("*courage d'esprit*," as expressed in French in *On War*, or "courage of the spirit" in English, as Clausewitz put it³⁰⁹), which never turned into stubbornness; and the temperament that would enable him to triumph over the new and the unexpected.

The combination of intelligence and character can be seen in the extreme flexibility with which Giáp implemented different forms of organization, maneuver, and combat. Depending on the place and the time, Giáp would split large units into small ones in order to revitalize guerrilla warfare or regroup small units into large ones to be able to wage a war of movement. Depending on the place and time, he would either launch

³⁰⁷ Giáp, *Mémoires*, 173.

³⁰⁸ Giáp endured the extremely harsh fighting conditions of guerrilla warfare in the jungle "where everything is rotting away, where your flesh is the first to rot," and was wounded while leading the attack on a French post in early 1945.

³⁰⁹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 102.

divisions of his army corps into the offensive, with the sole aim of relieving guerrilla zones threatened by roundup operations, or he would use the guerrillas to support the offensive campaign of his own army corps. Depending on the place and the time, he would either pit his large units against the enemy forces when the latter were on the offensive or, just as often, he would evade the enemy offensive altogether.

Giáp understood perfectly the action-reaction nature of warfare; not only did his plans incorporate variables depending on enemy reactions, they were actually adapted according to the particular general he was facing. What's more, Giáp never stuck to a pre-established plan; he pursued and amplified a victorious offensive or put an end to an offensive that was stalling.

Point by point, Giáp applied or reinvented the Clausewitzian doctrine in the specific context of revolutionary warfare. This is self-evident when it comes to theories of national warfare, "petty warfare," the relationship between war and politics, and the development of war plans. But the same applies to the theses on the asymmetry between the defensive and the offensive, on the principle of the concentration of forces, on the importance of army morale, and on that of the "decisive battle."

Giáp writes:

Revolutionary war viewed in the whole of its unfolding is an offensive. It is possible that at certain moments and in certain places one may act on the defensive, but this is in order to create necessary conditions for the continuation of the offensive.³¹⁰

Yet, as Clausewitz states:

If defense is the stronger form of war, yet has a negative object, it follows that it should be used only so long as weakness compels, and be abandoned as soon as we are strong enough to pursue a positive object.³¹¹

³¹⁰ Giáp, "National Liberation War in Vietnam," in *Selected Writings* (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1977), 265.

³¹¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 358.

Giáp mastered this dialectic between the defensive and the offensive to the utmost. Of course, the transition from one to the other was not always smooth. The failure of the three 1951 offensives against the Red River delta, that of the Têt offensive in 1968³¹² and of the Easter offensive in 1972, can be explained by a premature transition from one form of warfare to the other. A return to an active defensive approach enabled the People's Army's small quantitative advances to evolve into an overall shift in the balance of forces/power, allowing for a transition to the offensive to advance to victory (capture of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, Saigon in 1975). In operational terms, Giáp was able to use the advantages of active defensiveness to pin down the enemy's mobile forces, enabling his own army corps to go on the offensive.

Dien Bien Phu is a shining example of how Giáp put the Clausewitzian concept of the "decisive battle" into practice. It was after reading Clausewitz that Giáp took up the fight for Dien Bien Phu. In fact, he referred to the problem posed by Dien Bien Phu in the chapter of *On War* entitled "Defensive Mountain Warfare":

Undeniably, in a mountainous area a small post in a favorable position acquires exceptional strength. . . . It was only natural to assume that a series of strong posts of this sort would result in a strong, almost impenetrable front. One only had to guard against being outflanked by extending the position to right and left until it reached adequate points of support, or until one believed that the extension alone was enough to prevent the position from being turned.^{313 314}

The planning for the battle of Dien Bien Phu corresponds to this analysis, except that the eight centers of resistance did not form a defensive line, but a circular defensive complex.³¹⁵

³¹² These offensives, which had positive effects, were failures, as they did not achieve their objective.

³¹³ One "turns" a position to attack it from behind (or encircle it).—Ed.

³¹⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, 418

³¹⁵ Dien Bien Phu is a basin surrounded by mountains. The Viet Minh held these mountains, but their entrenched camp was made up of resistance centers firmly established on the hilltops scattered across the plain. Viet Minh fighters had to descend from the mountains under the cover of the jungle and then assault the low hills where the French had set up their base.

Dien Bien Phu is a type of a “great Clausewitzian battle.” Giáp was waiting for the opportunity to strike a decisive blow against the French Expeditionary Corps, one that would simultaneously annihilate the enemy's armed forces, open up the possibility of controlling territory, and break the enemy's will to fight.

The French general Navarre dropped his troops at Dien Bien Phu on November 20, 1953 to ward off a Viet Minh offensive in the northwest and in Laos. Unlike Navarre, some other French generals, confident in the solidity of the entrenched position,³¹⁶ were hoping for an attack by the Vietnamese on Dien Bien Phu. In their eyes, such an attack, which would be a welcome change from the routine of guerrilla warfare, would make it possible to destroy the Viet Minh corps in what they also ironically saw as a “great Clausewitzian battle.” For Giáp and his opponents alike, victory meant determining the course of the Geneva negotiations.

Down to the last minute and in every detail, Giáp conceived and faced the battle of Dien Bien Phu as a battle of annihilation. Even as he learned of the surrender of the entrenched camp of the French and the capture of General de Castries, he gave precise instructions to prevent the *légionnaires*³¹⁷ still holding Hồng Cúm, south of Dien Bien Phu, from achieving a breakthrough. Local militiamen and inhabitants scoured the jungle, torches in hand, to ensure that not a single man of the French Expeditionary Corps escaped. 10,000 French soldiers were trapped at Dien Bien Phu. A handful of them escaped captivity by making it, after an exhausting march, to one of the French outposts in Laos. . .

34. Clausewitz in the Maoist Tradition

There have been several notable instances of Clausewitz feeding into the strategic thinking of the contemporary Maoist movement in Peru, Iran, and Nepal.

³¹⁶ The resistance of the entrenched Na San camp during the previous campaign gave them confidence: “Dien Bien Phu will be Na San multiplied by ten. We won't be crushing one division, but four.” General Cagny declared: “I hope for a shock at Dien Bien Phu,” and challenged his besiegers by radio and leaflets dropped in the jungle: “What are you waiting for to attack if you're not cowards?”

³¹⁷ The French Foreign Legion is a special unit within the French Army, which has historically recruited foreign nationals in order to support France's colonial efforts in North Africa.—Ed.

Abimaël Guzmán Reynoso, “President Gonzalo” of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP),³¹⁸ by guiding the PCP along the path of people's war—fought to the brink of victory—made a decisive contribution to the reappraisal of the Maoist strategy of protracted people's war. Gonzalo had undergone extensive political and military training in Nanjing [China] in 1965.

In an interview, given at the height of the PCP's power in 1988, Gonzalo evokes Clausewitz when recalling the period in which the Peruvian army set out to annihilate the PCP using all the means of a dirty war: torture, death squads, disappearances, and militias of armed civilians (*ron-das*). On March 22, 1983, one of these militias assassinated a Maoist cadre. On April 3rd, a column of guerrillas rounded up 69 militiamen, officials, and close associates in the village of Santiago de Lucanamarca, before massacring them in a demonstrably cruel manner (with machetes and stones). Lucanamarca is unique in that it was both an expression of the vengeful rage of guerrilla peasants against the militiamen, and a terrorist measure decided coldly at the PCP's highest level. Gonzalo explains and endorses it:

In the face of reactionary military actions and the use of *mesnadas*, we responded with a devastating action: Lucanamarca. Neither they nor we have forgotten it, to be sure, because they got an answer that they didn't imagine possible. More than 80 were annihilated, that is the truth. And we say openly that there were excesses, as was analyzed in 1983. But everything in life has two aspects. Our task was to deal a devastating blow in order to put them in check, to make them understand that it was not going to be so easy.

On some occasions, like that one, it was the Central Leadership itself that planned the action and gave instructions. That's how it was. In that case, the principal thing is that we dealt them a devastating blow, and we checked them and they understood that they were dealing with a different kind of people's fighters, that we weren't the same as those they had fought before.³¹⁹ This

³¹⁸ Often referred to (by its enemies) as the “Shining Path.”

³¹⁹ Gonzalo is referring to the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria) guerrillas of 1965–1966, which were quickly wiped out by the army.

is what they understood. The excesses are the negative aspect. Understanding war, and basing ourselves on what Lenin said, taking Clausewitz into account, in war, the masses engaged in combat can go too far and express all their hatred, the deep feelings of class hatred, repudiation and condemnation that they have—that was the root of it.³²⁰

Lenin did indeed address this issue several times³²¹ but, contrary to what Gonzalo writes, he never mentioned Clausewitz in this regard. As we have seen though, Lenin's reading notes on *On War* show a keen interest in Clausewitz's treatment of this question.

In October 1993, after Gonzalo's arrest, the PCP's liquidationist wing published a document³²² supporting a peace agreement with the Peruvian state. Within the Maoist movement, the most well-argued response was a lengthy document drafted by the Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran),³²³ which repeatedly quoted Clausewitz on the correlation between the intensity of war and the importance of its political implications:

Exactly because of the nature of revolutionary warfare, once such a war is started we cannot return to mainly peaceful struggle. . . . This is so because the political aim of the revolutionary war is to destroy the old state and wipe out the rule of the exploitative classes forever. . . . "As policy becomes more ambitious and vigourous, so will war, and this may reach the point where war attains its absolute form." (Clausewitz, *On War*)³²⁴

³²⁰ "Interview with Chairman Gonzalo," *El Diario*, 1988, translated and reproduced by the Peru People's Movement.

³²¹ Notably in the "Telegram to G. Y. Zinoviev" (*Selected Works*, vol. 44), the "Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russia Trade Union Congress" (*Selected Works*, vol. 30), or the "Letter to American Workers" (*Selected Works*, vol. 28).

³²² Entitled *Asumir—Combatir por la Nueva Decision y Nueva Definicion* ("Assume—Fighting for the New Decision and New Definition").

³²³ The UIC(S), now the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist), waged a guerrilla war against the Islamic regime, culminating on January 25, 1982, in the capture of the town of Amol, near the Caspian Sea. The offensive benefited from an uprising in the town, which was liberated for two days, but the insurrection failed to spread and was crushed.

³²⁴ Leading Committee of the Union of Communists of Iran (Sarbedaran) (UICS), "Marxism Consists of One Thousand Truths, but in the Final Analysis They All Boil

Another Maoist disciple of Clausewitz is Nanda Kishor Pun “Pasang,” the military leader of the people's war that swept through Nepal from 1995 to 2006. Having studied Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, Marx, Lenin, Mao, and Giáp in depth, as well as contemporary military publications and the Hindu epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, Pasang, nicknamed “Giáp of Nepal,” took part in almost every major Maoist guerrilla operation. Commander-in-chief of the People's Liberation Army, Pasang had Giáp's *People's War, People's Army*, and Clausewitz's “*On War*” published, the latter of which Pasang³²⁵ acknowledged had been “painstakingly translated” over five months before being distributed to all sectors of the PLA.

35. Clausewitz and Castro-Guevarism

In November 1965, Guevara wrote in his notebooks that he had read Clausewitz.³²⁶ His politico-military thinking had already taken shape by this time, as he had written *Guerrilla Warfare* between 1960 and 1961, based on the Cuban experience.

In 1965–1966, after the failure of the Congolese experience and his reading of *On War*, Guevara reread his own book and began correcting it for a new edition. On the amended pages, he highlighted the following passage in red:

In military terms, tactics are the practical methods of achieving great strategic objectives.

In one sense, they complement strategy, and in another they are more specific rules within it. As a means to an end, tactics are much more variable, much more flexible than the final objectives, and they should be adjusted continually during the struggle. There are tactical objectives that remain constant throughout a war and others that vary. The first thing to be

Down to One: It Is Right to Rebel!” in *A World to Win*, no. 21 (1995).

³²⁵ Pasang (Nanda Kishor Pun), *Red Strides of the History* (Kathmandu: Agnipariksha Janaparakashan Griha Putalisadak, 2008). Pasang belongs to the Prachandist faction, which ended the people's war following the 2006 peace agreements.

³²⁶ He read *On War* in the Argentinian reprint of the “historical” Spanish edition, entitled *Principios esenciales para la conducción de la guerra* (“Fundamental principles for the conduct of war”), Clausewitz, Carlos (sic) von (Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Arsenal principal de guerra, 1902).

considered is the adjusting of guerrilla operations to the enemy's actions.³²⁷

And he wrote in the margin: "Consult Clausewitz on this point."

Which point is Guevara talking about? The definition of tactics or the principle of interaction? Keeping intact his own definition of strategy ("strategy is understood as the analysis of the objectives to be achieved in the light of the total military situation, and the overall ways of accomplishing these objectives"³²⁸), Guevara's is more restricted than but does not contradict that of Clausewitz. Clausewitz's definitions of tactics and strategy are linked: they form a conceptual couple. On the other hand, shortly before his departure for Bolivia, Guevara placed the following quotation from *On War* in the forefront of "Tactics and Strategy of the Latin American Revolution": "Tactics show us how to use armed forces in combat and strategy teaches us how to use combat encounters in order to obtain the war's objective."³²⁹ Guevara was influenced by this Clausewitzian definition of tactics, even if reading *On War* had not led him to rework his *Guerrilla Warfare* on this point.

The many other changes he proposed to make to *Guerrilla Warfare* were foreign to the topics covered in *On War*. So, either Guevara felt that the themes explored by Clausewitz were far removed from his subject, or Guevara failed to recognize the relevance of Clausewitz in areas where *On War* contradicted *Guerrilla Warfare*, or, most likely, Guevara felt that *Guerrilla Warfare* was in line with *On War*.

Unlike Guevara, Castro read Clausewitz long before the landing of the Granma, during his imprisonment on the Isle of Pines in 1953–55 following the attack on the Moncada barracks. In his so-called "autobiography" of Castro, Norberto Fuente, a former close friend of Fidel Castro who had become a dissident, writes that Castro knew Clausewitz "by

³²⁷ Ernesto "Che" Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 25.

³²⁸ Ernesto "Che" Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 21.

³²⁹ Ernesto "Che" Guevara, "Tactics and Strategy of the Latin American Revolution," in *Selected Works of Ernesto Guevara* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1969), 77. This analysis by Guevara appeared in the October 6, 1968 issue of the Cuban People's Army magazine *Verde Olivo*.

heart."³³⁰ Yet he found no direct trace of Clausewitz's influence in Castro's numerous texts.³³¹

Clausewitz was, however, part of the Castrist guerrilla's theoretical baggage; when Jorge Masetti underwent military training in Cuba, in addition to physical training and weapons handling, he found Lenin's military works, Engels's *Anti-Dühring*, and Clausewitz's *On War* on the syllabus.³³² Abraham Guillén, who trained many Latin American guerrillas in Cuba and later served as military advisor to several organizations including the Tupamaros, was a great reader of Clausewitz. He was the author of numerous political-military works, including *Strategy of Urban Guerrilla* (1965), which had a decisive influence on Carlos Marighela and the Tupamaros.³³³

In 1967, Régis Debray's *Revolution in the Revolution*³³⁴ helped forge a kind of "Guevarism" in spite of Guevara himself. It would come to be known as Focoism. The failures of focoism were devastating, and as a response Debray felt compelled to write *A Critique of Arms*³³⁵ in 1974. It would be wrong to interpret this critical reassessment as a precursor to Debray's later embrace of social democracy. The book is a self-criticism of *Revolution in the Revolution?* and an assessment of Guevarism in the service of defining a more appropriate revolutionary military policy. Based on a meticulous analysis of past guerrilla wars in Venezuela, Uruguay, and Guatemala,³³⁶ *A Critique of Arms* focuses on the dialectic between the military need for mobility (a factor to which Focoism sacrificed everything) and the

³³⁰ Norberto Fuente, *The Autobiography of Fidel Castro* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 2010), 429. Fuentes also mentions Castro as a clausewitzien in *El último santuario: una novela de campaña*, (Madrid/Mexico: Siglo Veintunos, 1992), 133.

³³¹ Castro's (and Guevara's) first real military training seems to have come in Mexico from the Spanish colonel Bayo, who during the Spanish Civil War had experienced the tactics of guerrilla groups fighting Franco's rearguard.

³³² Jorge Masetti, *El furor y el delirio—Itinerario de un hijo de la Revolución cubana* (Barcelona: Tusquets, 1999).

³³³ Abraham Guillén, *Estrategia de la guerrilla urbana* ("Strategy of Urban Guerrilla") (Monterideo: Manuel del Pueblo, 1966). References to Clausewitz are sometimes rhetorical (when Guillén explains that it is better to study Clausewitz than the theoreticians of parliamentary democracy, if revolutionary power is to survive the guardians of reaction, on page 9), sometimes theoretical (on the transition from knowledge to power, on page 27).

³³⁴ Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution?* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967).

³³⁵ Régis Debray, *A Critique of Arms*, vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1977).

³³⁶ Analyses published as a separate volume entitled *The Revolution On Trial: A Critique of Arms*, vol. 2 (London: Penguin, 1978).

political need for stability (a support base, a space where the advantage of defensiveness can be exercised).

Throughout the book, Debray makes frequent use of Clausewitz's concepts, with a relevance that testifies to his remarkable mastery of *On War*: the increasing course of defense and the decreasing course of attack, the culmination of the offensive, the asymmetry between defense and attack, popular defense in depth,³³⁷ the interaction between the opposing sides (Debray goes so far as to use the image of a deck of cards).³³⁸

The same year, 1974, Debray reflects on the Bolivian experience in *Che's Guerrilla War*.³³⁹ He draws on Clausewitz in his critical analysis of past revolutionary (or radical-reformist) upsurges of a concentrated yet small proletariat, which alternated with reactionary takeovers. Debray argues that these proletarian upsurges, concentrated in the cities and culminating in complete victory (April '52) or complete defeat (November '64) in a matter of hours, run counter to Clausewitz's principle that no state (and we might add, no class, no party) should allow its fate to rest on a single battle. In Bolivia, the conditions which, according to Clausewitz, are the only ones capable of making people's war efficient, did not exist in Bolivia.³⁴⁰

In addition to publishers like Debray, several of the great leaders of the Guevarist guerrillas were avowed disciples of Clausewitz. Miguel Enríquez, for example, had methodically studied *On War* in an activist university reading group. Enríquez was one of the main founders of the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) in Chile, which he led from 1965. He played a central role in the 2nd Congress (1967), which led the MIR to adopt Marxism-Leninism and armed struggle as its strategy. He led the armed struggle from '67-'70, then the armed resistance to Pinochet's coup d'état until his death in a gunfight in 1974.³⁴¹

³³⁷ This refers to a form of mass-based defensive policy that is supposed to stretch throughout the entire territory, wherever the masses are present, and not just on potential or existing front lines.—Ed.

³³⁸ Régis Debray, *A Critique of Arms*, vol. 1, 98, 132.

³³⁹ Régis Debray, *Che's Guerrilla War* (London: Penguin, 1976).

³⁴⁰ Régis Debray, *Che's Guerrilla War*, 64.

³⁴¹ Miguel Enríquez, *el proyecto revolucionario en Chile* ("Miguel Enríquez and the Revolutionary Project in Chile") (Santiago de Chile: Librería LOM, 2004).

But the Guevarist leader most influenced by Clausewitz was Argentina's Roberto "Roby" Santucho, founder of the Workers' Revolutionary Party (PRT), who commanded what remains the greatest experiment in revolutionary urban guerrilla warfare to date: the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP).

The PRT, which had origins in both Indigenismo and Trotskyism, distanced itself from both under the influence of Maoism and, above all, Castro-Guevarism.³⁴² Santucho had traveled to Cuba in 1961, where he underwent military training. The PRT, which from the start had been a pro-guerrilla movement led by Angel Bengocha, founded the ERP in the wake of the great Cordoba insurrection. The ERP's first major setback was the elimination of its rural guerrilla front in Tucumán in 1975.³⁴³ But while it was able to develop urban guerrilla warfare on a scale that has never been replicated, it also suffered defeats in equal proportions. In all, some 5,000 PRT and ERP activists were killed by counterrevolutionary forces in the '70s, and the military shot Santucho dead on July 19, 1976.

The resolutions of the 5th PRT Congress (July 29–30, 1970), drafted by Santucho who had just escaped his enemies, are the founding resolutions of the ERP. In them, the Clausewitzian thesis of the destruction of the enemy army is questioned at length, in the context of a revolutionary struggle capable of destroying the enemy army's power by undermining its morale.³⁴⁴

Clausewitz was studied by all ERP military cadres. A first military school was set up under Miguel Ángel "Niky" Ceballos's leadership in the town of Ichu Cruz near Carlos Paz.³⁴⁵ This program developed under the direct supervision of the ERP General Staff, i.e., Santucho himself. Farms in suburban areas were temporarily rented out and a "teaching corps," made up of ERP members with military knowledge and some teaching

³⁴² While critical of Focoism, the rural guerrilla movement in Tucumán and the urban guerrilla movement in the Greater Buenos Aires area were declared "congruous, interrelated, and inseparable."

³⁴³ The PRT had launched armed operations before the ERP was founded, but the aim at the time was to support workers' struggles and mass insurrections. The Trotskyites left the PRT in disagreement with the decision to form the ERP and practice armed struggle.

³⁴⁴ Daniel De Santis, *Vencer o Morir—PRT—ERP Documentos* (Buenos Aires: Nuestra América, 2006), 111.

³⁴⁵ Enrique Gorriarán Merlo, *Memorias: De los Setenta a La Tablada* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2003), 207.

experience, trained cadres under Juan Manuel Carrizo's leadership. There, students were taught operational tactics, explosives, weapons, and unit regulations. Their reading program included military texts by Engels, Trotsky, Mao, Giap, Guevara, and others. The students also studied general military history with particular emphasis on the experiences of patriotic warfare in the USSR, the Spanish Civil War, and the Vietnam War. In this curriculum, Clausewitz was a mandatory source.³⁴⁶

In May 1977, as the last clandestine structures of the PRT and ERP in Argentina were being dismantled by the military, the PRT leadership reconstituted itself in Rome and opened a new training school for activists in Sarnana. Clausewitz was still part of the curriculum.³⁴⁷

36. Clausewitz and Carl Schmitt

Interest in Clausewitz's thinking on people's war was not only confined to revolutionaries. Carl Schmitt, a notorious reactionary, made it one of his main interests. Schmitt had entered political philosophy as a declared enemy of the Weimar Republic. In Schmitt's view, majority rule and the separation of powers, transactional social relations between classes and interest groups as conceived by democratic parties, all of prevented the true exercise of politics, paralyzed the state, and constituted obstacles to its mission of organizing the "national community." Schmitt's anti-democratism, anti-communism, and anti-Semitism led him to become an active member of the Nazi party and a pillar of Hitler's "legal science."

It was on this reactionary, albeit "denazified," basis that Schmitt wrote his *Theory of the Partisan* in 1963. In line with his *The Concept of the Political*,³⁴⁸ we find repeated throughout the text the thesis according to which "The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy."³⁴⁹

³⁴⁶ Luis Mattini [Arnol Kremer], *Hombres y Mujeres del PRT-ERP (La pasión militante)* (La Plata: Ediciones de la Campagna, 2007), 215.

³⁴⁷ Interview by the author with a former PRT-ERP activist (2014).

³⁴⁸ The first edition of *The Concept of the Political* dates from 1927. A new edition was published in 1963—the same year as *Theory of the Partisan*, with its subtitle "Intermediate Commentary on the Concept of the Political." These two texts, written 35 years apart, are closely related.

³⁴⁹ Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 26.

Schmitt deals with the partisan³⁵⁰ from a historical and conceptual point of view. He traces the origins of the partisan back to the 18th century, in the sense that the figure of the “irregular” soldier implies the existence of a “regular” soldier, i.e., of a modern regular army. Schmitt discusses Prussia's plans for partisan warfare in 1813, repeatedly evoking Clausewitz. He then turns to the rapid development of the partisan phenomenon in the twentieth century, examining its characteristics (irregular and telluric³⁵¹ in nature, defensive and, above all, deeply political).

According to Schmitt, Lenin

recognized the inevitability of force and bloody, revolutionary civil war and state war, and thus also approved of partisan warfare as a necessary ingredient of the total revolutionary process. Lenin was the first to fully conceive of the partisan as a significant figure of national and international civil war, and he sought to transform the partisan into an effective instrument of the central Communist Party leadership.³⁵²

Schmitt describes Lenin's notes on Clausewitz as

one of the most remarkable documents of world history and intellectual history [from which it is possible to deduce] the new theory of absolute war and absolute enmity that has determined the age of revolutionary war and the methods of modern cold war. What Lenin was able to learn from Clausewitz, and what he learned painstakingly, was not only the famous formula of war as the continuation of politics. It was the further recognition that the distinction of friend and enemy in the age of revolution is primary, and that it determines war as well as politics. For Lenin, only revolutionary war was genu-

³⁵⁰ In military terminology, a partisan refers to a member of an irregular force engaged in guerrilla warfare, often operating behind enemy lines. Partisans typically rely on ambushes, sabotage, and hit-and-run tactics, and have historically been involved in resistance movements during occupations or wars.

³⁵¹ In other words, intimately linked to one's native land, and drawing strength from this very link.

³⁵² Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan* (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2007), 49.

ine war, because it arises from absolute enmity. Everything else is conventional play.³⁵³

And again:

Lenin shifted the conceptual center of gravity from war to politics, i.e., to the distinction of friend and enemy. That was significant and, following Clausewitz, a logical continuation of the idea that war is a continuation of politics. But Lenin, as a professional revolutionary of global civil war, went still further and turned the real enemy into an absolute enemy. Clausewitz spoke of absolute war, but always presupposed the regularity of an existing state. He could not conceive of a state becoming an instrument of a party, and of a party that gives orders to the state. With the absolutization of the party, the partisan also became absolute and a bearer of absolute enmity.³⁵⁴

As Raymond Aron put it,

[Schmitt] substituted his own notions for those of Clausewitz and Lenin. He says that in Lenin's eyes only revolutionary war is true war because it emanates from absolute hostility. All the rest is conventional games-playing. Lenin would never have been so silly.³⁵⁵

Indeed, when Lenin points at the opposition between war and play, he is not contrasting revolutionary war with wars between states, but rather noting the difference made by Clausewitz between the standardized/policed/civilized forms of warfare of the 18th century and the outburst of force and violence associated with the wars that followed the subsequent bourgeois revolutions.

Schmitt claimed to study politics independently of intention [see below], so much so that he placed Lenin in the same category as Cromwell or Salan. Yet, the distinction between political action and political intention can be both useful and productive. It is the product of an honorable and even progressive intellectual heritage, that begins with Machiavelli

³⁵³ Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 51.

³⁵⁴ Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 93.

³⁵⁵ Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War* (New York: Touchstone, 1986), 366.

and ends with Foucault.³⁵⁶ Schmitt, however, saw politics as nothing more than action, downgrading intention to the level of mere justification, the moralizing pathos of propaganda. Schmitt's thinking was forged against the *diktat* of Versailles, presented by the victorious imperialist powers as the triumph of Law and Justice. From this foundational historic event onward Schmitt crossed the dividing line between realism and cynicism, science, and ideology.

Schmitt's general conception of politics prevented him from truly grasping the Leninist approach. Whether a particular political force, class, state, or party comes to be regarded as friend or foe is, for Lenin, a direct result of what Schmitt called intention: the historical objective, or more precisely, the historical objective of the stage of development leading to the political goal. There is no such thing as an absolute enemy in Marxism-Leninism, contrary to what Schmitt imagined. This is why certain conditions have led communists to ally themselves with bourgeois forces in the struggle against feudal forces, foreign occupiers, colonial domination, or fascist reaction.

Next to Lenin, *Theory of the Partisan* also evokes Mao Zedong and his "new Clausewitzian theory of war"³⁵⁷: Mao, "The greatest practitioner of contemporary revolutionary war. . . as well its most famous theoretician."³⁵⁸ In organizing national resistance against the Japanese invaders, in realizing the Clausewitzian ideal of the nation in arms, in liberating the forces of the Chinese people, Mao's revolution possessed, according to Schmitt, a better "telluric foundation" than that of Lenin.

Four years after his *Theory of the Partisan*, Schmitt wrote an important article entitled "Clausewitz as a Political Thinker" ("Clausewitz als politischer Denker")³⁵⁹ He saw Clausewitz as the embodiment of his thesis regarding politics as the process of designating the enemy. And indeed, the

³⁵⁶ Schmitt wrote an important and laudatory article on Machiavelli in 1927, to mark the 400th anniversary of his death.

³⁵⁷ "[Mao's] theory of war is a consistent and systematic continuation of Prussian General Staff officers' concepts. Clausewitz, the contemporary of Napoleon I, could not have conceived of the degree of totality that today is obvious in the revolutionary war of the Chinese communists." Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 56.

³⁵⁸ Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan*, 55.

³⁵⁹ Carl Schmitt, "Clausewitz als Politischer Denker: Bemerkungen und Hinweise" ("Clausewitz as a Political Thinker: Remarks and Notes"), in *Der Staat*, vol. 6, no. 4 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot GmbH, 1967), 479–502.

common thread running through Clausewitz's commitment to objective analysis, his political compass, is the conviction that Napoleon is Prussia's true enemy. However Clausewitz's thinking is alien to Schmitt's "thread," and nothing in *On War* even remotely hints at the Schmittian conception of the political.

37. Clausewitz and "Asymmetric" Warfare

For Clausewitz, the political subject is the state, and war is war between nations. He conceives of particular interests, whether individual or collective, but for him politics

is nothing in itself; it is simply the trustee for all these interests [the rational interests of the state and its citizens] against other states. That it can err, subserve the ambitions, private interests, and vanity of those in power, is neither here nor there. In no sense can the art of war ever be regarded as the preceptor of policy, and here we can only treat policy as representative of all interests of the community.³⁶⁰

In short, in one way or another, the state "represents" the nation it governs. It can lead this nation to war, and is therefore the ultimate political agent. In his account of the conflicts that followed one another from Antiquity to the Napoleonic empire, Clausewitz does not list the Peasants' War in Germany, the Wars of Religion in France and England, nor any civil wars. His *On War* shows a clear unease with these phenomena.

According to Lenin, this section (which he painstakingly re-transcribed) marks a rapprochement with Marxism. But a rapprochement only. For Marxism, politics is the complex set of manifestations of class interests; it is the more or less coherent and organized action of classes (and class fractions) to realize their interests, and at a higher stage, the action of the institutions they establish (party, state, soviet, trade union, army, etc.). Lenin himself takes the point of view of a non-state politico-military force: the Russian workers' movement organized by the Bolsheviks. From this new, broader, and deeper conception of the political subject, Lenin adopts the Clausewitzian analysis point by point: war (just like negotiations) follows the logic of politics, but has its own "language" (in the same way that

³⁶⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 606–607.

diplomacy possesses its “language”). Analyzing war reveals specific laws, including its tendency to develop into extreme forms (and the fact that this tendency is tempered by the political stakes involved), or its threefold nature: political logic, the art of war, and the sense of hostility.

The question of whether Clausewitz's theses should be applied to non-state subjects remains open to debate. According to Martin Van Creveld, the Israeli military essayist who wrote a seminal work on the substitution of “asymmetric” warfare for conventional warfare,³⁶¹

strictly speaking, the dictum that war is the continuation of politics means nothing more or less than that it represents an instrument in the hands of the state, *insofar as the state employs violence for political ends*. It does not mean that war serves any kind of interest in any kind of community; or, if it does mean that, then it is little more than a meaningless cliché.³⁶²

For Van Creveld, not only does the asymmetric type of warfare emerge very late in history, it is in fact already on its way out, and Clausewitz's lessons with it.

One current of US military thought has reacted to this alleged “discovery” of asymmetry. For this school of thought, the essence of strategy consists precisely of exploiting one's advantages and one's opponent's weaknesses.³⁶³ This led Conrad Crane to distinguish two ways of waging war: “the asymmetric one and the stupid one.”³⁶⁴ If we consider that asymmetrical warfare takes on a specific character, not as warfare between the weak and the strong (which is simply “dissymmetric” warfare), but in terms of strategy (targeting the population and the civil administration rather than the armed forces, and/or considering the population as the

³⁶¹ Symmetric warfare is war between states with more or less equal strength, dissymmetric warfare is war between a strong state and a weak state; asymmetric war is between a state and a non-state entity or between two or more non-state entities.

³⁶² Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

³⁶³ Part of what Clausewitz calls the “principle of polarity.”

³⁶⁴ Conrad Crane teaches at the US Army War College and Lukas Milevski at the National Defense University. See Lukas Milevski, “Asymmetry Is Strategy, Strategy Is Asymmetry,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 75 4th Quarter (September 30, 2014), <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/JFQ/Joint-Force-Quarterly-75/Article/577565/asymmetry-is-strategy-strategy-is-asymmetry/> and Emile Simpson, *War from the Ground Up: Twenty-First Century Combat as Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 140.

battleground and the object of the war), we can see that there's nothing very innovative here either.

All the more so as the non-state entities involved in so-called "asymmetrical" wars (Maoist guerrillas in the Philippines, PKK in Kurdistan, Hezbollah in Lebanon, etc.) operate according to a political rationale equal to, and sometimes even superior to, that of the states they are fighting. Wars between states, revolutionary wars, and wars of national liberation are all part of the same political logic. Van Creveld is wrong in restricting the capacity to use war as a tool of political logic only to the state.³⁶⁵ Although some armed groups operate on the basis of an extra-political rationale (mafias, religious sects, racist gangs, street gangs), only in exceptional cases do they position themselves as active belligerents, a fact that may be overshadowed by the importance of the jihadist phenomenon.³⁶⁶

38. Clausewitz and the Red Brigades

In Italy, a commercial edition of *On War* was not made available to the general public until 1970.³⁶⁷ It's therefore unsurprising that Clausewitz was absent from the founding debates of the Red Brigades (RB). Up until the end of the '70s, he was mentioned by the Brigadists only incidentally, when they asserted that "Marighella was the Clausewitz of the 20th century."³⁶⁸

But Clausewitz found himself at the center of a crucial debate [see below] that followed the splits of 1981 and the setbacks of 1982.³⁶⁹ The

³⁶⁵ His analysis of the Algerian War is so far-fetched that it can only stem from his Zionist stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

³⁶⁶ Part of the jihadist movement's wars (and in varying proportions) involve a form of political rationality, part of what Creveld calls "the continuity of religion by other means."

³⁶⁷ An unabridged translation was made during the war, but this was reserved for staff officers. See "Clausewitz and Italy" by Virgilio Ilari (in collaboration with Luciano Bozzo and Giampiero Giacomello), in *Clausewitz Goes Global—Carl von Clausewitz in the 21st Century* (Berlin: Males Verlag, 2011), 182, 194. Interest in Clausewitz on the Italian Marxist left had been quite marginal until the 1970s. Gramsci had mentioned him only briefly in his prison notebooks.

³⁶⁸ Author's interview with former RB member (2013). Translation from French by the Editors.

³⁶⁹ 1982 was a devastating year for the Red Brigades. More than 500 brigadists were arrested: 300 as part of investigations into the RB prior to the split, more than 110 from the RB-Guerrilla Party, almost 80 from the "Walter Alasia column" and more than 50 from the RB-Combatant Communist Party.

initiator was one of the Red Brigades' founding members, Renato Curcio, and a number of other Red Brigades prisoners imprisoned with him in Palmi. In February 1982, they signed a document entitled *Forcing the Horizon*.³⁷⁰ At the end of 1982, in his book *Drops of Sun in the City of Specters*,³⁷¹ and again in early 1983 in a text entitled *Against Clausewitz*, Curcio took up the same theses, sometimes word for word. Curcio's positioning as a reader of Clausewitz since 1967³⁷² marks a key moment in his career. His position was no longer that of the classically Leninist Red Brigades, though not yet that of outright capitulation, which followed shortly afterwards.

Curcio refers to the phase in which capital invests in and determines all social relations as "total domination." He contrasts this with the phase of "formal domination," in which only the relations of production are invested and determined. According to Curcio (1981), this transformation calls for the abandonment of the classical Marxist model of the infrastructure (mode and relations of production) determining the politico-ideological superstructure. The contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie then becomes one of total social antagonism. The contradiction no longer opposes certain aspects, but the totality of the social system:

The absolute character of the antagonism of total real domination obliges us to redefine the dialectic between "politics," as the art of mediating contradictions, and "war," as their negation, their annihilation.

In the phase of formal domination, such a dialectic was summed up in Clausewitz's proposition that "war is the continuation of politics by other means"; in other words, war is an instrument of politics, a function of mediation, a transitional stage between "relative enemies." Mediation dominates over annihilation. Indeed, when Clausewitz formulated this principle, he was dealing with conflicts between states, i.e., in the final analysis, between fractions of the same class.

³⁷⁰ "Forzare l'orizzonte," in *Controinformazione*, February 1982, 7.

³⁷¹ "Gocce di sole nelle cita degli spettri," in *Corrispondenza internazionale*, 1982.

³⁷² According to Giorgio Bocca in *Il terrorismo italiano, 1970–78* (Milan: Rizzoli editore, 1978), note 1.

With Lenin, war between states gave way to “internal” war between parties. Nevertheless, the principles formulated by the Prussian general were not substantially modified. For Lenin, too, war was a circumscribed, transitory phase, and “insurrection,” like “partisan struggle,” had an extraordinary character. It’s no coincidence that his writings on partisan struggle from 1902 to 1906 refer to it as a “form of struggle”. Nevertheless, with Lenin, the concept of war began to be defined as “total enmity.” Until then, wars between states had developed according to established rules accepted by all belligerents. But such “total enmity” establishes that the October Revolution maintains an ambiguity between content and form: bourgeois-democratic for the former, proletarian for the latter.

Finally, with Mao, war definitively loses its exceptional, transitory character, to become “long lasting,” a constant determination of politics. But the qualitative leap to its absolute form has not yet been made.

Curcio tried to use Clausewitz against Lenin, but he could only do so by breaking with the Marxist conception of politics. By declaring politics as firstly “the art of mediating contradictions” (thus rejecting the Marxist resolution/overcoming of contradictions), and then “the personified will of the state,”³⁷³ Curcio adopts a definition that could be endorsed by Machiavelli or Clausewitz, but which would only be suitable for Max Weber, not Karl Marx. It is only by abandoning the Marxist extension of the realm of politics to the realm of social classes—an extension rejected by Weber—that Curcio can tackle the Leninist conception of revolutionary war.³⁷⁴

The Brigadists who were standing trial in Turin at the time, responded to Curcio by publishing their book entitled *Politics and Revolution*,³⁷⁵

³⁷³ This concept is historically linked to theories of sovereignty articulated by thinkers like Hobbes, who described the State as a *persona ficta* (a fictional person) through which the collective will is expressed.

³⁷⁴ Negri and Hardt would later also turn to Weber, with the same concern for avoiding Marxist theses on class warfare. See Michel Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (London: Penguin, 2004).

³⁷⁵ Andrea Coi, Prospero Gallinari, Francesco Piccioni, and Bruno Seghetti, *Politica e Rivoluzione* (Milan: Giuseppe Maj Editore, 1983).

which became one of the main references for the “orthodox” Red Brigades: the Red Brigades-Communist Combatant Parties. On a rigorously Leninist-Clausewitzian basis, they point out the issue that Curcio ignored: the seizure of power; the apparent radicality of Curcio’s turn actually masks the abandonment of Marxist-Leninist revolutionary fundamentals.

Politics and Revolution exposes that Curcio’s (and the Red Brigades-Guerrilla Parties³⁷⁶) fundamental concepts of “total war” and “total enmity”³⁷⁷ are anti-Marxist because they are anti-dialectical. Lenin does not speak of “total enmity” but of “irreconcilable antagonism” between classes; the difference is decisive: from the first concept, “total social war” is deduced from the second, proletarian revolution. The authors of *Politics and Revolution* explain that this thesis of “total war” originated with Carl Schmitt, whose influence on Curcio they do not fail to mention.³⁷⁸ And finally, the Red Brigades-Communist Parties denounced Curcio’s deviation in the *communiqué* issued in connection with their action against government advisor Giugni on May 3, 1983.

This high-level theoretical debate soon ceased owing to a lack of combatants willing and able to participate in it; Curcio pursued his shift to the point of renouncing armed struggle altogether and the Red Brigades-Guerrilla Parties were annihilated by State repression.

39. Conclusion

The relevance of Clausewitz’s thought for the Communist movement largely overlaps with that of the question of proletarian military doctrine. In a long unpublished article, Engels wrote:

But will not a new revolution which brings to power an entirely new class give rise, like the first one, to new means and ways of waging war, compared with which the present Napoleonic ones will appear just as obsolete and ineffective as

³⁷⁶ Formed after the 1981 split, bringing together the ultra-militarist and ultra-subjectivist currents of the Neapolitan, Roman, and Turin groups.

³⁷⁷ Or, depending on the translation, “total hostility.”

³⁷⁸ They reveal that the RB prisoners who took part in the internal discussions were well aware of the influence of Schmitt (and in particular his *Theory of the Partisan*) on Curcio. It was Curcio and those close to him who brought Schmitt into the debate. More surprisingly, *Politics and Revolution* reveals that Schmitt was presented to the prisoners as a “social-democratic” theorist.

those of the Seven Years' War compared with those of the first Revolution?³⁷⁹

The question of heritage arises for military art as it does for the fine arts: which parts of the heritage will be rejected by the revolutionary proletariat? Which parts will be reclaimed? And what transformations will the latter undergo?

From right-wing opportunism, which professes a slavish imitation of bourgeois models, to leftism, which denies that heritage has any value (aside from the historical), the spectrum is incredibly vast. In this light, the ultra-left's attack on Clausewitz is easy to understand:

The contradiction between the real totality of violence and the particular part of society in which it is exercised is found, with all its limitations and its narrow-mindedness, in the crudest formulation that the bourgeoisie could find on violence during its period of splendor—at the time of the anti-feudal bourgeois revolution: “war is simply the continuation of politics by other means” (Clausewitz). Hegel's contemporary uses the same method, separating the subjective world of the state and politics from the objective world of human and economic society. Based on this initial separation, Clausewitz situates war within the political sphere, or better still, makes it a kind of appendix, an extension. As Clausewitz's concepts are the theoretical expression of violence within bourgeois society, Engels and Lenin both paid them the greatest attention—just as Marx scrutinized, for example, the most eminent theoretician of capitalist political economy, Ricardo. It's not, then, that on every page, Marxism has taken up the best ideas of Ricardo or Clausewitz, and with them a basely utilitarian and therefore bourgeois vision. On the contrary, Marxism is aware that these two theorists, each in their own field, gave the most accurate and highest—the most “scientific”—formulation of bourgeois reality, which is precisely dual and contradictory. This is unlike the unitary conceptions of Marxism, which

³⁷⁹ Friedrich Engels, “Conditions and Prospects of a War of the Holy Alliance Against France in 1852,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 10, 542.

anticipate—based on a reality and practice already developed within present-day society in and by the proletariat—the future society of communism that will develop from the socialization already achieved.³⁸⁰

Or, to put it even more bluntly:

Clausewitz is to the military field what Hegel is to the philosophical field—and Marxism's attitude towards him is the same: in complete opposition and absolutely original³⁸¹

The question of a specifically proletarian military art (in its organizational forms, strategies, and tactics) has arisen on several occasions in different forms. The debate between Trotsky and the Tsaritsyn group³⁸² in 1918 and the debate between the same Trotsky and Frunze in the early '20s, are symptomatic of this problematic, which we find again, barely modified, during the Spanish Civil War.

The Tsaritsyn group was opposed to Trotsky's policy of staffing the Red Army with officers from the former imperial army, and turning it into a classical army. In October 1918, Trotsky appointed Sytin, a former imperial army general, to command the Southern Front and replaced Stalin with Shliapnikov, clashing head-on with the Tsaritsyn group. He even threatened Voroshilov with a court-martial trial. Lenin, only after a careful examination of the situation, concluded that a regular army was necessary and that it would be impossible to run one without the former officers, supported Trotsky's decision.³⁸³

Trotsky summed up the theses of the Tsaritsyn group:

³⁸⁰ "Le marxisme et la question militaire" ("Marxism and the Military Question"), *Le Fil du Temps*, no. 10, Paris, September 1974, 12–13. Translated from French by the Editors.

³⁸¹ "Le marxisme et la question militaire" ("Marxism and the Military Question"), 23. Translated from French by the Editors.

³⁸² The Tsaritsyn group was born of Stalin's union with the so-called "group of non-commissioned officers" (Voroshilov, Budyonny, Dybenko, and others who were to play a major role in the war against Hitler). Stalin had become the political commissar of the 10th Army, commanded by Voroshilov, which repelled the White Army's offensive on the southern front in the autumn of 1918. Budyonny commanded the cavalry on this southern front.

³⁸³ See the chapter "Attitude Towards Military Experts" in "All Out for the Fight Against Denikin!" (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 29). However, the following year, Lenin and the entire Central Committee supported the offensive-oriented theses of Sergey Kame-nev (commander of the Eastern Front) against those of Văciets (commander-in-chief of

The opposition assumed a more or less definite form during the first months of the organizing of the Red army. Its fundamental ideas found expression in a defense of the electoral method and in protests against the enlistment of experts, the introduction of military discipline, the centralizing of the army, and so on. The opposition tried to find some general theoretical formula for their stand. They insisted that a centralized army was characteristic of a capitalist state; revolution had to blot out not only positional war, but a centralized army as well. The very essence of revolution was its ability to move about, to deliver swift attacks, and to carry out maneuvers; its fighting force was embodied in a small, independent detachment made up of various arms; it was not bound to a base; in its operations it relied wholly on the support of a sympathetic populace; it could emerge freely in the enemy's rear, etc. In short, the tactics of a *small war*³⁸⁴ were proclaimed the tactics of revolution. This was all very abstract and was really nothing but an idealization of our weakness. The serious experience of the civil war very soon disproved these prejudices. The superiority of central organization and strategy over local improvisations, military separatism and federalism, revealed itself only too soon and too clearly in the experiences of the struggle.³⁸⁵

This debate cut across a whole range of issues, on which the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party and the Revolutionary Military Council decided one way or the other. The 1st Red Cavalry Army was formed against Trotsky's advice, although he signed the declaration of its creation under pressure. Under Budyonny's command, it played a decisive role

the Red Army), openly supported by Trotsky. Stalin proposed replacing Văciētis with S. Kamenev and won the argument.

³⁸⁴ "Small war" refers to irregular or guerrilla warfare, characterized by skirmishes, raids, and hit-and-run tactics rather than large-scale battles. Clausewitz discussed it as a form of warfare distinct from conventional armies, often used by smaller states or insurgent groups against more powerful adversaries.—Ed.

³⁸⁵ Leon Trotsky, *My Life: The Rise and Fall of a Dictator* (London: Thornton Butterworth Limited, 1930), 373–374.

in the defeat of Denikin and was a breeding ground for Red Marshals (Tymoshenko, Zhukov, and Rokossovsky served in its ranks).

The debate resurfaced after the civil war. In 1921, Frunze asserted that it was possible and necessary to forge a proletarian military doctrine, opposing Trotsky on this and several other points in a debate that took place before the 11th Party Congress. However, Frunze's positions were not those previously defended by the Tsaritsyn group, since he advocated for a centralized, homogeneous, and largely professionalized Red Army. One of the elements of Frunze's thinking was the primacy of the offensive. Frunze argued that Marx and Engels had consistently written that attack was the best form of defense, concluding that

The tactics of the Red Army have been and will be stamped by the seal of "activity." Conceived of in an offensive spirit, it is characterized by operations conducted with vigor and energy.³⁸⁶

Tukhachevsky also called for a regular army, describing the militia as the "ancient superstition" of the Second International:

A militia is characterized mainly by the contrast between the size of its numbers and its low efficiency. Large armies without a permanent military nucleus [that is, large militias,] cannot receive intensive training parallel to that of regular peacetime units, since they are assembled only by a mobilization order.³⁸⁷

The question of whether to choose between a militia and a regular army (which was settled definitively in 1939 with the abolition of the militia) was just one aspect of a debate that also encompassed tactical and technical issues (the mechanization of the armed forces, for example). It is important to note that the various debates that took place in the USSR around questions of military doctrine took place in a changing reality; the problems and potentialities of Soviet power were fundamentally different

³⁸⁶ Quoted in Dominique Venner, *Histoire de l'Armée rouge* ("History of the Red Army"), vol. 1 (Paris: Plon, 1981), 272. An otherwise very dislikeable book. Translated from French by the Editors.

³⁸⁷ Quoted in Raymond Garthoff, *La doctrine militaire soviétique* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1956), 33. Translated from French by the Editors.

during civil war (in a devastated country) in 1918 than in the defense of the socialist state (in a country with a powerful industrial base) in 1939—so much so that the same thesis could be correct at one moment and erroneous at another.

It is beyond the scope of this work to analyze these debates, in which Clausewitz was put up and pulled down by the protagonists.³⁸⁸ But suffice it to say that in practice, Clausewitz was almost always in favor of a critical but methodical use of bourgeois military art—the people's and proletarian character of revolutionary warfare did not invalidate his proposals, but enabled his limitations to be overcome, and the foundations to be laid for a proletarian science and art of war³⁸⁹ of a new type.

³⁸⁸ I have discussed this issue in a separate study: T. Derbent, "Towards a proletarian military doctrine (or not)—The Frunze-Trotsky debate of 1920–1921," *Revue Période*, October 2018. See pages 224–276 of the present edition.

³⁸⁹ We know that Clausewitz rejected the concept of "military science" in favor of "the art of war." Soviet military thought took up the concept of the art of war as conceived by Clausewitz (the art of war covers everything to do with strategy and tactics), but integrated it into a broader concept: that of military science. In addition to the system of principles defining the art of war, this included the study of war, the laws of war, and the preparation of the country for war (i.e., the social, political, economic, and organizational principles of Soviet military development, as well as the principles of education and training). See Jacques Sapir, *Le système militaire soviétique* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1987), 98 and following pages. Giáp also believed that there was a science of war ("as in all revolutionary activity, empiricism is not enough. There is a thought, a conception, a Marxist-Leninist military science," see his interview in *Études vietnamiennes*, no. 3, 1965), while the art of war defines "the organic relationship and interaction between its three components: strategy, operational art and tactics, and the role of each of them." ("National Liberation War in Vietnam," 274); this is an entirely orthodox approach.

Lenin and the War

*Contribution to the 100th anniversary of the
Zimmerwald Conference*

Introduction: Lenin and Clausewitz

Three months before the October Revolution, following insurrectionary demonstrations in Petrograd, Kerensky's Provisional Government issued a warrant for Lenin's arrest. In response, Lenin left the capital and clandestinely made his way across the Finnish border, only taking with him a small bag and two books: Karl Marx's *Civil War in France* and Clausewitz's *On War*. Clausewitz's influence on Marxism-Leninism began with Engels, was deepened by Mehring, and became decisive through Lenin's study.

At first glance, it could seem as if there was a great divide between the Prussian soldier, patriot, and monarchist, and the Russian professional revolutionary. But a deep intellectual affinity united the two: dialectical, methodical, caustic, creative thinking, founded on a solid philosophical culture. Lenin was quick to perceive the originality and richness of Clausewitz's thought, which had been misunderstood, distorted, and impoverished by a military caste which—both in France and Germany—brought the art of warfare to its lowest ebb in the First World War. As important as Clausewitz was for Lenin, so Lenin was for Clausewitz, in that the Russian revolutionary was the first statesman to apply his thinking in the realm of political action.

In his field, Clausewitz's thought is the equivalent of Hegel's in philosophy, or Adam Smith's in economics: one of the foundational sources of Marxism-Leninism. It wasn't until the military writings of Mao Zedong, himself a great reader of Clausewitz,³⁹⁰ that a revolutionary military policy was fully and coherently theorized; neither Marx, Engels, Lenin, nor Stalin had produced a work that surpassed *On War*, just as *Capital* surpassed *The Wealth of Nations*.

Whether it was Mehring's writings that prompted Lenin to read Clausewitz is still an open question.³⁹¹ What is certain is that Lenin read the passages in which Mehring praised Clausewitz's thought, before under-

³⁹⁰ Zhang Yuan-Lin, *Mao Zedong Und Carl von Clausewitz: Theorien Des Krieges, Beziehung, Darstellung Und Vergleich* (Mannheim University Press, 1995).

³⁹¹ Schössler suggests the existence of this influence as early as Mehring's 1904 articles on the Russo-Japanese War. Dietmar Schössler, *Clausewitz–Engels–Mahan: Grundriss Einer Ideengeschichte Militärischen Denkens* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2009), 388, 393.

taking the reading of *On War* in the Bern library, during his second exile³⁹² between autumn 1914 and spring 1915. In his notebook, he copied substantial excerpts (in German) accompanied by a few remarks in Russian. Extracts which, tellingly, grew in number and scope as he read on.

³⁹² His exile was the result of a wave of repression following the defeat of the 1905 Revolution. Lenin had gone to Galicia, which was Austrian at the time, but had to leave in 1914 following the declaration of war.

Part I: Theory of War

1.1. War as a Political Instrument

The first thesis of Clausewitz of which Lenin took note was his famous formula describing war as “the continuation of politics by other means.” Clausewitz first mentioned it in his *Note of July 10, 1827 [on the state of the manuscript]*,³⁹³ before copying paragraph 24 of Chapter 1 of Book 1 in its entirety.³⁹⁴ Later, when Clausewitz addressed the question again in chapter 6 B of Book VIII, Lenin reproduced extensive passages, noting in the margin: “most important chapter.”³⁹⁵

But of what politics is war the continuation? Firstly, of *object-politics*, i.e., the set of historical, social, economic, technical, cultural, and ideological factors that constitute the social conditions of war, making it a socio-historical product.³⁹⁶ Secondly, of *subject-politics*, or policy, that is, political action, the “conduct of public affairs” inspired by a set of motives and guided by a specific aim. In this sense, the Clausewitzian concept of “continuation” is to be understood as follows:

1. The specificity of war, namely the use of armed force, which creates a particular situation governed by specific laws;
2. The inclusion of war in the broader totality of politics. War is only one of the means of doing politics;³⁹⁷

³⁹³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 69–70; T. Derbent, “Notes de Lénine Sur Clausewitz (‘Lenin’s Notes on Clausewitz’),” in *Clausewitz et La Guerre Populaire (‘Lenin and the People’s War’)* (Brussels: Aden, 2004), 132.

³⁹⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, 79; Derbet, “Notes de Lénine Sur Clausewitz (‘Lenin’s Notes on Clausewitz’),” 132–133.

³⁹⁵ It is in this chapter that we find the famous passage: “It is, of course, well-known that the only source of war is politics, the intercourse of governments and peoples; but it is apt to be assumed that war suspends that intercourse and replaces it by a wholly different condition, ruled by no law but its own. We maintain, on the contrary, that war is simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means.” Clausewitz, *On War*, 605; Derben, “Notes de Lénine Sur Clausewitz,” 158.

³⁹⁶ “The origin and the form taken by a war are not the result of any ultimate resolution of the vast array of circumstances involved, but only of those features that happen to be dominant.” Clausewitz, *On War*, 580.

³⁹⁷ “The concept that war is only a branch of political activity; that it is in no sense autonomous.” Clausewitz, 605.

3. A complex relationship between the aims *within* a war (its *Ziel*—i.e., the destruction of the enemy army, the capture of its capital or one of its provinces) and the larger purpose *of* the war (its *Zweck*—i.e., the new situation created as a result of the war: the conquest of a province, the establishment of a new political regime, the annexation of the enemy country).

Clausewitz points out that if we separate war from politics, war would be no more than the expression of hatred between two peoples. But warfare cannot be reduced to mere animosity, to a struggle to the death pitting two peoples blindly against each other. As Lenin summarizes in a sidenote, war is part of a whole, and that whole is politics. It is by establishing this relationship that Clausewitz makes war a theoretical object.³⁹⁸ In this light, all wars become phenomena of the same nature.

1.2 War and Antagonism

One of the truisms of counterrevolutionary discourse, whether on the left or the right, consists of reducing those who use violence to the use of such violence alone. A more nuanced form of this is the claim that Lenin's politics is a mere continuation of war. This accusation has been leveled at Lenin, Marxism, and the USSR as a state. A particularly bold formulation of this claim can be found in J. F. C. Fuller, sometimes referred to as "the greatest military thinker of the 20th century," who wrote (in 1961!) that

Soviet political relations, both internal and external, are analogous with those within and between primitive tribes. . . . To both the tribesman and the revolutionary "to destroy or be destroyed" is the governing slogan, and as in the animal world, there is no distinction between war and peace.³⁹⁹

There are many versions of this evaluation, one of the least libelous being by Jean Vincent Holeindre:

³⁹⁸ Later, war would become a theoretical object through the intercession of other relationships: Bouthoul and Feund, for instance, based their polemology on a certain type of anthropology.

³⁹⁹ John Frederick Charles Fuller, *The Conduct of War, 1789–1961: A Study of the Impact of the French, Industrial, and Russian Revolutions on War and Its Conduct* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 202.

[Lenin's] politics are thought out from the point of view of class struggle, which necessarily has a violent character, and from the perspective that peace will be established as a result of the realization of the communist idea. This is where Clausewitz's Formula is overturned: in Lenin's eyes, violence precedes and institutes politics. In Lenin's theory, violence must be conceived and implemented by the vanguard party. The vocation of politics is not to tame violence, but to organize it in the revolutionary moment with the aim of putting an end to it once and for all, as soon as the objectives of the revolution have been achieved.⁴⁰⁰

Considering the vocation of politics to be the domestication of violence is a Hobbesian, liberal view, alien not only to Lenin but to Clausewitz, Machiavelli, and many others, for whom war does not represent the negation of politics but one of its manifestations.

The Marxist-Leninist conception of history is founded on the notion of contradiction, which can take the form of social antagonism—as illustrated by the opening line of the *Communist Manifesto*:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.⁴⁰¹

In French, we have long been confronted with a recurring translation error which reveals the relative complexity of the question. The standard French translation of the word “Kampf” is “guerre” (Krieg), rather than “lutte” (struggle) or “combat” (fight). This error seriously misrepresents the concept's meaning, since antagonism is not necessarily belligerence,

⁴⁰⁰ Jean-Vincent Holeindre, “Violence, Guerre et litig—Études Sur Le Retournement de La ‘Formule’ de Clausewi’,” *Res Militaris* 1, no. 3 (Summer 2011).

⁴⁰¹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party & Principles of Communism* (Paris: Foreign Languages Press, 2020), 33.

especially since class struggle is “sometimes open, sometimes concealed.” This is an essential clarification, as it suggests that historical agents, even though they may not be concealing their intentions, may nevertheless be blind to the antagonism between them.

Moreover, for Marxism-Leninism, the scope of politics is broader than that of the struggle between antagonistic classes. If societies are divided by the class contradictions that determine historical upheavals, they are also marked by innumerable conflicts of interest between peoples, nations, classes, particular social strata, class factions, and so on. Not all these conflicts of interest imply a logic of open warfare, firstly because they may be offset by a community of higher interests, and secondly because war is costly and its outcome uncertain: the game of war may not seem worth the effort. In the historic struggle between the English bourgeoisie and aristocracy, the period of Cromwellian warfare in the 17th century was rather short lived compared to the process of the conversion of a large part of the English aristocracy to the delights of capitalism. Today, the US and China are experiencing numerous conflicts of interest, leading to increasingly hostile practices of various kinds (espionage, disinformation, taxation or limitation of imports, etc.); yet the US and China are fundamentally at peace. In politics, peace is not the exception. Peace does not presuppose the absence of contradictions; it is the state in which armed violence is not considered to be the appropriate means of resolving conflicts of interest.

In the case of contradictions between antagonistic classes, a certain warlike relationship persists, however tenuously, in times of peace. First, because the more violent episodes of the past are still present during times of peace (for example, the legacy of the Paris Commune). Second, because certain class-conscious political forces, having no illusions about cooperation between classes with antagonistic interests and convinced of the inevitability of confrontation, carry out acts of war during times of peace as a preparation/anticipation of future periods of open war.⁴⁰²

The idea of a period of peace between antagonistic classes leads us to reflect on the way in which the *Manifesto* spoke of a struggle that is

⁴⁰² In Italy, for example, during the intense class struggle of the late '60s and early '70s, the Red Brigades carried out armed propaganda with the aim of leading the masses to armed revolution, while the P2 Masonic lodge (“Propaganda Due”), on the other hand, provoked assassination attempts to bring about martial law.

sometimes concealed, sometimes open. When the power of a class is well secured, its devices of coercion are used only exceptionally. Its ideological omnipotence succeeds—if not in preventing any expression of the specific interests of the dominated class, then at least in keeping said expression at a low level of antagonism. At this stage, most of the dominated class does not see itself as such, but dilutes or splits its identity along other lines (national, ethnic, religious). In such periods, in the absence of a clear enemy and deluded by its own ideological categories, the ruling class itself often perceives its own identity as a mere part of a national or religious community. This is not a situation of war in disguise, but one of peace between classes, which lasts until the historical agents—both objective (war, economic crisis) and subjective (political action)—transform the class *in* itself into a class *for* itself.

For Lenin, pacifist strategies are pacifist illusions. Only revolution can cut the knot of social contradictions. The class struggle is destined to transform itself into a class war by the transition from a period marked by an accumulation of quantitative changes (more class consciousness, more organization, more revolutionary theory and practice) to a phase in which qualitative change takes place (the passage from peaceful to armed struggle):

A Marxist bases himself on the class struggle, and not social peace. In certain periods of acute economic and political crises the class struggle ripens into a direct civil war, i.e., into an armed struggle between two sections of the people.⁴⁰³

The proletariat constitutes itself as a class in its own right through partial struggles, through an effort to organize and raise political consciousness—but this does not yet make it a partisan of open warfare. Consciousness of the fundamental contradiction between class interests does not necessarily imply belief in the need for war. The idea that parliament or the state float above social classes, or that they can at least be used to transform society, is likely to result in a pacifist outlook. War is costly and risky and clashes with long-held moral values: it is inevitable that nonviolent strategies will be favored as long as they seem likely to succeed. What's more, the process leading from the class in itself to the class for itself, and subsequently from class struggle to class war, is far from linear. It involves

⁴⁰³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 11 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1962).

both rapid advances and equally abrupt setbacks. This is why Lenin criticized the armed actions of the Narodniks, as in his view, proletarian politics called for the work of consciousness raising and organization, which included an antagonistic dimension (strikes, etc.) but did not yet require armed violence.

1.3. War As an Object of History

Lenin reproduces the sections of chapter 3 B of Book VIII of *On War* dealing with the transformation of warfare in the light of historical changes, particularly those brought about by the French Revolution. According to Clausewitz, it is not in the new ideas and new processes that the French Revolution introduced into the art of war that one should look for the causes of its armies' accomplishments, but in the new state of society and its national character.

Only a government freed of all the special rights, privileges, internal barriers, monopolies, and particularisms that characterized the Ancien Régime could launch a genuine national mobilization and set up a war economy. All of France's resources were mobilized in the service of war, and the military might that resulted, far surpassed the combined strength of the opposing dynastic armies. Unlike the princes' armed forces, made up of mercenary vagabonds trained by the drill and led by the rod, the French army was a national army of citizens, whose recruitment and promotion was based on merit, not birth.

With the armies of the Revolution (which Napoleon inherited), warfare underwent major changes and took on a new form—not because the French government had emancipated itself from the constraints of politics, but because the Revolution had changed the foundations of politics itself, thus awakening new forces and revealing new means of increasing and directing the dynamics of war. These changes in military art were the outcome of those in politics.

In the chapter entitled “Scale of the Military Objective and of the Effort to Be Made,” Clausewitz looks back at the historical changes brought about in the character of warfare (from the Tatar hordes and the small republics of antiquity, to ancient Rome, the vassals of the Middle Ages and the wars of the 17th and 18th centuries):

The Tartar people and army had been one; in the republics of antiquity and during the Middle Ages the people (if we confine the concept to those who had the rights of citizens) had still played a prominent part; but in the circumstances of the eighteenth century the people's part had been extinguished. The only influence the people continued to exert on war was an indirect one—through its general virtues or shortcomings. . . . This was the state of affairs at the outbreak of the French Revolution. . . . [T]he full weight of the nation was thrown into the balance. . . . Since Bonaparte, then, war, first among the French and subsequently among their enemies, again became the concern of the people as a whole, took on an entirely different character, or rather closely approached its true character, its absolute perfection. There seemed no end to the resources mobilized; all limits disappeared in the vigor and enthusiasm shown by governments and their subjects. . . . War, untrammelled by any conventional restraints, had broken loose in all its elemental fury. This was due to the peoples' new share in these great affairs of state; and their participation, in turn, resulted partly from the impact that the Revolution had on the internal conditions of every state and partly from the danger that France posed to everyone. Will this always be the case in future? From now on will every war in Europe be waged with the full resources of the state, and therefore have to be fought only over major issues that affect the people? Or shall we again see a gradual separation taking place between government and people? Such questions are difficult to answer, and we are the last to dare to do so. . . . [Our objective:] show how every age had its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions. Each period, therefore, would have held to its own theory of war, even if the urge had always and universally existed to work things out on scientific principles. It follows that the events of every age must be judged in the light of its own peculiarities. One cannot, therefore, understand and appreciate the commanders of the past until one has placed oneself

in the situation of their times, not so much by a painstaking study of all its details as by an accurate appreciation of its major determining features.⁴⁰⁴

Lenin recopied this excerpt, described it as important, and summed it up in the following way: "Each era, its wars." And so it proved to be for revolutionary wars as well.

1.4. The Rise Toward the Extremes and the Clausewitzian Trinity

Lenin also showed a keen interest in analyzing the political causes of the rise of extreme forms of war and of the process of de-escalation, as weak motives and tensions take war away from its "ideal," "abstract" model: absolute war, the unrestrained outbreak of violence aimed at crushing the enemy to the bone.

When considering the differences in the nature of war, Clausewitz develops a remarkably dialectical line of thought, which Lenin would carefully reiterate:

The more powerful and inspiring the motives for war, the more they affect the belligerent nations and the fiercer the tensions that precede the outbreak, the closer will war approach its abstract concept, the more important will be the destruction of the enemy, the more closely will the military aims and the political objects of war coincide, and the more military and less political will war appear to be. On the other hand, the less intense the motives, the less will the military element's natural tendency to violence coincide with political directives. As a result, war will be driven further from its natural course, the political object will be more and more at variance with the aim of ideal war, and the conflict will seem increasingly *political* in character.⁴⁰⁵

Thus, even when war appears to be absurd and senseless, drawing from within its own fabric the reasons for its escalation to new extremes

⁴⁰⁴ Clausewitz, *On War*, 589–593.

⁴⁰⁵ Clausewitz, 87–88.

and pitting different nations against each other, politics remains the determining factor in war. In fact, in such instances, it is even more decisive than ever. Only when war is tempered by the influence of political power does it betray the weakness of its own political objectives and motivations. As Lenin summarized: “appearance is still not actuality. The more war seems ‘military,’ the more profoundly it is political; the more ‘political’ war appears to be, the less profoundly political it actually is.”⁴⁰⁶

During the repression of the 1905 Russian Revolution, Lenin was able to assess the value of Marx’s lessons on the Paris Commune. These lessons, set out in *The Civil War in France*, can be summed up as follows: the necessity of centralism, of decisiveness, and of the use of force. And yet, it was only gradually, as the situation grew more perilous, that the Bolsheviks acquired the means to wage civil war: they created the Cheka⁴⁰⁷ on the spur of the moment, and it only came to play a real role after the assassination of Bolshevik leader Volodarsky. The death penalty itself, a terrorist measure *par excellence*, was not introduced until the spring of 1918. But despite these hesitations and improvisations, the Bolsheviks were able to carry out the “rise towards the extremes” of violence and save the revolution from the dangers that struck it down in Finland, Poland, Hungary, and Germany.⁴⁰⁸

According to Clausewitz (whom Lenin also quoted in his following train of thought), wars are as different as the motives behind them and

⁴⁰⁶ V. I. Lenin, “Lenin’s Notebook on Clausewitz,” in *Soviet Armed Forces Review Annual*, ed. Donald E. Davis, trans. Walter S. G. Kohn, vol. 1 (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1977), 196.

⁴⁰⁷ The Cheka was the Bolshevik governments’ security agency during the early days of the founding of the Soviet Union, focused on suppressing counterrevolutionaries and safeguarding the socialist state according to Marxist-Leninist principles.—Ed.

⁴⁰⁸ In 1918, Finland went through a civil war between White and Red forces, resulting in the defeat of the revolutionaries of the Finnish Socialist Workers’ Republic and the declaration of the Kingdom of Finland under German control. In Poland, the Provisional Polish Revolutionary Committee controlled only the regions of Podlasie and parts of Mazovia. Following the triumph of the regular Polish armies over the Soviets, the committee was soon dissolved. The Hungarian Soviet Republic, led by Béla Kun in 1919, emerged after the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and attempted to establish a communist state in Hungary. Kun’s government implemented sweeping reforms and land redistribution, but faced internal opposition and external intervention, leading to its downfall after a few months. In Germany, the 1918 revolution saw the emergence of workers’ councils modeled on the Russian soviets. Under the command of Social Democratic traitors, the reactionary Freikorps troops suppressed the workers’ uprisings of January 1919.—Ed.

the political relations that precede them. War is a true shape-shifter not only because of such differences, but also because of the combinations of factors, tendencies, and phenomena that are peculiar to it, and which Clausewitz presents in the form of a trinity: the feeling of hatred and hostility (which drives the people), the set of objective and subjective factors at play (which the general staff has to sort out), and the rational objectives (which the government has to judge).

1.5. Lenin and Other Aspects of Clausewitzian Thought

When reading and commenting on Clausewitz, Lenin also dwelled on the role played in war by the people;⁴⁰⁹ on the role of the general staff;⁴¹⁰ on the critique of the doctrine of key positions (the key position in enemy territory, says Clausewitz, is its army—to which Lenin adds in the margin: “witty and clever!”); on the conduct and character of a regular army; on the concept of the “decisive battle”; on the advantages of the defensive; on the narrowness of the general staffs’ vision, etc.

He goes on to discuss the question of courage (that of the soldier in the face of physical danger, and that of the warlord confronted with his responsibilities), as well as Clausewitz’s digressions on the legitimacy of theoretical activity, and the dialectic between the particular and the general that should characterize it.

Lenin’s notes on Clausewitz reveal a particular interest in the theses relating to “military virtue,” namely those qualities that are peculiar to a regular army hardened by victory and defeat. In fact, Clausewitz theorized about the “military virtue” of regular troops in order to distinguish it from the military qualities of the people in arms, in order to examine their respective merits, the situations in which both are best employed, and so on.

Given that the modalities of confrontation can never be freely chosen, certain conditions demand that the forces of revolution provide themselves

⁴⁰⁹ “Although one single inhabitant of a theater of operations has as a rule no more noticeable influence on the war than a drop of water on a river, the collective influence of the country’s inhabitants is far from negligible, even when we are not dealing with popular insurrection. At home, everything works more smoothly—assuming the public is not wholly disaffected.” Clausewitz, *On War*, 373.

⁴¹⁰ Lenin also dwells on Clausewitz’s observation in Chapter 30 of Book VI that the general staff tends to overestimate issues that are directly under its control (such as the topography of the theater of war) and that, since military history is written by the general staff, it is these aspects that are generally emphasized at the expense of others no less important.

with the means required to develop said “military virtue,” since the inherent qualities of a people in arms (enthusiasm, fighting spirit, creativity) are unable to resolve all problems. It was Lenin who first understood, in the field of proletarian military thought, that the armament of the masses could, under certain conditions, be insufficient, and that the revolution might have to equip itself with a standing army. This went against many prejudices stemming from the anti-militarist tradition of the workers’ movement and anticipated the difficulties of a people’s government confronted with the onset and conduct of a conventional war (Russia 1918–21, Spain 1936, etc.).

Part 2: Imperialist War, War of Liberation

2.1. The Class Character of War

Clausewitz, referring to the new character of warfare brought about by the French revolution, writes that “[t]he people became a participant in war, instead of governments and armies as heretofore, [and as such] the full weight of the nation was thrown into the balance.”⁴¹¹ According to Lenin, who introduces a class analysis into the subject, this was in fact the war “of the French bourgeoisie and perhaps of the entire bourgeoisie”—even if the revolutionary wars and the wars waged by Napoleon’s French Empire may have had a certain “national” character, insofar as they also expressed the struggle of the popular masses against absolutism, national oppression, and feudalism.

In the same chapter, Clausewitz explains that while

[i]t is, of course, well known that the only source of war is politics—the intercourse of governments and peoples; but it is apt to be assumed that war suspends that intercourse and replaces it by a wholly different condition, ruled by no law but its own.⁴¹²

Far from disappearing with the onset of war, political life and struggle continue and, in fact, shape the course of war itself. It was on this basis that Lenin was able to attack Kautsky and Plekhanov, who denounced their government’s imperialist aims in peacetime but joined the side of the bourgeoisie in wartime. As early as May–June 1915, in his pamphlet directed against the leading figures of social-chauvinism, Lenin drew on his most recent reading of Clausewitz:

to be able to assess the concrete situation, [Plekhanov] says, we must first of all find out who started it and punish him; all other problems will have to wait until another situation arises. . . . Plekhanov has plucked out a quotation from the German Social-Democratic press: the Germans themselves, before the

⁴¹¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 592.

⁴¹² Clausewitz, 605.

war, admitted that Austria and Germany had “started it,” he says, and there you are. He does not mention the fact that the Russian socialists repeatedly exposed the czarist plans of conquest of Galicia, Armenia, etc. He does not make the slightest attempt to study the economic and diplomatic history of at least the past three decades, which history proves conclusively that the conquest of colonies, the looting of foreign countries, the ousting and ruining of the more successful rivals have been the backbone of the politics of both groups of the now belligerent powers.

With reference to wars, the main thesis of dialectics, which has been so shamelessly distorted by Plekhanov to please the bourgeoisie, is that “war is simply the continuation of politics by other [i.e., violent] means.” Such is the formula of Clausewitz,⁴¹³ one of the greatest writers on the history of war, whose thinking was stimulated by Hegel. And it was always the standpoint of Marx and Engels, who regarded any war as the continuation of the politics of the powers concerned—and the various classes within these countries—in a definite period.

Plekhanov’s crude chauvinism is based on exactly the same theoretical stand as the more subtle and saccharo-conciliatory chauvinism of Kautsky, who uses the following arguments when he gives his blessing to the desertion of the socialists of all countries to the side of their “own” capitalists:

It is the right and duty of everyone to defend his fatherland; true internationalism consists in this right being recognized for the socialists of all nations, including those who are at war with my nation . . . (See *Die Neue Zeit*, October 2, 1914, and other works by the same author.)

Indeed, there had been debate in the Second International as to whether the multiplication of wars (the Boer War, the Spanish-American War, the Russo-Japanese War) was a mere coincidence or the expres-

⁴¹³ Here, Lenin inserts the entire passage from *On War* and its references.

sion of a historical trend. Lenin's analysis of world war as "imperialist" in nature, accompanied his work on imperialism in general.⁴¹⁴ The term does not simply denounce the annexationist aims of the belligerent powers; it expresses the historical content of a war that occurs when the capitalist mode of production has spread to the whole world, when there are no longer any "virgin" territories to colonize, and when the expansion of one power can only take place at the expense of another.

Lenin's inclusion of the class character broadens the horizon of Clausewitz's theory. Lenin argued that a policy (and the war it determines) serves the interests of one class and undermines the interests of another. This vision opposed that of the Second International's ideologues, who were quick to emphasize the "national" character of war. If war seems to have a national character because part of the masses enthusiastically supports it, the real character of war is to be found in its political cause, and in this case in the imperialist aims of the belligerent powers. Imperialist policies are the cause of war, they give it meaning and determine not only its nature, but also its revolutionary potential. As Lukács points out:

War is, as Clausewitz defined it, only the continuation of politics; but it is so *in all respects*. In other words, it is not only in foreign affairs that war is merely the ultimate and most active culmination of a policy which a country has hitherto followed "peacefully." For the internal class relations of a country as well (and of the whole world), it only marks the intensification and ultimate climax of those tendencies which were already at work within society in "peacetime."⁴¹⁵

The question of popular enthusiasm for war, that of the "instigator of war" (i.e., which of the powers "provoked" the inter-imperialist war), or that of the motives invoked by each of the powers involved (the fight for freedom, for civilization, etc.), obscure rather than illuminate the real character of war.

⁴¹⁴ In 1916, Lenin completed *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*.

⁴¹⁵ Georg Lukács, *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of His Thought* (New York: Verso, 2009), 51.

2.2. The Political Subject of War

For Clausewitz, the political subject is the state, and war is war between nations. He conceives of particular interests, whether individual or collective, but for him politics

is nothing in itself; it is simply the trustee for all these interests [the rational interests of the state and its citizens] against other states. That it can err, subserve the ambitions, private interests, and vanity of those in power, is neither here nor there. In no sense can the art of war ever be regarded as the preceptor of policy, and here we can only treat policy as representative of all interests of the community.⁴¹⁶

In short, in one way or another, the state “represents” the nation it governs. It can lead this nation to war, and is therefore the ultimate political agent. In his account of the conflicts that followed one another from Antiquity to the Napoleonic empire, Clausewitz does not list the Peasants’ War in Germany, the Wars of Religion in France and England, nor any civil wars. His *On War* shows a clear unease with these phenomena.

According to Lenin, this section (which he painstakingly re-transcribed) marks a rapprochement with Marxism. But a rapprochement only. For Marxism, politics is the complex set of manifestations of class interests; it is the more or less coherent and organized action of classes (and class fractions) to realize their interests, and at a higher stage, the action of the institutions they establish (party, state, soviet, trade union, army, etc.). Lenin himself takes the point of view of a non-state politico-military force: the Russian workers’ movement organized by the Bolsheviks. From this new, broader, and deeper conception of the political subject, Lenin adopts the Clausewitzian analysis point by point: war (just like negotiations) follows the logic of politics, but has its own “language” (in the same way that diplomacy possesses its “language”). Analyzing war reveals specific laws, including its tendency to develop into extreme forms (and the fact that this tendency is tempered by the political stakes involved), or its threefold nature: political logic, the art of war, and the sense of hostility.

⁴¹⁶ Clausewitz, *On War*, 606–607.

The question of whether Clausewitz's theses should be applied to non-state subjects remains open to debate. According to Martin Van Creveld, the Israeli military essayist who wrote a seminal work on the substitution of "asymmetric" warfare for conventional warfare,

strictly speaking, the dictum that war is the continuation of politics means nothing more or less than that it represents an instrument in the hands of the state, *insofar as the state employs violence for political ends*. It does not mean that war serves any kind of interest in any kind of community; or, if it does mean that, then it is little more than a meaningless cliché.⁴¹⁷

For Van Creveld, not only does the asymmetric type of warfare emerge very late in history, it is in fact already on its way out, and Clausewitz's lessons with it.

One current of US military thought has reacted to this alleged "discovery" of asymmetry. For this school of thought, the essence of strategy consists precisely of exploiting one's advantages and one's opponent's weaknesses.⁴¹⁸ This lead Conrad Crane to distinguish two ways of waging war: "the asymmetric one and the stupid one."⁴¹⁹ If we consider that asymmetrical warfare takes on a specific character, not as warfare between the weak and the strong (which is simply "dissymmetrical" warfare), but in terms of strategy (targeting the population and the civil administration rather than the armed forces, and/or considering the population as the battleground and the object of the war), we can see that there's nothing very innovative here either.

All the more so as the non-state entities involved in so-called "asymmetrical" wars (Maoist guerrillas in the Philippines, PKK in Kurdistan, Hezbollah in Lebanon, etc.) operate according to a political rationale equal to, and sometimes even superior to, that of the states they are fight-

⁴¹⁷ Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

⁴¹⁸ Part of what Clausewitz calls the "principle of polarity."

⁴¹⁹ Conrad Crane teaches at the US Army War College and Lukas Milevski at the National Defense University. See Lukas Milevski, "Asymmetry Is Strategy, Strategy Is Asymmetry," *Joint Force Quarterly* 75 4th Quarter (September 30, 2014), <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/JFQ/Joint-Force-Quarterly-75/Article/577565/asymmetry-is-strategy-strategy-is-asymmetry/> and Emile Simpson, *War from the Ground Up: Twenty-First Century Combat as Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 140.

ing. Wars between states, revolutionary wars, and wars of national liberation are all part of the same political logic. Van Creveld is wrong in restricting the capacity to use war as a tool of political logic only to the state. Although some armed groups operate on the basis of an extra-political rationale (mafias, religious sects, racist gangs, street gangs), only in exceptional cases do they position themselves as active belligerents, a fact that may be overshadowed by the importance of the jihadist phenomenon.

2.3 Just Wars, Unjust Wars

From Clausewitz's formula linking war to politics, we only retained the primacy of political authority over military power. By adding to this an analysis of the political nature of a particular war—fundamentally, its class character—Lenin was able to identify its historical and moral character, and thus distinguish between just and unjust wars:

To recognize defense of the fatherland means recognizing the legitimacy and justice of war. Legitimacy and justice from what point of view? Only from the point of view of the socialist, proletariat and its struggle for its emancipation. We do not recognize any other point of view. If war is waged by the exploiting class with the object of strengthening its rule as a class, such a war is a criminal war, and "defensism" in such a war is a base betrayal of socialism. If war is waged by the proletariat after it has conquered the bourgeoisie in its own country, and is waged with the object of strengthening and developing socialism, such a war is legitimate and "holy."⁴²⁰

This is a notable expansion on Clausewitz's thematic approach, since Clausewitz, apart from the moral advantages he attributes to the attacked nation, emphasizes only moral factors that are extraneous to the character of warfare itself, which are therefore likely to benefit both belligerents (e.g., the "military virtue" of the troops). The military impact of the Marxist-Leninist approach lies in the fundamental adherence of the popular masses to the just war, and thus a higher degree of mobilization, endurance, and fighting spirit.

⁴²⁰ "'Left-Wing' Childishness," in *Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, vol. 27 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965).

It was Mehring who opened this path by rejecting the concept of “defensive war” in favor of the concept of “just war.” Indeed, the concept of “defensive war” can mask the imperialist character of a war. It was in the name of self-defense that Germany mobilized against Russia and France against Germany in 1914; it was on the same basis that the German and French social-chauvinists rallied their bourgeoisie. The concept of just war—revolutionary war and war of national liberation, in which peoples fight for their true interests is quite different.

[I]t is not the defensive or offensive character of the war, but the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat, or—to put it better—the interests of the international movement of the proletariat—that represent the sole criterion for considering and deciding the attitude of the Social-Democrats to any particular event in international relations.⁴²¹

Lenin's thoughts date back to 1908, but the problem resurfaced with force in 1914, when the leaders of the Second International aligned themselves with their respective bourgeoisie by asserting that the enemy nation had declared the war.

2.4 Wars of National Liberation

In respect to wars of national liberation, Lenin was a true “purifier” of Marxism. And a lot had to be done! Back in 1848, political, social, and national issues seemed intertwined to all parties involved; both the liberal bourgeoisie and the proletarian vanguard were in favor of “national liberation” (which in this context took the form of German unification—as opposed to the dusty reactionary principalities), while reactionaries identified and fought the proponents of German unity and those of democracy as if they were a single enemy.

This explains why the democratic movement was so enthusiastic at the outbreak of the Second Schleswig War against Denmark (which resulted in the annexation of Schleswig and Holstein to Prussia)⁴²² and, above all, why

⁴²¹ “Bellicose Militarism and the Anti-Militarist Tactics of Social-Democracy,” in *Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, vol. 15 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965, 15).

⁴²² The Democratic Party was steeped in nationalism and, while hostile to Bismarck and the reactionary Prussian state, also made Schleswig-Holstein a German national issue.

Marx and Engels were so hostile towards the Czech national cause.⁴²³ At the time, Marx and Engels's position was imbued with a "Great German" outlook—even if its criterion was determined by the revolutionary cause's best interests—as the main reason for their hostility was that Slavic nationalist movements (particularly Pan Slavism) favored the policies of the Russian Empire. The Russian Empire, the main reactionary force of the time, had intervened militarily not only within its own borders (in Poland) but also beyond (in Hungary), in order to resist any challenge to the balance of power established by the Holy Alliance at the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

Marx and Engels would refine their positions, but it was Lenin who, while justifying/contextualizing Marx's and Engels's positions on the subject of the Southern Slavs, would strip the national question of its pre-Marxist cloak.

Here, Raymond Aron nevertheless thought he discovered a contradiction in Lenin's reasoning:

In defining the nature of war, Lenin swept aside national passions indifferently and continued to follow the Marxist interpretation of the society of states. But in defining annexation he referred to the will of the people. He condemned the patriotic fervor of 1914 and approved in advance the desire of Finland, Poland and even the Ukraine to be independent.⁴²⁴

In short, he claimed that Lenin deemed the national feelings of the masses relevant when it came to obtaining independence for Poland, and negligible (a product of bourgeois propaganda) when it came to "liberating" Alsace-Lorraine.

To this point, *The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up* is a remarkable text, because it defines the Leninist position against the chauvinist Right, but also against the Zimmerwaldian⁴²⁵ Marxist Left which

⁴²³ Simon Petermann, *Marx, Engels et Les Conflits Nationaux* (Brussels: Émile Van Ballberghe, 1987).

⁴²⁴ Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz, Philosopher of War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986), 276.

⁴²⁵ The Zimmerwald Conference was a 1915 meeting of anti-war socialists during World War I. Differences emerged between those advocating for a pacifist approach to end the war (the Zimmerwaldians) and Lenin, who argued for turning the war into a revolutionary civil war against capitalism.

asserted "that socialism will abolish all national oppression, since it abolishes the class interests that lead to this oppression."

What has this argument [objects Lenin,] about the *economic* prerequisites for the abolition of national oppression, which are very well known and undisputed, to do with a discussion of one of the forms of political oppression, namely, the forcible retention of one nation within the state frontiers of another? This is nothing but an attempt to evade political questions!⁴²⁶

It is *impossible* to abolish national (or any other political) oppression under capitalism, since this *requires* the abolition of classes, i.e., the introduction of socialism. But while being based on economics, socialism cannot be reduced to economics alone. A foundation—socialist production—is essential for the abolition of national oppression, but this foundation must also carry a democratically organized state, a democratic army, etc. By transforming capitalism into socialism the proletariat creates the *possibility* of abolishing national oppression; the possibility becomes *reality* "only"—"only"—with the establishment of full democracy in all spheres, including the delin-eation of state frontiers in accordance with the "sympathies" of the population, including complete freedom to secede. And this, in turn, will serve as a basis for developing the *practical* elimination of even the slightest national friction and the least national mistrust, for an accelerated drawing together and fusion of nations that will be completed when the state *withers away*. This is the Marxist theory.⁴²⁷

What about the class character of national liberation struggles? Lenin is clear: we must support the right to self-determination (up to and including armed insurrection) of national minorities and oppressed nations, even if they are not progressive in character, except when they become instruments of international reaction. For example, as this article was written

⁴²⁶ "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," in *Collected Works*, by V. I. Lenin, vol. 22 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964).

⁴²⁷ "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up."

in 1916, Marxists should support a possible insurrection by the Belgians against Germany, the Armenians against Russia, the Galicians against Austria, even if these movements were led by the national bourgeoisie. Marxists cannot be accomplices, even passive ones, in a violation of peoples' right to self-determination. The only exception being:

[if] it is . . . the revolt of a reactionary class⁴²⁸[:]

The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, but only a *small* part of the general-democratic (now: general-socialist) *world* movement. In individual concrete casts, the part *may* contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected. It is possible that the republican movement in one country may be merely an instrument of the clerical or financial-monarchist intrigues of other countries; if so, we must *not* support this particular, concrete movement, but it would be ridiculous to delete the demand for a republic from the program of international Social-Democracy on these grounds.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁸ "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up."

⁴²⁹ "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up."

Part 3: War and Revolution

3.1 War and Revolution

The relationship between (imperialist) war and (proletarian) revolution lies at the heart of Lenin's experience, beginning from his analyses of the Russo-Japanese (1905) and Balkan (1912–1913) wars. This relationship takes two forms:

1. Imperialist war is, if not primarily, at least secondarily, an instrument of counterrevolution. Ideologically, positions based on class struggle and aiming at the unity of the international workers' movement are attacked by nationalist and chauvinist propaganda. On a practical level, the state of war is used to break up the class' political and trade union organizations.
2. In an opposite sense (but dialectically linked), imperialist war exacerbates contradictions with its trail of massacres, forced labor, misery, and destruction.

Historically, the international workers' movement focused on the first aspect. The struggle against war was a humanitarian imperative, but also, for the Second International, a prerequisite for following the "tried and tested tactic"⁴³⁰: time, the course of history, historical determinism, the development of capitalism and its contradictions, all played in favor of socialism. Since the peaceful progress of the workers' movement seemed irresistible, they rationalized that preserving the peace meant certain victory. Lenin's 1907 speech at the International Congress in Stuttgart, where social-democratic leaders were looking for ways to prevent war, was surprising in that he argued that the aim should not only be to prevent war, but also, if necessary, to use the crisis caused by war to overthrow the bourgeoisie. By envisaging the role of war as a catalyst of social contradictions, Lenin distanced himself from those who saw war only as a catastrophe for the workers' movement. His amendment offended the International's right-wing leadership. Bebel feared that such a revolutionary declaration

⁴³⁰ "The tried and tested tactic" ("die alte bewährte Taktik" in German) was an expression used in revolutionary circles at the turn of the last century to mockingly refer to the reformist path advocated by the Social Democratic parties of the time.—Ed.

could give rise to lawsuits and had it reworded in legally unassailable but ambiguous terms.

Yet Lenin did not theorize that war was necessarily favorable to the revolutionary process. He distanced himself from Radek and the German extreme left, for whom “the convulsions of war” were the shortest route to revolution. Lenin believed that wars were inevitable due to the development of imperialism, but it was the concrete historical conditions, which were extremely difficult to untangle, that would determine whether a war would be a brake or a gas pedal of the class struggle: the latter would sharpen revolutionary contradictions, the former would drag the workers’ movement backwards. What is important for Lenin is that the goal of the Revolution be maintained in war: “the masses will realize the need for revolutionary action in connection with the crises which war inevitably involves.”⁴³¹ At the Zimmerwald and Khienthal conferences, he waged a two-pronged battle: outwardly, against the Social-Chauvinists who had rallied their bourgeoisie, and inwardly, against the Zimmerwaldists who had no other objective than peace, immediate peace, peace without annexation. This pacifist line prevailed in Zimmerwald—even Clara Zetkin and Angelica Balabanov adhered to it,⁴³² while Lenin’s revolutionary thesis received only seven or eight votes out of forty mandates.

But Lenin didn’t wait for Zimmerwald to denounce pacifism:

War is no chance happening, no “sin” as is thought by Christian priests (who are no whit behind the opportunists in preaching patriotism, humanity and peace), but an inevitable stage of capitalism, just as legitimate a form of the capitalist way of life as peace is. Present-day war is a people’s war. What follows from this truth is not that we must swim with the “popular” current of chauvinism, but that the class contradictions dividing the nations continue to exist in wartime and manifest themselves in conditions of war. Refusal to serve

⁴³¹ V. I. Lenin, “The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart,” first published in *Proletary*, no. 17, October 20, 1907. In Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 13 (Moscow: Progress Publishers).

⁴³² A number of Zimmerwaldian pacifists eventually rallied behind Lenin’s positions and became, if not the founders of the communist party in their own country, at least the defenders of Soviet Russia in the socialist movement in the West.

with the forces, anti-war strikes, etc., are sheer nonsense, the miserable and cowardly dream of an unarmed struggle against the armed bourgeoisie, vain yearning for the destruction of capitalism without a desperate civil war or a series of wars. It is the duty of every socialist to conduct propaganda of the class struggle, in the army as well; work directed towards turning a war of the nations into civil war is the only socialist activity in the era of an imperialist armed conflict of the bourgeoisie of all nations. Down with mawkishly sanctimonious and fatuous appeals for "peace at any price"! Let us raise high the banner of civil war!⁴³³

3.2. Kautsky's *The Road to Power*

Lenin was horrified by Kautsky's reversal at the outbreak of the First World War. The 1907 Stuttgart resolution (confirmed in Copenhagen in 1910 and Basel in 1912) obliged socialists in the event of war

to secure the speediest termination of wars that have already begun, [and] utilize the crisis created by the war to hasten the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.⁴³⁴

In the *Neue Zeit* of October 2, 1914, Kautsky wrote:

If it comes to war, every nation has to defend itself as best it can. It follows that Social-Democrats of all nations have an equal right or an equal duty to take part in this defense; none should hurl reproaches at another.⁴³⁵

In short: proletarians of all countries, kill each other. . . .

Lenin's unbridled hatred of "the renegade Kautsky" can be explained by the role Kautsky had played in defining proletarian policy on war: as early as 1887, in an article in the *Neue Zeit* entitled "The Modern Nation-

⁴³³ V. I. Lenin, "The Position and Tasks of the Socialist International," in *Collected Works*, vol. 21 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974).

⁴³⁴ V. I. Lenin, "The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart," in *Collected Works*, vol. 13.

⁴³⁵ K. Kautsky, "Social-Democracy in the War," first published in the *Neue Zeit*, October 2, 1914. Source of the English translation used here: V. I. Lenin, "To Alexandra Kollontai," in *Collected Works*, vol. 36 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971).

ality,” Kautsky had laid the foundations for a Marxist theory of the national question and its interaction with the social question. He intervened several times on these issues (notably in 1886 and 1905). In 1907, with the threat of war looming over the Moroccan crisis,⁴³⁶ he published a pamphlet entitled “Patriotism and Social-Democracy,” in which he rejected any “Sacred Union”⁴³⁷ between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie: “At the present time the conflicts between states can bring no war that proletarian interests would not, as a matter of duty, energetically oppose.”⁴³⁸

In 1909, Kautsky himself tackled the question of the war-revolution correlation in a work that Lenin was to put forward.⁴³⁹ *The Road to Power*. From the moment of its publication, this pamphlet was a central reference for Lenin—and never ceased to be so. And even if in October 1914, Lenin wrote to Shliapnikov: “I hate and despise Kautsky now more than anyone, with his vile, dirty, self-satisfied hypocrisy,”⁴⁴⁰ he wrote four days later: “Make sure of getting and rereading (or get someone to translate to you) Kautsky’s *Weg zur Macht* [*The Road to Power*—what he wrote there about the revolution of our times!! And what a scoundrel he has become now, renouncing all this!”⁴⁴¹

Kautsky considered that revolution could be produced by war in three different scenarios:

⁴³⁶ Rival claims to Morocco by France and Germany—one of Africa’s last independent states—brought the two countries to the brink of war in 1905. The crisis was not resolved until 1911, when Germany renounced all claims to Morocco in exchange for a 272,000 km² enlargement of its Cameroon colony at the expense of neighboring French colonies.

⁴³⁷ “Sacred Union” signifies temporary class collaboration orchestrated by the ruling bourgeoisie to maintain power and suppress dissent. It refers to the consensus among French political parties during World War I.—Ed.

⁴³⁸ K. Kautsky, “Patriotism and Social Democracy,” first published in the *Neue Zeit*, 1907. Source of the English translation used here: Rosa Luxemburg, *The Crisis in the German Social-Democracy (The “Junius” Pamphlet)* (New York: The Socialist Publication Society, 1919), 104.

⁴³⁹ In *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin opposed Kautsky’s anti-Soviet positions with his own writings, particularly *The Road to Power*, written “when Kautsky was still a Marxist” (chapter “What is Internationalism?”), which stated that “the era of revolutions has begun.” In *The State and Revolution*, even as he berates Kautsky, he writes that this pamphlet is also his best.

⁴⁴⁰ V. I. Lenin, “Letter to Alexander Shliapnikov,” October 27, 1914, in *Collected Works*, vol. 35.

⁴⁴¹ V. I. Lenin, “To A. G. Shliapnikov,” October 31, 1914, in *Collected Works*, vol. 35.

1. When the country that is on the losing side in the war, wanting to throw all national forces into the balance, calls the proletariat to come to power;
2. When the defeated army, exhausted, turns against the government, and the people rise up to put an end to a disastrous war;
3. When the army and the people rise up against a government that has signed a disgraceful peace.

According to Kautsky, after a generation of stability and progress, Europe and the world were entering a new period of war and revolution of unprecedented magnitude (due to its global dimension and advances in technology, trade, and communications). These upheavals would give rise to socialist revolutions in Europe, as well as revolutions towards democracy and national liberation in subjugated countries. This transition from a non-revolutionary to a revolutionary situation would require radically new tactics. In this sense, when the sharpening of class antagonisms would come to demonstrate the need for socialist revolution, any form of class collaboration would be tantamount to political suicide:

It is to ask the Socialists to commit political suicide to demand that they join in any coalition or “bloc” policy, in any case where the words “reactionary mass” are truly applicable. It is demanding moral suicide of the Socialists to ask them to enter into an alliance with capitalist parties at a time when these have prostituted themselves and compromised themselves to the very bottom.⁴⁴²

The interplay between socialist, democratic (i.e., against absolutist monarchies), national, and anti-colonial revolutions implies the rejection of simplistic models in which “advanced” countries show the way to “backward” ones. Kautsky argued that in Russia and the subjugated countries of the East, the interaction of different forms of revolution could open up new paths.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴² K. Kautsky, *The Road to Power* (Chicago: Samuel A. Bloch, 1909).

⁴⁴³ According to Lars T. Lih, however, not only did Kautsky (who believed in the ability of the workers' movement to prevent war, if only because of the fear the movement would inspire among the bourgeoisie) consider these eventualities unlikely, he also felt that bas-

The SPD was so undermined by opportunism that the first version of Kautsky's pamphlet was discarded on Bebel's orders, because it asserted that "No one would be so naive as to assert that we can pass imperceptibly and without a battle from the military state and absolutism into democracy."⁴⁴⁴ Kautsky agreed to rewrite his pamphlet, removing anything that might provoke a lawsuit, while retaining its revolutionary character:

it is necessary to make clear, what has so often been stated before, that we are not discussing the question of whether labor legislation and similar laws in the interest of the proletariat, and unions and co-operatives are necessary and useful or not. There are no two opinions among us on that point. What is disputed is the view that the exploited class, who control the power of the state, will permit such a development of these factors, as will amount to abolishing capitalist oppression, without first making such a resistance, with all the means at its disposal, that it can be abolished only through a decisive battle.⁴⁴⁵

In short, as Lenin summed up:

In 1909 Kautsky voiced the undisputed opinion held by all revolutionary Social-Democrats when he said that revolution in Europe cannot now be *premature* and that war means revolution.⁴⁴⁶

3.3. The Transformation of Imperialist War into Civil War

At its outset, the First World War effectively brought the labor movement to a halt; in July 1914, there had been a surge of political strikes in Russia, with insurrectionary demonstrations, which were interrupted by the declaration of war a month later. Bolshevik deputies who had voted against war credits in the Duma were deported to Siberia, and most businesses came under army control and surveillance. All the hard-won labor

ing a strategy on them would be tantamount to adventurism. Lars T. Lih, "Lénine en 1914, La 'nouvelle époque de guerre et révolution.'"

⁴⁴⁴ K. Kautsky, *The Road to Power*.

⁴⁴⁵ K. Kautsky, *The Road to Power*.

⁴⁴⁶ V. I. Lenin, "Dead Chauvinism and Living Socialism," in *Collected Works*, vol. 21.

rights acquired since the beginning of the century were “suspended” for the duration of the conflict.⁴⁴⁷

However, as early as the summer of 1914, in the midst of chauvinist hysteria, Lenin, confident that reactionary propaganda would dissipate in the face of the misery caused by the war, endeavored to “transform the imperialist war into a civil war.”

Georges Haupt points out that the study of Lenin's writings is complicated by the fact that they blend the demands of revolutionary pedagogy with those of tactical maneuvering.⁴⁴⁸ Haupt asserts, for example, that the slogan of “transforming the imperialist war into a civil war” changed in character in the course of the war:

1. In 1914, as a simple reaffirmation of revolutionary principles in the face of the opportunism of the Second International and the Mensheviks, but without any real possibility of realizing such a goal;
2. At the time of Zimmerwald and Kienthal, as a practical possibility;
3. In 1917, as an immediate and tangible objective.

Haupt's thesis is questionable. As early as 1914, Lenin gave concrete content to this slogan. He knew that the time for civil war had not yet come, but more than a principle to be reaffirmed, it was a concrete objective requiring concrete organization and concrete action, namely

[An] all-embracing propaganda, involving the army and the theater of hostilities as well, for the socialist revolution and the need to use weapons, not against their brothers, the wage slaves in other countries, but against the reactionary and bourgeois governments and parties of all countries; the urgent necessity of organizing illegal nuclei and groups in the armies of all nations, to conduct such propaganda in all languages; a merciless struggle against the chauvinism and “patriotism” of the

⁴⁴⁷ Rémi Adam, *La première guerre mondiale: Dix millions de morts pour un repartage du monde* (Pantin: Les bons caractères, 2010), 78.

⁴⁴⁸ Georges Haupt, “Guerre et révolution chez Lénine,” first published in *Revue française de sciences politiques*, no. 2 (1971), reprinted in *L'historien et le mouvement social* (Paris: Maspéro, 1980).

philistines and bourgeoisie of all countries without exception. In the struggle against the leaders of the present International, who have betrayed socialism, it is imperative to appeal to the revolutionary consciousness of the working masses, who bear the entire burden of the war and are in most cases hostile to opportunism and chauvinism.⁴⁴⁹

In reality, it was a strategic project from the outset. It was based on theory, on objective and subjective conditions (as they were and as they were bound to evolve), but also—and this was overlooked by Haupt—on the historical precedents of the Paris Commune and the 1905 Revolution. These two great experiences of revolutionary civil war, to which Lenin referred so many times, had each emerged from an imperialist war: the Franco-German War of 1870 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1905.

As early as 1914, Lenin concretely foresaw the prospect of transforming imperialist war into civil war:

The bourgeoisie is duping the masses by disguising imperialist rapine with the old ideology of a “national war.” This deceit is being shown up by the proletariat, which has brought forward its slogan of turning the imperialist war into a civil war. This was the slogan of the Stuttgart and Basel resolutions, which had in mind, not war in general, but precisely the present war and spoke, not of “defense of the fatherland,” but of “hastening the downfall of capitalism,” of utilizing the war-created crisis for this purpose, and of the example provided by the Paris Commune. The latter was an instance of a war of nations being turned into a civil war.

Of course, such a conversion is no easy matter and cannot be accomplished at the whim of one party or another. That conversion, however, is inherent in the objective conditions of capitalism in general, and of the period of the end of capitalism in particular. It is in that direction, and that direction alone, that socialists must conduct their activities. It is not their business to vote for war credits or to encourage chauvin-

⁴⁴⁹ V. I. Lenin, “The Tasks of Revolutionary Social-Democracy in the European War,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 21.

ism in their “own” country (and allied countries), but primarily to strive against the chauvinism of their “own” bourgeoisie, without confining themselves to legal forms of struggle when the crisis has matured and the bourgeoisie has itself taken away the legality it has created. Such is the line of action that *leads* to civil war, and will bring about civil war at one moment or another of the European conflagration.⁴⁵⁰

As we can see, it's not a question of preparing for the possibility of civil war, but of following a line of action that leads to it. In this context, Lenin's thinking is in tune with reality; he is on the lookout for developments, backlashes, and runaway processes, as well as their concrete manifestations. He mentions, for example, a phenomenon that was unknown during the Russo-Japanese War of 1905: fraternization in the trenches:

Clearly, this path tends to develop, strengthen, and consolidate fraternal confidence between the workers of different countries. Clearly, this path is *beginning to wreck* the hateful discipline of the barrack prisons, the discipline of blind obedience of the soldier to “his” officers and generals, to his capitalists (for most of the officers and generals either belong to the capitalist class or protect its interests). Clearly, fraternization is the revolutionary initiative of the *masses*, it is the awakening of the conscience, the mind, the courage of the oppressed classes; in other words, it is a rung in the ladder leading up to the socialist proletarian revolution.

In order that fraternization achieve the goal we set it more easily, surely and rapidly, we must see to it that it is well organized and has a clear political program.

In our appeal to the soldiers of all the belligerent countries we have set forth our program for a workers' revolution in all countries, namely, the transfer of all state power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

⁴⁵⁰ V. I. Lenin, “The Position and Tasks of the Socialist International,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 21.

Comrades, soldiers, discuss this program among yourselves and with the German soldiers.⁴⁵¹

Moreover, Lenin saw to it that leaflets for soldiers were published in Russian and German, and that joint meetings were organized with interpreters, etc.⁴⁵² The Bolsheviks massively distributed a “Trench Pravda”⁴⁵³ calling for fraternization.

Disentangling the tactical from the ideological aspects of a situation proved an almost impossible task for Lenin, who took this art to the highest level: the art of going back and forth dialectically between theory and practice, synthesizing this dialectic into a strategy that was flexible because it was solid—solid because it was flexible—and formulating it for polemical, agitation, and propaganda purposes. If we fail to grasp the depth and richness of this dialectic, we come to speak of Lenin either as an obtuse ideologue hacking away at the century to make it conform to his ideal, or, on the contrary, as an absolute empiricist constantly changing line and discourse whenever it served his purposes.

⁴⁵¹ V. I. Lenin, “The Significance of Fraternization,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 24.

⁴⁵² V. I. Lenin, “Petrograd City RSDLP(b) Conference” (April 14–22, 1917), in *Collected Works*, vol. 41.

⁴⁵³ The *Trench Pravda* (“*Okopnaia Pravda*” in Russian) was a clandestine newspaper produced by Bolshevik activists and soldiers during World War I. It aimed to disseminate Bolshevik propaganda and agitate for socialist revolution among soldiers fighting in the trenches. The “Trench Pravda” played a crucial role in Bolshevik efforts to undermine support for the Provisional Government and the war effort, advocating instead for an end to the conflict and the establishment of a socialist state.—Ed.

Part 4: The Revolutionary War

4.1. Insurrection

Lenin's interest in military questions was also closely linked to the military dimension of the revolutionary struggle. As early as January 1905, before the wave of insurrections struck Russia, the Bolsheviks set about building up a military organization. At the Second London Congress (April 12–27, 1905), a Military-Technical Bureau was set up under the supervision of the Central Committee, and local committees were instructed to draw up an insurrectionary plan and prepare for its implementation.

The 1905 wave of insurrections nevertheless surprised the RSDLP, which had no real military apparatus and no military doctrine other than Engels's writings on insurrection. The Military-Technical Bureau did its utmost to raise the level of the revolutionary struggle of the masses by carrying out intelligence operations, actions against the regime's leaders and forces, and expropriations as a way of financing the whole, but its forces and the impact of its actions were insufficient. The Bolsheviks—and Lenin in particular—immediately set about learning from experience to improve the effectiveness of their fighting groups. In October, Lenin wrote to the Combat Organization:

It horrifies me—I give you my word—it horrifies me to find that there has been talk about bombs for over six months, yet not one has been made! . . . Go to the youth. Form fighting squads *at once* everywhere, among the students, and *especially among the workers*, etc., etc. Let groups be at once organized of three, ten, thirty, etc., persons. Let them arm themselves at once as best they can, be it with a revolver, a knife, a rag soaked in kerosene for starting fires, etc. Let these detachments at once select leaders, and as far as possible *contact* the Combat Committee of the St. Petersburg Committee. Do not demand any formalities, and, for heaven's sake, forget all these schemes, and send all “functions, rights, and privileges” to the devil. Do not make membership in the RSDLP an absolute condition—that would be an absurd demand for an armed

uprising. Do not refuse to contact any group, even if it consists of only three persons; make it the one sole condition that it should be reliable as far as police spying is concerned and prepared to fight the czar's troops.⁴⁵⁴

In her memoirs, N. K. Krupskaya recalls Lenin's application to the study of military art:

He had given more thought to this than people know, and his talk about fighting squads in partisan war, about the squads of "five and ten," was not just the idle talk of a layman, but a well-thought-out plan.⁴⁵⁵

In January 1905, Lenin had reread Marx's articles on insurrection and translated the chapter on street fighting in the memoirs of Cluseret, the general of the Paris Commune. Cluseret's memoirs were published in *Vperiod* with a preface and biographical note written by Lenin.⁴⁵⁶

On December 5, the Moscow Bolshevik conference unanimously decided to proclaim an insurrectionary general strike, followed on December 7 by the Moscow Soviet (composed of a majority of Bolsheviks). The strike and demonstrations turned into an armed confrontation, but the Bolshevik-minority Joint Council of Volunteer Fighting Squads⁴⁵⁷ proved incapable of acting as the insurrectionary headquarters. The Moscow workers resisted, but only 8,000 of them were militarily organized. The RSDLP tried to help the insurrection in every way possible (notably by trying to stop the trains taking the troops to Moscow⁴⁵⁸), but on December 18, their last entrenched fighters fell in the Presnia district to the west of the city.

⁴⁵⁴ V. I. Lenin, "To the Combat Committee of the St. Petersburg Committee," in *Collected Works*, vol. 9.

⁴⁵⁵ N. K. Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959).

⁴⁵⁶ V. I. Lenin, "Street Fighting (The Advice of a General of the Commune)," in *Collected Works*, vol. 8.

⁴⁵⁷ Created in Moscow at the end of October 1905 to resist the ultra-nationalist Black Hundred movement, it brought together representatives of the party's combat groups from the Moscow Committee of the RSDLP, the Moscow Social Democratic Group, the Moscow Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and other combat groups. It was controlled by the Revolutionary Socialists and Mensheviks.

⁴⁵⁸ Lenin discusses the importance of the railway workers' situation in the event of insurrection in "The Dissolution of the Duma and the Tasks of the Proletariat," in *Collected*

For the Mensheviks, starting with Plekhanov, the lesson drawn from the 1905 surge of the revolutionary movement, and particularly from the Moscow insurrection, was that it was a “tactical folly” of “incredible lightness.”⁴⁵⁹ But the Bolsheviks, even after the defeats in Moscow, Donetsk, and Rostov, declared that the problem was the lack of forces and organizational, military, and doctrinal preparation:

Thus, nothing could be more short-sighted than Plekhanov's view, seized upon by all the opportunists, that the strike was untimely and should not have been started, and that “they should not have taken to arms.” On the contrary, we should have taken to arms more resolutely, energetically and aggressively; we should have explained to the masses that it was impossible to confine things to a peaceful strike and that a fearless and relentless armed fight was necessary. And now we must at last openly and publicly admit that political strikes are inadequate; we must carry on the widest agitation among the masses in favor of an armed uprising and make no attempt to obscure this question by talk about “preliminary stages,” or to befog it in any way. We would be deceiving both ourselves and the people if we concealed from the masses the necessity of a desperate, bloody war of extermination, as the immediate task of the coming revolutionary action.⁴⁶⁰

Lenin also drew tactical lessons similar to those outlined by Kautsky in “Prospects of the Russian Revolution.” The fact that the Moscow insurgents offered such resistance to the regime's elite troops shows that Engels's condemnation of the barricade struggle needed to be refined, that it was a particular kind of barricade tactic that he condemned because of the appearance of the cannon, and so on. However, a new tactic could be formulated from the Moscow experience.

Works, vol. 11.

⁴⁵⁹ Plekhanov made these judgments in Nos. 3 and 4 of the *Dnevnik Sotsial-Demokrata* (“Diary of a Social-Democrat”) he edited in Geneva, condemning the insurrection and calling for “more dedicated attention to the workers' trade-union movement.”

⁴⁶⁰ V. I. Lenin, “Lessons of the Moscow Uprising,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 9.

The lessons drawn from this experience led to the insurrectionary doctrine put into practice in October 1917. This doctrine was no longer based on the barricade struggle or spontaneous mass demonstrations, but on concerted, planned offensive actions carried out by trained and disciplined units of armed workers,⁴⁶¹ on the mastery of military techniques,⁴⁶² and on the fragmentation of the bourgeois army through agitation and propaganda.⁴⁶³ Lastly, this doctrine was founded on a precise analysis of the objective and subjective conditions required for its implementation: political crisis of the system; mass dissatisfaction; the existence of a recognized revolutionary vanguard; and peasant support for proletarian revolution. This doctrine presupposes a long process of preparation, accumulation, and qualification of military forces. The final act—insurrection—is preceded by a long politico-military phase, examined at length by Lenin in *The Partisan War*. This doctrine attributes three roles to armed struggle:

⁴⁶¹ “Volunteer fighting units, composed of “*druzhinniki*,” if we adopt the name made so honorable by the great December days in Moscow, will be of tremendous value at the moment of the outbreak. A “*druzhina*,” or volunteer squad, that can shoot will be able to disarm a policeman, or suddenly attack a patrol and thus procure arms. A volunteer squad which cannot shoot, or which has not procured arms, will assist in building barricades, reconnoitering, organizing liaisons, setting ambushes for the enemy, setting fire to houses occupied by the enemy, occupying rooms to serve as bases for the insurgents—in short, thousands of the most diverse functions can be performed by voluntary units of persons who are determined to fight to the last gasp, who know the locality well, who are most closely connected with the population.” (V. I. Lenin, “The Dissolution of the Duma and the Tasks of the Proletariat,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 11.)

⁴⁶² “Military tactics depend on the level of military technique. This plain truth Engels demonstrated and brought home to all Marxists.[10] Military technique today is not what it was in the middle of the nineteenth century. It would be folly to contend against artillery in crowds and defend barricades with revolvers. . . . There have been new advances in military technique in the very recent period. The Japanese War produced the hand grenade. The small-arms factories have placed automatic rifles on the market. Both these weapons are already being successfully used in the Russian revolution, but to a degree that is far from adequate. We can and must take advantage of improvements in technique, teach the workers’ detachments to make bombs in large quantities, help them and our fighting squads to obtain supplies of explosives, fuses and automatic rifles.” (V. I. Lenin, “Lessons of the Moscow Uprising,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 9.)

⁴⁶³ “Unless the revolution assumes a mass character and affects the troops, there can be no question of serious struggle. That we must work among the troops goes without saying. But we must not imagine that they will come over to our side at one stroke, as a result of persuasion or their own convictions. The Moscow uprising clearly demonstrated how stereotyped and lifeless this view is. As a matter of fact, the wavering of the troops, which is inevitable in every truly popular movement, leads to a real *fight for the troops* whenever the revolutionary struggle becomes acute.” (V. I. Lenin, “Lessons of the Moscow Uprising,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 9.)

a subjective role of political mobilization of activists and the masses; a role of accumulation of forces in non-revolutionary periods; and the final, decisive role of armed insurrection.

4.2. Partisan War

Lenin had to lead the battle against Plekhanov, who wanted to dissolve the combat groups and conduct politics solely through the actions of elected members of the Duma. In spite of this, the Bolsheviks approved and practiced bank robberies (the earnings from which were needed to run an underground party), and armed action against members of the repressive apparatus, particularly spies.

A school for military instructors was set up in Kiev, and another was opened in Lemberg to teach bomb use. In November 1906, Lenin had the Military-Technical Bureau convene a conference of combat groups in Tammerfors,⁴⁶⁴ Finland. In preparation for this conference, Yaroslavsky, one of the leading Bolshevik military leaders, met Lenin:

I arrived in Finland and saw Vladimir Ilyich, who bombarded me with questions. I immediately sensed that I was dealing with a comrade who knew our work inside out and was seriously interested in it. Vladimir Ilyich was not content with general answers; he wanted to know the details, the mechanics of our work, our projects, our contacts. He took a keen interest in the military instructors' school we had organized, where we taught our activists how to handle and make explosives, maneuver machine guns and other weapons, learn the trade of the mine-sapper, street-fighting tactics—in a word, prepare the cadres of our combat detachment commanders for the coming revolution.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁴ Tammerfors is the Swedish name given to the city of Tampere, in Finnish.—Ed.

⁴⁶⁵ Yemelian Yaroslavsky, "Vladimir Ilitch dirige les activités combatives du Parti (Une page d'histoire des organisations militaires et de combat de notre parti)" ("Vladimir Ilyich directs the Party's military activities [A page in the history of our Party's military and combat organizations]"), in *Lénine tel qu'il fut: Souvenirs de contemporains*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1958), 465–466. Translated from French by the Editors.

In addition to the official Central Committee (controlled by the Mensheviks), there was a Bolshevik center (the Bureau of the Majority Committee) within the leadership of the RSDLP, whose military organization (the Committee for Financial and Military Affairs) was headed by Lenin, Krasin, and Bogdanov.

In preparation for the Stockholm Congress (April 10–20, 1906), Lenin wrote the following draft resolution:

Whereas:

1. scarcely anywhere in Russia since the December uprising has there been a complete cessation of the hostilities, which the revolutionary people are now conducting in the form of sporadic guerrilla attacks upon the enemy;
2. these guerrilla operations, which are inevitable when two hostile armed forces face each other, and when repression by the temporarily triumphant military is rampant, serve to disorganize the enemy's forces and pave the way for future open and mass armed operations;
3. such operations are also necessary to enable our fighting squads to acquire fighting experience and military training, for in many places during the December uprising they proved to be unprepared for their new tasks;

We are of the opinion, and propose that the Congress should agree:

1. that the Party must regard the fighting guerrilla operations of the squads affiliated to or associated with it as being, in principle, permissible, and advisable in the present period;
2. that the character of these fighting guerrilla operations must be adjusted to the task of training leaders of the masses of workers at a time of insurrection, and of acquiring experience in conducting offensive and surprise military operations;
3. that the paramount immediate object of these operations is to destroy the government, police and military machinery, and to wage a relentless struggle against the active Black-Hun-

dred organizations, which are using violence against the population and intimidating it;

4. that fighting operations are also permissible for the purpose of seizing funds belonging to the enemy, i.e., the autocratic government, to meet the needs of insurrection, particular care being taken that the interests of the people are infringed as little as possible;

5. that fighting guerrilla operations must be conducted under the control of the Party and, furthermore, in such a way as to prevent the forces of the proletariat from being frittered away, and to ensure that the state of the working-class movement and the mood of the broad masses of the given locality are taken into account.⁴⁶⁶

But the Congress, with its clear majority of Menshevik delegates, did not discuss the question. Lenin returned to the issue in September 1906, asserting that

Guerrilla warfare is an inevitable form of struggle at a time when the mass movement has actually reached the point of an uprising and when fairly large intervals occur between the "big engagements" in the civil war. . . . It is absolutely natural and inevitable that the uprising should assume the higher and more complex form of a prolonged civil war embracing the whole country, i.e., an armed struggle between two sections of the people. Such a war cannot be conceived otherwise than as a series of a few big engagements at comparatively long intervals and a large number of small encounters during these intervals. That being so—and it is undoubtedly so—the Social-Democrats must absolutely make it their duty to create organizations best adapted to lead the masses in these big engagements and, as far as possible, in these small encounters as well.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁶ V. I. Lenin, "A Tactical Platform for the Unity Congress," in *Collected Works*, vol. 10.

⁴⁶⁷ V. I. Lenin, "Guerrilla Warfare," *Collected Works*, vol. 11.

Nevertheless, the dissolution of the combat groups was decided by the Menshevik majority at the Third London Congress (May 13–June 1, 1907).

4.3. Lenin, the Military Leader

Lenin's role as a war leader is underestimated, and Adam Ulam's judgment on the subject is, unfortunately, widely shared.⁴⁶⁸ Driven by obvious political interests, sovietologists and Trotskyists have attributed to Trotsky all the military merits of the civil war. No less obvious interests have led Soviet historiography to overemphasize the role of Stalin, Voroshilov, and Frunze. All agree that Lenin played the leading political role, but all neglect his military importance. He himself did nothing to highlight his interest in military affairs; he never visited the general staff nor the trenches and only met Red commanders and soldiers when necessary. As such, there is no military imagery attached to him.

And yet, between December 1 and 24, 1918, he presided over 143 of the 175 meetings of the Defense Council. In 1919 alone, he presided over 14 sessions of the Party Central Committee and 40 sessions of the Political Bureau, which examined military issues. Lenin examined thousands of military questions on these occasions. He sent out at least six hundred letters and telegrams on defense issues.

The Trotskyist version of the story, which sees Lenin giving Trotsky *carte blanche* on military matters, is contradicted by several incidents, the most famous of which is the replacement of the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army, J. Vācietis, by S. S. Kamenev.⁴⁶⁹

It is true that Lenin delegated most of the war's management to the commanders and commissars he had helped choose, starting with the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs himself. Yet, rarely did Lenin's activities interfere with those of the commanders.

⁴⁶⁸ "Lenin had very little of the military leader in his make-up. In the years of the Civil War after the Revolution he would not dream, though he had every opportunity to do so, of assuming the office or the pose of the generalissimo. He would not, unlike Trotsky or Stalin, affect the military uniform or intrude his judgment in technical military affairs." (Adam B. Ulam, *Lenin and the Bolsheviks* (London: Collins Clear-Type Press), 343.)

⁴⁶⁹ Both were former czarist colonels. Kamenev himself reported having been rebuffed by Lenin the day he ventured to point out the sheer "beauty" of the planned maneuver. Lenin curtly told him that his job was to beat the enemy, whether he did it artfully or not being of no importance. . .

In November 1917, Kerensky met up with the armies that had remained loyal to the Provisional Government, in order to march on Petrograd, when said armies had taken Gatchina and were threatening Tsarkoye Selo (today called Pushkin), just 25 km from the capital. During this time Lenin frequently “descended” from the strategic level to the tactical one, provoking an incident with Nikolai Podvoisky, organizer of the Red Guard and the first People's Commissar for Military and Naval affairs.⁴⁷⁰

Several different but concurring accounts describe how Lenin planned to use the fleet as fire support on the Tsarkoye Selo⁴⁷¹ front.

Lenin called I. I. Vakhrameev, a delegate of the Baltic Fleet, to the command center of the Petrograd military district:

The map of Petrograd and its surroundings was spread out on a large table. The plan to destroy Kerensky's gang was being discussed. Vladimir Ilyich asked me what, in addition to its detachments, the fleet could provide to help the ground units. Once I knew the disposition of the enemy forces, I explained that the fleet could bomb Kerensky's troops ambushed in Tsarkoye Selo. The bombardment could be carried out from both sides, with long-range naval guns; to this end, the cruiser Oleg would have to be brought into the Moscow Canal, where it would be possible to bombard the entire Tsarkoye Selo region to the northwest, with its 130 mm guns. In addition, two or three Novik torpedo boats could sail up the Neva, near the village of Rybatskoye, and bombard Tsarkoye Selo from the east with their 100 mm guns. No unit could withstand such a bombardment.

Comrade Lenin took a keen interest in this proposal. He asked me for details, thoroughly checked the feasibility of the proposed operation, and, having convinced himself of its real

⁴⁷⁰ Lenin ordered the workers at the Putilov factory to armor trains and take them to the front. However, notes Podvoisky, “It's true that these orders didn't concern operations or military units, but only the mobilization of ‘everything and everyone’ for defense. But this parallelism of work irritated me terribly.” (Nicolai Podovoiski, “Les journées d'Octobre in *Lénine tel qu'il fut*, vol. 1, 751. Translated from French by the Editor.)

⁴⁷¹ Tsarskoye-Selo, now called Pushkin, is a district belonging to the metropolitan area of the federal city of St. Petersburg, formerly known as Petrograd.—Ed.

and rational character, ordered me to undertake its execution immediately, and to keep him regularly informed of the progress of the work.⁴⁷²

But Lenin sought a second opinion (at least one), from another Bolshevik member of the fleet, Fiodor Raskolnikov, who gave an almost identical account: close discussion of the map, study of the depth of the channels, the effect of the tides, firing plans, and so on.

The third account is provided by N. Izmaylov, Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet, who relates his telegraphic conversation with Lenin, the latter asking him how many ships he could get underway and within what timeframe, whether they were supplied with provisions and equipped with wireless telegraphy, etc.⁴⁷³ The maneuver was carried out, the fleet embarked a short distance from Tsarkoye Selo, and observers were placed on the heights of Pulkovo to direct the fire, but the sudden retreat of Kerensky's troops rendered this deployment useless.

It is difficult to judge the military relevance of Lenin's decisions.⁴⁷⁴ Trotsky's testimony on this point is often suspect, as it tends to make light of Lenin's alleged "errors of military judgment" in order to make himself look good.

Lenin's military activity essentially consisted of gathering resources, galvanizing energies, sending the right people to the right places, and giving whoever was entitled a dressing-down. A good example of this is his telegram to Gusev on September 16, 1919:

In reality, we have stagnation, almost collapse.

At the Siberian Front they have put some blackguard Olderogge and the old woman Pozern in charge, and "reassured them-

⁴⁷² L. Vakhrameev, "Dans les premiers jours d'Octobre" ("During the first days of October"), in *Lénine tel qu'il fut*, vol. 1, 748. Translated from French by the Editor.

⁴⁷³ N. Izmaylov, "Le Comité central de la flotte de la Baltique (Centrobalt) aux jours de l'insurrection," in *L'insurrection armée d'Octobre à Pétrograd: Souvenirs des révolutionnaires* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1958), 397–402. Translated from French by the Editor. Izmaylov's account differs from the previous ones in that the battleship *Respublika* (formerly *Emperor Paul I*), rather than the cruiser *Oleg*, was mentioned—it was only because the latter's draught was too great that the cruiser *Oleg* was finally chosen.

⁴⁷⁴ Soviet publications naturally present them all as insightful, even pivotal, as when Kedrov, who was in command on the Arkhangelsk front, commented on Lenin's direct, personal order to send a heavy artillery battery to Kotlas.

selves.” An absolute disgrace! And now we are beginning to get beaten! We shall make the RMCR responsible for this, if energetic steps are not taken! To let victory slip out of our hands is a disgrace.

Inaction against Mamontov. Evidently, there has been one delay after another. The troops marching on Voronezh from the North were late. We were late in transferring the 21st Division to the South. We were late with the armored cars. Late with communications. Whether it was the Commander-in-Chief alone who visited Orel, or whether he went with you, is all one: the job was not done. Communications with Selivachov were not established, supervision of him was not established, in spite of the long-standing and direct demand of the Central Committee.

As a result, inaction against Mamontov and inaction with Selivachov (instead of the “victories” promised from day to day in childish little drawings—do you remember how you showed me these little drawings, and how I said: they’ve forgotten the enemy?⁴⁷⁵). If Selivachov escapes or his division chief betrays, the Republic’s Revolutionary War Council will be to blame, because he was sleeping and reassuring everyone, but didn’t do what was necessary. We need to send the best, most energetic commissars to the South, and not nightcaps.

We’re falling behind on division formation. We’re letting autumn pass us by, but in the meantime Denikin is tripling his forces, receiving tanks, etc., etc., etc. We can’t go on like this. We have to get rid of this somnolent way of working and move on to a lively pace.⁴⁷⁶

In a paragraph also reproduced by Lenin, Clausewitz wrote that

If an increase in vigor is combined with wise limitation in objective, the result is that combination of brilliant strokes

⁴⁷⁵ Typical Clausewitzian irony.

⁴⁷⁶ V. I. Lenin, “Letter to Sergey Ivanovich Gusev,” in *Collected Works*, vol. 35.

and cautious restraint which we admire in the campaigns of Frederick the Great.⁴⁷⁷

It was this balance of qualities that Lenin demonstrated at the time: boldness when launching the October uprising, prudence during the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations. And although Lenin urged commanders and commissars to show initiative, audacity, and combativeness, he never urged them to be reckless—since recklessness and inertia were the twin manifestations of the lack of seriousness he abhorred. Evidence of this attitude can be found in the telegram he sent to Trotsky on June 3, 1920, regarding an offensive plan:

This is sheer Utopia. Won't it cost too many lives? We will be sacrificing a host of our soldiers. We must think this over and weigh it up ten times. I suggest replying to Stalin: "Your proposal for an offensive against the Crimea is so serious that we should make inquiries and give it most careful consideration. Wait for our reply. *Lenin, Trotsky.*"⁴⁷⁸

4.4. Attack and Defense

In paragraphs extensively commented on by Lenin, Clausewitz points out that it is easier to hold a position than to take it, and that the defensive is the strongest form of warfare. If the offensive did not only have a positive objective (the conquest of a province, for example), but was in itself superior to the defensive, no belligerent would adopt the defensive. Those who pursue a positive objective necessarily have to go on the offensive and must, therefore, provide themselves with means superior to those of the enemy, in order to compensate for the inherent superiority of the enemy's defensive position. When one is inferior to the enemy, the choice of the defensive makes up, in part or in whole, for this inferiority.

The defender takes advantage of unforeseen events, weather, and enemy attrition. While the attacker has the advantage of the surprise factor (as in the choice of the moment at which war commences), the defender is able to benefit from said surprise factor at the tactical level. As the defender

⁴⁷⁷ Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 283.

⁴⁷⁸ V. I. Lenin, "Letter to L. D. Trotsky," in *Collected Works*, vol. 44.

knows the terrain, he can occupy its strongholds and most advantageous points, and he can opt for strategy of envelopment, seizing objectives in the enemy's rear, and allows him to play the interior lines,⁴⁷⁹ and so on. Moreover, the defender's position wears out less quickly than that of the attacker, and the defender benefits from the support of the population, as well as the sympathies and moral advantages that result from his status as the victim of aggression.

Certain intrinsic advantages of the defensive position operate even before the defender withdraws into the depths of his territory, and these benefits only increase with the extent of the withdrawal. As this retreat is costly (since it involves abandoning territory), it should only be undertaken if the initial imbalance of forces is such that all the advantages of defense are required to compensate for it. Depending on the extent of the imbalance, the defender may choose to confront the enemy as he crosses the border. If he is not strong enough to do so, he may choose to wait and confront the attacker when he has penetrated his territory to the point of arriving at the position chosen to conduct the battle to his advantage (on a river line, for example). Alternatively, if he still feels too weak, he can wait for the enemy to initiate the attack from this position. If the imbalance is still too great to allow for this option, the defender can extend his waiting position until the enemy offensive reaches its climax. Defense does not mean passivity: the defender, retaining the initiative, can retreat to multiply the number of battles, unleash guerrilla warfare at the enemy's rear, etc.

In 1918, Lenin applied this doctrine step by step. He had been a fierce opponent of the "revolutionary war" against Germany in 1918. But his opposition represented a minority in the party: half the Bolsheviks wanted war, a quarter peace, and a quarter "neither war nor peace" as advocated by Trotsky. Trotsky imposed his line during the peace talks, provoking their breakdown and a new German offensive that proved disastrous for Soviet Russia. On March 3, 1918, Russia was forced to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, by which Germany seized Poland and the Baltic States, and imposed independence on Ukraine, Finland, and the three Transcau-

⁴⁷⁹ In a military context, "interior lines" typically refer to the shorter and more direct communication and supply routes that connect various units *within* a force. By controlling these interior lines, a military force can more efficiently move troops and supplies to where they are needed on the battlefield.—Ed.

casian republics. The creation of the Red Army on January 15, 1918 had led to initial victories over the White armies in the Urals, on the Don, Donets, and Kuban and in Crimea, but in May 1918 (at the call of bourgeois nationalists threatened by the development of Ukrainian and Finnish revolutionary movements), the German and Austrian armies decisively breached Ukraine and Finland:

Now that we have become representatives of the ruling class, which has begun to organize socialism, we demand that everybody adopt a serious attitude towards defense of the country. And adopting a *serious* attitude towards defense of the country means thoroughly preparing for it, and strictly calculating the balance of forces. If our forces are obviously small, the best means of defense is *retreat into the interior of the country* (anyone who regards this as an artificial formula, made up to suit the needs of the moment, should read old Clausewitz, one of the greatest authorities on military matters, concerning the lessons of history to be learned in this connection). . . . It has become our duty to calculate with the utmost accuracy the different forces involved, to weigh with the utmost care the chances of our ally (the international proletariat) being able to come to our aid in time. It is in the interest of capital to destroy its enemy (the revolutionary proletariat) bit by bit, before the workers in all countries have united (actually united, i.e., by beginning the revolution). It is in our interest to do all that is possible, to take advantage of the slightest opportunity to postpone the decisive battle until the moment (or *until after* the moment) the revolutionary workers' contingents have united in a single great international army.⁴⁸⁰

The German and (to a lesser extent) Austro-Hungarian armies were clearly stronger, better armed, more experienced, and better trained than the young Red Army. The revolutionary war against Germany had been

⁴⁸⁰ V. I. Lenin, "Left-Wing' Childishness," in *Collected Works*, vol. 27.

pure adventurism, as its first supporter, Bukharin, would acknowledge ten years later.⁴⁸¹

By applying the principle of retreat to the heart of the territory, Lenin opted for the higher form of defensiveness. This defense would allow the revolution to develop its forces (the Red Army was in the process of being formed), the Red Army to exploit the interior lines (units could be sent from north to south, from east to west, according to needs and priorities, and thus obtain in turn the superiority required to win a decisive battle), the German forces were moving away from their supply bases and increasingly exposed to the intense activity of the Ukrainian Red Partisans, while pacifist and revolutionary ideas were spreading within Germany and the German army. Lenin relied heavily on the latter factor. In January 1918, revolutionary political strikes and the creation of workers' soviets had already broken out in Berlin, Vienna, Hamburg, Kiel, Düsseldorf, Leipzig, Essling, and elsewhere, but it was not until November that the revolutionary wave swept across Germany: more than 10,000 workers and soldiers soviets were formed and took control of Berlin. The revolution was crushed, but its effects, combined with those of the armistice, led to the withdrawal of German troops from Ukraine and Crimea.

4.5. The “Militarization” of Marxism?

Lenin's “militarization” of Marxism is the subject of two indictments:

1. One that asserts this militarization to be a necessary, intrinsic development of Marxism, as Anibal Romero argues:

For Clausewitz, politics does not necessarily require war; for Lenin, politics is class struggle—the state being merely an instrument of oppression—and the triumph of the proletariat, which can only be achieved by an act of force, through extreme violence leading to the elimination of the state and ultimately to the disappearance of politics itself.⁴⁸²

⁴⁸¹ “The external burdens, the very great difficulties within the country, all of this, we felt, had to be dealt with by the sword of revolutionary war.” Quoted by Christian Salmon in *Le rêve mathématique de Nicolai Boukharine* (Paris: Le Sycomore, 1980), 116. Translated from French by the Editor.

⁴⁸² Anibal Romero, *Lenín y la militarización del marxismo*, Universidad Simón Bolívar, Caracas 1983. For Romero, this “militarization” stems from the rejection of the “peaceful

2. For Jacob Kipp, Lenin's "militarization" of Marxism is a tendency, triggered by the World War, his reading of Clausewitz, and the October Revolution, reaching its climax in 1922–23:

Lenin has come full circle. War and politics have been transposed as subject and object. Here politics have become a continuation of war by other means. The NEP was a tactical device to restore the national economy and regain peasant support in the face of armed uprisings at Kronstadt and in the Tambov region.⁴⁸³

Kipp is wrong in general and regarding the timeframe in particular, as Lenin's position clearly "demilitarized" at the end of the Civil War, as evidenced by his report to the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party (1922):

In the preceding period of development of our revolution, when all our attention and all our efforts were concentrated mainly on, or almost entirely absorbed by, the task of repelling invasion, we could not devote the necessary attention to this link; we had other things to think about. To some extent we could and had to ignore this bond [with the peasant economy] when we were confronted by the absolutely urgent and overshadowing task of warding off the danger of being immediately crushed by the gigantic forces of world imperialism. . . . The idea of building communist society exclusively with the hands of the Communists is childish, absolutely childish. We Communists are but a drop in the ocean, a drop in the ocean of the people. . . . Rendering the exploiters innocuous . . . we have learned to do it. Here a certain amount of pressure must be exercised; but that is easy. To win the second part of the victory, i.e., to build communism with the hands of non-Communists, to acquire the practical ability to do what

path" seen as reformist, and thus also concerns Mao Zedong and even, given his use of the category of war, Gramsci. In another document, he also refers to Stalin (Aníbal Romero, *Aproximación a la Política*, Universidad Simón Bolívar, Instituto de Altos Estudios de América Latina, Caracas, 1990).

⁴⁸³ Jacob W. Kipp, "Lenin and Clausewitz: The Militarization of Marxism, 1914–1921," in *Military Affairs*, October 1985, 189.

is economically necessary, we must establish a link with peasant farming; we must satisfy the peasant.⁴⁸⁴

Civil war against the bourgeoisie, for the conquest of state power, is one of the fundamental parts of Leninism, but no more so than the rallying of the small and medium-sized peasantry and the intelligentsia to the proletariat. The outreach to these classes and social groups is just as political as the war against the landed gentry and the capitalists. Peace with some and war with others form a general policy, and are an integral part of the Leninist project.⁴⁸⁵

The battle of Kronstadt and the crushing of the Tambov uprising or the Makhnovshchina have a different character than the war against the White and interventionist armies. For Lenin, whose main reference was the Paris Commune, a war against the forces of the ruling classes of the old regime, against the Versailles reactionaries, had to be waged.

This was not the case with Kronstadt, Tambov, or the Makhnovshchina, which were wars “imposed” on the Bolsheviks, in the sense that they were not “part of the program,” so to speak. Of course, the decisions of the commissars were decisive in the emergence of such conflicts, particularly the draft and *prodrazverstka*—the requisitioning of agricultural surpluses to feed the cities—but the Bolsheviks hoped not to have to fight such wars in the future anyway. Leaving aside the agents of counterrevolution adding fuel to the fire, the enemies of the Bolsheviks in Kronstadt, Tambov, and Ukraine consisted of social groups, starting with the middle peasants,⁴⁸⁶ with whom Lenin hoped to form an alliance. The insurgents positioned themselves as enemies of the Soviet government because they perceived it as an antagonistic force. It is true that from the moment they took up

⁴⁸⁴ V. I. Lenin, “Political Report of the Central Committee of the RCP(b),” in *Collected Works*, vol. 33.

⁴⁸⁵ It could be argued that Lenin's outreach to the peasantry and intelligentsia was dictated by strategic imperatives (the proletariat needed allies in the civil war), but his interest went far beyond these imperatives. Lenin cultivated the alliance between the peasantry and the intelligentsia as part of the peaceful construction of the new society. When Lenin set out to put the intelligentsia at the service of a cultural revolution and to help all the cultural forces emerging from the masses, he didn't do so in order to provide the Red Army with better-educated recruits. This is one of the components he considered necessary for socialist construction.

⁴⁸⁶ According to the categories in use: peasants who were sufficiently prosperous to live off their land and livestock, but not wealthy enough to employ hired labor.

arms, they were treated as enemies, but the severity with which they were repressed⁴⁸⁷ was not the result of a general antagonistic policy.

For an insurgent shot by the Cheka, the distinction was of little consolation, but it was crucial to the theoretical question of Lenin's relationship to war. At a time when opposition to autocracy, big landlords, and capitalists was deemed irreconcilable, the Bolshevik government took steps to accommodate the class interests of the middle peasantry; shortly after the suppression of the Tambov revolt, the Council of People's Commissars substituted *prodrazverstka* for *prodnalog*, a set tax levied in the form of grain, which was much more acceptable to the peasants. Hence, even if Lenin did recommend the reading of Clausewitz to party cadres because political and military tactics are closely related fields,⁴⁸⁸ and even if the public discourse remained martial,⁴⁸⁹ in 1922, contrary to Kipp's thesis, Lenin's policies in Russia no longer bore the hallmarks of military confrontation.⁴⁹⁰

Reducing Lenin's politics to war, then, is not only disregarding everything that came before the war (the organization and raising of the political consciousness of the working class at national and international levels; the organization and unification of revolutionaries around a strategic project; the bringing together of classes and social groups with an objective interest in revolutionary change, etc.), but also everything that came after the war (the organization of the new revolutionary government; the trans-

⁴⁸⁷ Chemical weapons were used on a massive scale against the Tambov insurgents.

⁴⁸⁸ V. Sorin quoted a remark he had heard Lenin make, in his article "Marxism, tactics, and Lenin," which appeared in *Pravda*, no. 1, 1928: "Lenin said that 'political and military tactics are called *Grenzgebiet* (a borderland) in German and party workers could study with advantage the works of Clausewitz, the greatest of German military theoreticians.'" [Source of the English translation used here: Donald E. Davis and Walter S.G. Kohn, *Lenin's "Notebook on Clausewitz,"* (Normal: Illinois State University).]

⁴⁸⁹ For example, in the previously quoted "Political Report of the Central Committee of the RCP(b)," Lenin compares the economic system of the NEP to a retreat: "On the whole, the retreat was fairly orderly, although certain panic-stricken voices, among them that of the Workers' Opposition. . . caused losses in our ranks, caused a relaxation of discipline, and disturbed the proper order of retreat. The most dangerous thing during a retreat is panic. When a whole army (I speak in the figurative sense) is in retreat, it cannot have the same morale as when it is advancing." V. I. Lenin, "Political Report of the Central Committee of the RCP(b)," in *Collected Works*, vol. 33.

⁴⁹⁰ The country would in part regain such a character with the revival of class struggle in the countryside following the 1928 grain crisis, which led to the escalation of the farm strike and forced collectivization.

formation of social relations; the reorganization of production and the development of town and countryside; cultural revolution, etc.). And if the objectives of pre-revolutionary politics did indeed make it possible to wage and win the revolutionary war, they also had to make it possible to win the peace.

According to Clausewitz, "we must always consider that with the conclusion of peace, the purpose of the war has been achieved and its business is at an end,"⁴⁹¹ and this is precisely how Lenin understood it: once the class enemy (Russian reactionaries and imperialist interventionists) had been defeated, the political task was the peaceful construction of socialism. This construction was also a struggle: a struggle for production, for culture, for the improvement of social relations and social consciousness, a struggle against laziness, negligence, selfishness, routine, and bureaucracy, or what Lenin called "oblomovism."⁴⁹² But these struggles did not necessarily amount to war. Peace (which here takes the form of the construction of socialism) is, in accordance with Clausewitz's conception, the truth of Leninist war.

Only in foreign policy was the situation different. At the Eighth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, speaking of the peace offers that Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson had just made to the Kremlin, Lenin asked the stenographers to put down their pencils so that he could say, without fear of indiscretion, what he thought of them. For Lenin, these offers were dictated by the failure of the military intervention in Russia and the revolutionary vibrancy in Europe, not by the desire to find a *modus vivendi* with the Bolsheviks.⁴⁹³ For Lenin, the contradiction with the bourgeois states was antagonistic; the relentlessness of the interventionists demonstrated their hostility to the first socialist state. While exhaustion, internal contradictions (mutinies, strikes, etc.), and the collapse of the White Armies forced them to abandon their military operations, they did not put an end to their hostility. Peace and international treaties are nothing more than deferred war. It makes no difference whether the tool of revolution-

⁴⁹¹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 91.

⁴⁹² The term "oblomovism" used here by Lenin is derived from the main character in Ivan Goncharov's Russian novel *Oblomov*. It is used by Lenin to criticize apathy, laziness, and procrastination, in reference to Oblomov's indolent and inactive character.—Ed.

⁴⁹³ Cf. Marcel Body, "Les groupes communistes français de Russie 1918–1921," in *Contributions à l'histoire du Comintern*, no. 45 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1965), 51.

ary war is the insurgent indigenous proletariat or the Red Army; Lenin's international policy was a policy of war, tempered by the conviction that the enemy's internal contradictions would play the most important role in its defeat. Lenin did not believe it possible to establish normal relations between Soviet Russia and the capitalist states. He was one who, like Wynn Catlin, saw diplomacy as the art of saying "good boy" while preparing for the next attack.

**Towards a Proletarian
Military Doctrine (or not)**
The Frunze-Trotsky debate of 1920–21

Foreword

The topic covered below was first presented at (or more accurately, “dispatched” to) the *Penser l’émancipation* (Thinking Through Liberation) symposium held at the University of Paris 8 on September 13, 2017. The current written version of the text, which is a development of the original, was commissioned by the journal *Période*. It only deals superficially with the presuppositions, frameworks, and consequences of the debate in order to focus on the discussions themselves, many transcriptions of text that have never been translated.

1. Introduction: A Rich and Complex Debate

In the 1920s, the military debate in the USSR was rich and open-minded. It brought together the ideas of a wide range of participants, from young Communists with no military training other than their experience of the civil war, to old Czarist generals still baffled by the emergence of a workers’ and peasants’ state. It was “only” ten years later that theoreticians opposed to the party line would have to deal with policemen rather than opponents in a debate (Svechin’s first arrest dates back to 1931).

It’s noteworthy that every major participant in the debate found himself sometimes in agreement and sometimes in disagreement with each other. Voroshilov and Stalin opposed Tukhachevsky on the mechanization of the Red Army, Voroshilov and Frunze opposed Stalin on the use of the army in collectivization, Tukhachevsky opposed Trotsky and Svechin on the offensive character of the Red Army, Trotsky opposed Voroshilov on partisanship and Svechin on the question of the militia, and so on. In other words, there were no two “camps” (Stalinists versus Trotskyists, for example) weaponizing the military debate for power plays, but rather a genuine exchange of theses, proposals, analyses, and criticisms.

Positions were generally nuanced, distinguishing between distant objectives and immediate contingencies and became even more nuanced over the years as Soviet power grew stronger, old threats disappeared, and new ones emerged. This means that, as far as Trotsky’s position is concerned, we have to distinguish between the thesis of the “genetic” impossibility of a proletarian military policy, and that of its “conjunctural” impos-

sibility arising from the Red Army's lack of experience, the shallowness of the socialist experiment, and so on.

Finally, let's note the wide range of issues addressed: the question of whether to have a standing or a militia army, the issue of mechanization, the possibility and content of a military doctrine, the offensive nature of any such doctrine, the conceptualization of deep operations and operational art, the place of the political apparatus in the army, etc. All of these issues contributed to making the debate in the Red Army one of the most important issues of the 1920s.

All of these factors contributed to making the debate in the USSR in the '20s one of the pinnacles of military intelligence—a term that some may consider an oxymoron!

Incidentally, many of the concepts born of that era remain fundamental to contemporary strategic thinking.

2. The Epistemological Framework of the Debate

The question of the possibility of a proletarian military science is a multi-faceted one and leads to two questions whose tentative answers have already filled several libraries:

1. Does military knowledge constitute a science?
2. Can it have a proletarian character?

Voltaire neatly summed up and even exaggerated the position of those who recognize the “art of war” but reject any “science of war.” There is nothing to learn from past campaigns for those to come, he says, for

resemblances are always imperfect, and the differences always great. The conduct of war is like games of skill, which can only be learned by practice, and the days of action are often but games of chance.⁴⁹⁴

Clausewitz distinguishes himself not only by refusing to accept this position but also by going beyond the alternative, a formulation that Engels greatly appreciated. In his view, war is neither an art nor a science,

⁴⁹⁴ Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet), *The Age of Louis XIV*, vol. 1 (City of London: Fielding and Walker, 1779), cxxxviii.

but an act of social life more akin to commerce (which also constitutes a conflict of vested interests), and even more akin to politics.

While Frunze seemed to recognize the scientific character of military thought, Trotsky adopted a critical stance, most clearly expressed in a 1922 speech to the Military Scientific Society entitled “Marxism and Military Knowledge.” Trotsky argued that “military science” could not be regarded as “natural science,” because it was neither “natural” nor “science.” According to Trotsky, military knowledge is an art that requires knowledge derived from real sciences (geography, ethnology, statistics, etc.) and principles derived from centuries of military practice, which no more constitute a science than, to use his example, the principles of locksmithing.

And according to him, it's not Marxism that will make it a science. In his speech, and in his account of the discussions that followed, Trotsky used several images: Marxism can explain how and why the Russian peasant makes shoes from birch bark, because it can explain the peasant's socio-economic conditions, the state of development of the productive forces, etc. But Marxism cannot teach how to make these shoes. Even in its core field of political economy, Marxism reaches this limit: it can't explain how to run a business, how to keep accounts. In the same way, according to Trotsky, Marxism can account for the how and why of a war, and even the how and why of a victory, but it cannot teach how to win a battle.

The Soviets only solved the question by redefining the fields of application, and making the art of war part of the science of war. According to this typology, which postdates the Frunze/Trotsky debate, but is one of its consequences, the science of war is subdivided into four chapters:

1. The study of war, which includes the history of wars;
2. The laws of war, i.e., the few principles whose application is imperative at all levels, and the few rules whose application, while always desirable, is not always possible under the conditions that make them truly efficient;
3. The theoretical basis of the country's preparation for war, which corresponds more or less to what Frunze called “military doctrine”;
4. The art of war, which, unlike the science of war, is not a rigorous system of knowledge of phenomena and their laws. As a

concrete command activity, no two conditions are ever identical: neither the means, nor the enemy, nor the terrain, nor the socioeconomic conditions are ever the same.

The debate on the existence of a proletarian military doctrine is akin to that on the existence of a proletarian science, and therefore of proletarian sciences.

Trotsky rejected this possibility: and why not a proletarian veterinary science? he ironized. . . . And yet, he regarded historical materialism as a science, even a science that the bourgeoisie could not grasp. If there's a Marxist sociology, a Marxist historical science, a Marxist economic science, why shouldn't Marxism apply to other fields with equal creativity?

Long before Stalin became Party leader, this notion of proletarian science, dampened and disqualified by the debate on genetics in the '50s, asserted itself. This science was attributed the following characteristics, all of which were supposed to offer advantages, compared to non-scientific perspectives:

1. Its philosophical basis: dialectical materialism, which enables it to overcome idealistic and metaphysical limitations;
2. Its class character: because the proletariat is the agent of historical transformation, it is in a position to comprehend things in their development—and because it is called upon to become the agent of its own demise in the communist society, it is the bearer of universality;
3. A superior social formation, socialism: providing a better basis for scientific activity.

Even if we were to follow Trotsky in denying military knowledge the label of science (proletarian or “general”), even if we were to reduce it to mere technical knowhow, we would still have to settle the crux of the debate: is there a proletarian method to prepare for and wage war?

As we'll see, Trotsky rejected this idea: according to him, there is no more proletarian method of winning a battle than there is of overcoming an outbreak of animal disease. Yet he acknowledged a proletarian method of engaging in politics, with its specific forms of organization (party and trade union), its particular forms of power (soviet, dictator-

ship of the proletariat). Why, then, should there not be a proletarian method of preparing for and waging war? Especially since, for Lenin, war and politics are related fields.

This was the crux of the 1920–21 debate.

3. Theoretical Framework of the Debate

In addition to Clausewitz, whom Trotsky and Frunze both quoted or, more accurately, drew on, the main theoretical basis on which they based their arguments was Engels.

The leading Marxist authority on military matters, Engels had denounced the theories of his time, which attributed victories to the genius of warlords, in favor of the following factors:

1. Everything that makes an army powerful: the quality and quantity of the population, armaments, organization, supplies, means of communication, etc. These factors depend directly on the state of development of the productive forces.
2. The ability of political-military leaders to understand this state of socio-economic development and its military potential. The great military commanders simply adapted their methods of warfare to the new types of weapons and troops.

Revolutionary periods upend all aspects of social life, with the military among the first to be affected, and revolutionaries best positioned to grasp and exploit the new. Engels referred to the defeat of English troops—mercenaries with no motivation whatsoever, stuck in tight formations and armed with muskets—by American rebels fighting in dispersed order, using forks and knives, firing rifles, each striking blows at their own pace and ready to take risks for their cause.

But it was the armies born of the French Revolution which, in their military epic, provided the main example of this theory. Napoleon's genius lay in understanding the full potential of these armies: mass armies equipped with the latest advances in artillery (numbers, efficiency, mobility, standardization), benefiting from a national economic war effort that would have been unimaginable under the Ancien Régime—and whose motivation allowed for great maneuvers, rapid marches on the enemy's

flanks, rear, or weak point, and subsequent pursuit to transform a victorious battle into a decisive success, determining the fate of the entire war.

Engels and Marx were particularly enthusiastic about the Hungarian uprising of 1848 and the armed resistance led by Lajos Kossuth against the Austrian Crown. The Hungarians rediscovered the methods of 1793⁴⁹⁵ (mass mobilization) and beyond (combining conventional warfare with guerrilla warfare), giving Marx and Engels the opportunity to reaffirm that a revolutionary army introduces new strategic methods.

But there's another theoretical reference to the 1920–21 debate: Jaurès' *Armée nouvelle* ("The New Army"). Jaurès advocated the replacement of the encamped standing army—with its conscripts deliberately cut off from civil society and placed at the disposal of a reactionary officer caste—by a vast militia system. Militias were to be based on production units, factories or village communities. Militiamen were to live and work as regular citizens, and receive local military training.

Jaurès saw only advantages to his reform:

1. The army would cease to be a tool in the hands of reaction, the very foundations of militarism would be undermined, and the country's youth would no longer waste long, stultifying and unproductive years in the barracks.
2. An astute reader of Clausewitz, Jaurès saw defense as the strongest form of warfare, and his militia system offered France the most effective defensive tool available. France would have in every citizen an armed and trained defender, motivated and endowed with a form of discipline far superior to that obtained through caporalism;⁴⁹⁶ a form of discipline freely accepted and understood as a necessity. Even if the aggressor (i.e., Imperial Germany) were to gain an initial advantage, thanks to the surprise attack of his concentrated forces, resistance would grow stronger as he pushed deeper into the country, until his offen-

⁴⁹⁵ The 1793 *levée en masse* ("mass levy") was a mass conscription decree issued during the French Revolution, mandating the mobilization of all able-bodied men aged 18 to 25 to defend the revolutionary government against foreign and domestic enemies.—Ed.

⁴⁹⁶ Caporalism refers to a hierarchical, authoritative, management style where power and decision-making are concentrated in a few individuals at the top, often emphasizing strict control and discipline over subordinates.—Ed.

sive potential was exhausted and the balance of power reversed. What's more, the militia army would have such defensive potential that it could even dissuade any idea of aggression.

3. The militia army was unfit for wars of aggression. If workers' parties were to impose similar reforms in their own countries, starting with Germany, the specter of war would be averted.

This was the kind of reform that Jaurès hoped would enable the transition, without revolution, from capitalism to socialism. The Bolshevik leaders had read Jaurès. They considered this reform utopian within the framework of a bourgeois state: the bourgeoisie needed an encamped army to ensure its power, and this was the kind of suicidal reform it would never allow. But beyond this divergence, the entire workers' movement had accepted Jaurès' doctrine, which overlapped with Mehring's, for the armed forces of future socialist republics.

4. The Historical and Military Context of the Debate

At the end of 1920, the civil war was virtually over in Russia. Frunze attended the 10th Party Congress buoyed by his crushing victory over Baron Wrangel's last White Army in Crimea on November 16.

By the time the Congress began, the last armed forces opposing Soviet rule were Makhno's Green Army, the Basmachi movement in Turkestan, and the Muridist movement in the Caucasus. Frunze was elected as a member of the Central Committee, but when the Congress first convened on March 8, the party was in the midst of a line struggle, intensified by the Kronstadt uprising (which had broken out on March 2). The debates opposed the advocates of a radicalization of war communism, such as Trotsky, with those seeking an alliance with the peasantry, such as Bukharin, who in the end were subsequently able to impose their views. Faced with the spiraling/decentralizing development of tendencies, currents, and factions, Lenin emphasized the need for unity; this was the famous 7th point of the Congress, which had a decisive influence on the political life of the party in the following years. These debates were interrupted by the resistance of the Kronstadt insurgents, and Frunze, like many other congressmen, took part in the suppression of the uprising, which ended on March 18.

By October 1919, the Red Army numbered three million men, the vast majority of whom were peasant conscripts, with an additional 48,409 former officers. The Party had to send in working-class activists to bolster its strength. At the time, there were 120,000 of them. In *Lessons of Civil War*, Gusev, the leader of the political commissars, who would play a major role in the debate we're examining here, estimated that with less than 5% Communists, a unit was ineffective during the civil war, but that with a presence of 12–15% of Communist activists, it could be considered a shock unit. A propaganda campaign was launched in the army: 500,000 Red soldiers became Party members during the civil war, representing 91% of all party members during this period. The Red Army became the country's leading educational institution: by 1920, it had 4,000 schools, three universities, 1,000 clubs,⁴⁹⁷ and 25 newspapers and two million books in circulation. By June 1920, the Red Army reached its peak strength of 5.5 million men. In August 1920, it counted 300,000 Communists, i.e., half of the members of the entire party were in the Red Army.

While the fight against the White armies had only generated debate on the main principles of a unanimously agreed upon strategic objective (the annihilation of the White armies and the expulsion of the interventionists⁴⁹⁸), the Russo-Polish war raised broader questions that marked the debate between Frunze and Trotsky.

On April 25, 1920, the Poles crossed the border, taking advantage of Soviet Russia's weakness in annexing Ukraine and tried to reestablish the borders of medieval Greater Poland. Overrunning the Red Army's weak position, they seized Kiev on May 7. The Red Army responded with a vast maneuver: Kamenev, who was in charge of the campaign, ordered three armies to engage Egorov in the south and four armies from Tukhachevsky in the north. Trapped by the Red Army, the Polish forces retreated with the Red Cavalry on their heels. Minsk was liberated and the Polish border crossed.

There was a debate in the Central Committee, with Trotsky opposing the extension of the revolution by conquest, but Lenin decided to take

⁴⁹⁷ Factory or soldiers' clubs were places for instructive relaxation, with comfortable arm-chairs, bookcases, newspapers, chess games, etc.—Ed.

⁴⁹⁸ Part of the Russian Civil War. See related glossary entry.—Ed.

the risk and gathered the Polish Bolshevik leaders to form a revolutionary government once Warsaw had been taken.

In the meantime, a geographical divide formed between the two Soviet army groups, that is, between Tukhachevsky's Western Front marching on Warsaw and Egorov's Southwestern Front marching on Lvov.⁴⁹⁹ The Poles received military aid from France and firmly entrenched themselves in Warsaw. On August 6, Kamenev ordered Egorov to aid Tukhachevsky with a vast maneuver of three armies, including the 1st Cavalry Army. But Egorov and the members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southwestern Front (including Stalin and Voroshilov) deliberately ignored the order and, on August 12, on their own initiative, launched an offensive towards Lvov, the "Polish Manchester"⁵⁰⁰ and stronghold of the workers' movement. On the 13th, Stalin wrote a telegram to Kamenev justifying his refusal to carry out the order. For this manifest insubordination, Stalin was relieved of his duties and recalled to Moscow. Budyonny and Voroshilov continued to turn a deaf ear to Kamenev's repeated orders, and it was not until August 20 that they turned their forces northwards.

But it was too late. The Battle of Warsaw was a defeat, and the defeat turned into a disaster, culminating in the massacre of Red prisoners.

On October 12, an armistice was signed, followed by the Treaty of Riga, leaving Poland with a vast portion of Ukrainian territory that the USSR would not recover until 1939, under the terms of the German-Soviet Treaty.

Tukachevsky attributed his defeat to the refusal of the command of the Southwestern Front, i.e., to Egorov, Stalin, Voroshilov, and Budyonny.

Stalin blamed Tukhachevsky: his leadership of the armies had been inadequate, his conduct of operations adventurous. According to Stalin, a more capable commander would have won the Battle of Warsaw with the forces at Tukhachevsky's disposal.

Frunze and Kamenev adopted Tukhachevsky's analysis.

Trotsky and Lenin did not.

⁴⁹⁹ Lviv in modern Ukrainien.—Ed.

⁵⁰⁰ In the 19th century, the city of Manchester symbolized the heart of the Industrial Revolution, being the epicenter of industrial development with rapid growth in the textile industries and marked urbanization.—Ed.

Although Tukhachevsky's version completely disappeared from Soviet literature in the early 1930s (and his defenders were subsequently shot), this version of this history has now become the most widely accepted in the West.

But, there was a third analysis, Svechin's, according to which even if Egorov's army had lent a hand to Tukhachevsky, and even if the battle of Warsaw had been won, the war would have been lost in Poland, during the next battle or the one after. In his opinion, the Red Army had surpassed the "limit" of the offensive; its forces were exhausted, its logistics and supplies lacking due to overstretched lines of communication and a dearth of transport.

In any case, Trotsky was convinced that a military offensive aimed at spreading the world revolution over Poland's corpse was a mistake. And his position in future debates would be marked by a fundamentally defensive strategic posture.

5. Frunze and Gusev's 22 Theses

At the 10th Congress, Frunze and Gusev, two leading figures of the so-called "military communists," presented a draft resolution consisting of 22 theses for the reorganization of the Soviet armed forces. The first 16 proposals were written by Gusev, while the last six were by Frunze, but together they constituted a coherent document.

Gusev began by examining the situation facing the Red Army, both nationally and internationally. He considered the civil war in Russia to be the first episode in a general war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. This first episode was characterized by the instability of the White and Red armies, due to the fact that the majority of their soldiers were peasants who vacillated between the two sides.

Gusev's 2nd thesis stated that, even if the counterrevolution was 90% defeated in Russia, the Soviet authorities should not relax their defensive efforts because one or several other wars were possible on the western borders, in the Caucasus, or in the Far East.

Even if such a war does not break out in the short term [Gusev points out in his 3rd thesis,] there is no doubt that it will break out in the future. And then the Red Army will no lon-

ger have to face unstable armies, but solid, well-armed and well-commanded bourgeois armies. As it stands, the Red Army is incapable of defeating such armies, and its reorganization is therefore an essential task, which includes a vast program of military training and education.

Gusev's 4th thesis emphasized the need to qualitatively improve the Red Army, by providing it with modern weaponry in particular. In Thesis 5, Gusev stressed the qualitative gap between the Red Army and the White and imperialist armies. In his 6th thesis, he identified the commander corps as the Red Army's main weakness. To remedy this, Gusev proposed the creation of a network of military schools at different levels, whose teaching would be based on the experiences of past wars and on a unified military doctrine founded on the study of Marx and Engels.

It is here, in Gusev's words, that the proposal for a unified military doctrine appears, which would prove to be at the heart of the Trotsky/Frunze debate.

Yet Gusev also warned that, even following this program, the Red Army would remain qualitatively inferior to its enemies for a long time to come, both in terms of leadership and the economic base of military power.

However, in the short term, the 7th thesis nuanced, there were ways of compensating for the weakness of the leadership, by raising the political awareness and combat readiness of Red soldiers.

Gusev's 8th thesis advocated for an army focused on quality, from the bottom up.

The 9th thesis referred to the unification of military training with the country's economic life.

The 10th thesis stated that the Red Army should learn from the mobility of Makhno's armies.

The 11th thesis asserted that future warfare would involve maneuver, and that the role of the cavalry would therefore be fundamental. Gusev called for the cavalry to be reinforced with mounted machine guns, armored cars, trucks, and bombing aircraft. This equipment would not handicap cavalry mobility, but would transform it "into a new type of weapon"—"armored cavalry." It was an extremely perceptive, almost

visionary analysis, foreshadowing the military changes that would take shape only ten or fifteen years later.

The 12th thesis called for the popularization of this program, taking into account the imperatives of military secrecy.

The 13th thesis emphasized the danger of Bonapartism, of a counter-revolution through a military coup, rooted socially in the predominance of middle peasants in the population and the tendency of capitalism to reemerge. Any tendency towards Bonapartism had to be fought against and this required a major political apparatus within the armed forces.

The 14th thesis was devoted to political work, the need to define a program, found schools, and so on.

The 15th thesis addressed the question of a single command, which would gradually replace the commander/commissar combination of the civil war. It took a cautious approach to the question of "partisanship."⁵⁰¹ *Partizanstvo* is a term coined in 1921 to denounce the tendency towards irregular organization, Red armed groups' refusal to submit to general plans and to integrate into the military apparatus (for example, by keeping spoils of war rather than turning them in to the ad hoc systems for rational redistribution).

Gusev criticized partisanship but rejected an across the board condemnation of the phenomenon specific to situations in civil war.

The 16th thesis, the last that Gusev wrote, quoted the resolution adopted by the 9th Party Congress in 1920 establishing that the transition from military service (with the training encampment of units) to a militia system should be gradual, and above all dependent on the Republic's military and international situation. Gusev, a supporter of the standing army, criticized those who advocated a militia system in "safe" areas (in the interior of the country) and a regular army on vulnerable borders. Gusev warned that a militia system could encourage the development of particular interests within each individual militia group at the expense of the Republic's general interests. For Gusev, a militia system was only conceivable in industrial regions inhabited by a highly class-conscious popula-

⁵⁰¹ Focusing on the methods of partisan warfare, and by extension the tendency towards independent action of military forces. Not to be confused with "partisanship," which expresses a partisan attitude, a (quasi-)unconditional adherence to a cause, party, or ideology.—Ed.

tion. Finally, he advocated military training for all citizens living in border regions threatened by war.

Frunze took over at the 17th thesis, stressing the need to transform the Red Army into an organization that was unified by a community of political and ideological views, a unity that had to be reinforced by a unity of views on military problems—which meant, Frunze explained, working to solve these problems and to develop combat training methods for the army units.

The 18th thesis stated that this unity should be strengthened and expressed in military regulations, manuals, and directives. Such unity was to be organized on the basis of Marxism, within an ordered system reflecting the overall worldview (Frunze made use of the Hegelian term that has entered Marxist vocabulary: *Weltanschauung*⁵⁰²) of the Red Army and the Republic as a whole.

In the 19th thesis, Frunze explained that this unified vision had to be the result of the joint efforts of political workers and military specialists.

In the 20th thesis, Frunze argued that the General Staff should be transformed into the “theoretical-military staff of the proletarian state.”

The 21st thesis stated that the General Staff could only fulfill this function by integrating workers with politico-military training, and by giving future army commanders a broad scientific education in addition to purely military training.

The 22nd and final thesis called for the immediate publication, by state publishing houses, of all Marxist works on military questions.

⁵⁰² In Marxist jargon, the term *Weltanschauung* refers to the comprehensive worldview or ideology that shapes how individuals and societies understand and interpret their social and economic conditions, often influenced by their class position and material circumstances. Karl Marx’s critique of Hegel’s dialectic aimed to put the “world [and the method of approaching it through thought: the historical dialectic] back on its feet.” Friedrich Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1946). “Criticism has plucked the imaginary flowers on the chain not in order that man shall continue to bear that chain without fantasy or consolation, but so that he shall throw off the chain and pluck the living flower. The criticism of religion disillusions man, so that he will think, act, and fashion his reality like a man who has discarded his illusions and regained his senses, so that he will move around himself as his own true Sun. Religion is only the illusory Sun which revolves around man as long as he does not revolve around himself.” K. Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law,” *Collected Works*, vol. 3, 176.

6. The Response to the 22 Theses

Delegates to the 10th Congress didn't seem to be impressed by Gusev and Frunze's 22 theses. Worse still, Trotsky, the party's and state's second most important figure, and the Revolution's leading military figure, declared them "incorrect in theory" and "sterile in practice."

Trotsky did not even care to elaborate on his criticism. But in the face of such opposition, Frunze and Gusev withdrew their draft resolution.

Nevertheless, the theses of the "military communists" met a favorable reaction among the young commanders, who saw in what would be the future unified doctrine the theorization and formalization of their own experiences and commitments to building a professional proletarian army.

Trotsky's uncontested victory at the 10th Congress against the proposed doctrine was not definitive. The project remained alive and appealing, especially among Red Army commanders and political workers in Ukraine, as evidenced by the articles published on the subject in the military press.

After the Congress, Frunze returned to his command in Ukraine. He acknowledged that his theses were somewhat imprecise, inaccurate, and not clearly formulated, but he remained convinced of their validity. He and the other "military communists" set about deepening, clarifying, and substantiating them.

By this time, the Red Army was beginning to demobilize: some units were assigned to production as "labor armies" and then disbanded altogether. Communist activists left *en masse*, the tasks of the day being the reconstruction and administration of the country. The state of the army was appalling. As military budgets dried up, equipment was not renewed. With no barracks to speak of, the red soldiers lived with their families and instead of training, they cut firewood, grew vegetables to improve their living conditions, and built their own barracks. In addition, they were constantly mobilized for civilian tasks such as haymaking or unloading trains.

7. Frunze: "A Unified Military Doctrine for the Red Army"

In July 1921, Frunze published his famous "A Unified Military Doctrine for the Red Army" in *Armiya i Revolyutsiya* (*Army and Revolution*), a journal for Ukrainian and Crimean servicemen. Subsequently, the arti-

cle appeared in the July–August issue of the Ukrainian generalist journal *Krasnaya Nov* (*Red Virgin Soil*).

In it, Frunze began by outlining the origins of the problem—but without mentioning the debates at the 10th Congress.

Again, Frunze argued that the victory over counterrevolution and the establishment of workers' power created the conditions for a doctrine that could be developed by military specialists and communists on the basis of experience gained in past wars, especially the civil war.

In his view, Soviet military theory could be developed on the basis of newly created social relations. Within the General Staff, there were old specialists willing to break from old routines and take on the views of the new social classes, aided by the experience they had gained in the Red Army in addition to the activity of the younger generation of military workers from the working classes in a context of revolutionary wars. Frunze believed that the combination of these efforts meant that the analysis of Soviet military experience would progress at the same time as the development of that unified doctrine whose absence he felt was keenly sensed.

Frunze explained that in the past, the outcome of wars depended on relatively small population groups—on permanent troops whose job it was to wage war—or on those temporarily included in the ranks of the armed forces that had been called up for this purpose. Nowadays, the protagonists of war are virtually entire nations. Wars subordinate all aspects of social life, dragging all state and social interests in their wake. The theater of military operations is no longer narrowly defined, but comprises vast territories occupied by millions of people. Technical resources are constantly being developed, becoming more complex and creating new categories of specialization, types of arms, and so on.

Whereas in the past, the commander's direct authority over each unit of his army was the norm, this is no longer the case. However, unity of command is more necessary than ever, not only when military operations are underway, but from the moment the state and its military apparatus prepare for war. The State must determine in advance its general and military policy, indicate the possible objectives of its military efforts, and draw up and implement a general plan which, through the judicious use of the nation's energies, prepares for possible future confrontations.

As for the military apparatus, it must adopt the organizational form required by the general aims determined by the State, and on this basis create a solid unity among the armed forces. All levels of the hierarchy must be bound by a common view of the nature of military tasks and the means to achieve them.

A unified military doctrine should therefore start by indicating the character of future confrontations, which in turn will determine military policy, the development of the armed forces, the character and system of training for soldiers and large units, political-military propaganda and so on.

Conscious of this new context and the theoretical it required Frunze proposed a definition: a unified military doctrine is the accepted set of instructions for the army of a state, which establishes the nature of the development of the country's armed forces; the methods of training its troops; their orientation on the basis of the dominant views of its government in terms of the character of their military tasks and the means of meeting the challenges they present—all of which are founded on the class nature of the state and determined by the level of development of the country's productive forces.

Frunze recognized the limits of his definition (although Trotsky ended up supporting it, he only paid it lip service), and called for its development.

To be better understood, Frunze used a series of examples. He outlined the differences between German, French, English, and Russian military policies, explaining them in terms of each country's specific characteristics (a voracious German bourgeoisie, hence expansionist, with an offensive military doctrine; a satiated French bourgeoisie, exploiting its immense colonial empire, hence aspiring to the status quo, with a defensive military doctrine, etc.).

Based on these examples, he concluded:

1. The military affairs of a state are determined by the general living conditions of that state.
2. The character of a state's military doctrine is determined by the nature of the social class at its head.
3. The vitality of a military doctrine depends on its suitability for the general objectives of the state, and on its material and moral resources.

4. It is impossible to “invent” a military doctrine: its basic elements are taken from the surrounding context. Any theoretical inquiry consists of discovering these elements and transcribing them into a system that conforms to the principles of military science and art.
5. The theoretical task of Red Army workers must be the study of the surrounding social structures; the determination of military tasks resulting from the class nature of the state; the study of the conditions enabling them to be accomplished in relation to material and moral conditions; the study of the peculiarities of the Red Army’s construction and the application of methods of struggle to this army; the harmonization of the requirements of military science and art in general with these particularities, which are objectively and directly linked to the nature of the proletarian state and the revolutionary epoch.

In the process, Frunze undertook part of this work.

The unified Soviet military doctrine was based on the fact that the dictatorship of the proletariat meant that there is an unconditional state of war waged by the working classes against the Russian bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie remains a powerful enemy by relying on the strength of international capital, the solidity of its international ties and, ultimately, the petty-bourgeois masses’ spontaneous conservatism.

Between the proletarian state and the rest of the bourgeois world, there can only be a long, stubborn war until death. A state of open war may occasionally and temporarily give way to a kind of peaceful coexistence, but fundamentally, Soviet Russia was considered to be under siege, and would remain so for as long as capital dominated the world.

The Soviet state had one advantage: while the bourgeoisie had to resort to methods of trickery and deceit to mobilize the masses for military objectives alien to their interests, the victory of the revolution was in the masses’ interest.

The country’s energy and will must be directed towards creating and strengthening its military power, and it must be prepared morally and materially for the idea of an inevitable war as the only way to face it successfully.

Frunze then addressed the question of the nature of the Red Army's tasks in the form of an either/or approach: defensive or offensive? His text, so far solidly structured and argued, here suffered from a confusion between the principle of activity, the principle of initiative, and the principle of the offensive. Trotsky would seize upon this Achilles' heel.

What did Frunze actually say? That the general policy of the working class, which strives to defeat the bourgeois world, can only be one of "action." It's true that the weakness of the young Soviet Republic's material resources prevented it from immediately striving for this goal. But this did not change the essence of the question, and the class character of the struggle remains consistent with the strategic principle that the side that only defends itself is doomed to defeat.

He continued, that the working class would be forced, by the very course of the historical process, to take the offensive when the opportunity arises. The requirements of military art and proletarian politics seemed to be in complete harmony, all the more so as the shortcomings (economic, scientific, etc.) of Soviet military power could be offset by the emergence of a revolutionary development within the capitalist countries.

This thesis was based on the experience of the war against Poland; during its offensive, the Red Army was reinforced by tens of thousands of volunteers from the liberated regions: 30,000 from Ruthenia⁵⁰³ alone, when the total number of troops involved did not exceed 160,000. And when the Red Army approached East Prussia, it was strengthened by thousands of German volunteers, whom Tukhachevsky organized into an autonomous brigade.

By evoking the initiative of the proletariat within the enemy countries as a factor to compensate—to a yet to be determined extent—for the qualitative inferiority of the Red Army in the face of the imperialist powers' armies, and thus ultimately enabling the Red Army to envision offensive operations, Frunze left his mark, for better or worse, on Soviet military thinking at least until the Finnish War.

This advantage was later referred to as compensating not so much for the material weakness of the Red Army, which became modern and powerful, but for the inherent advantage of the defensive over the offen-

⁵⁰³ Ruthenia is a historical region in Eastern Europe, encompassing parts of modern-day Ukraine, Slovakia, and Poland.—Ed.

sive, as theorized by Clausewitz. Soviet strategists recognized the validity of Clausewitz's thesis that only the offensive could achieve positive goals, but that, all else being equal, the defensive was superior militarily to the offensive. However, they believed that their historical uniqueness (as an army representing the interests of the peoples of enemy countries, and therefore able to count on their support), outweighed the disadvantages of the offensive that Clausewitz detailed.

Frunze's conclusions coincide with Lenin's policy: be prepared for an offensive in the West (or a counteroffensive in the event of imperialist aggression), but only when the time was right. Although it was necessary to wait for a new wave of revolutions in Europe, Lenin believed that this was imminent and that preparations had to be made in earnest.

This represented a middle position between Thukhachevsky's, who was ready to bring the revolution to the West at the tip of the bayonet, and Trotsky's, who planned to assume a defensive stance and devote himself to rebuilding the economy. Frunze envisaged a preemptive attack and if the threat of imperialist military aggression materialized, the Red Army could take both the initiative and the offensive.

The Red Army and its staff had to be ready to fulfill any operational objective on a battlefield that was actually the entire Old World [i.e., the non-socialist world]. Therefore, in addition to military training, Red commanders were required to study the economic and political conditions of future theaters of war.

From his analysis of the general situation of Soviet Russia, which was in a state of permanent war against the capitalist powers, Frunze saw the need to vigorously educate the army to prepare it to accomplish revolutionary tasks through energetic and courageous offensive operations. The experience of the civil war demonstrated a spirit of initiative in the revolutionary camp, sometimes to the point of excessive risk-taking.

Frunze returned to the subject of the Red Army's material (and especially technical) inferiority, pointing out that the most important way to overcome it was to prepare the Army materially and morally for large-scale maneuver operations. The vastness of the Soviet territory, Frunze explained, offered the possibility of retreating great distances without losing the ability to continue fighting, creating the right conditions for the application of strategic maneuvers (i.e., outside the immediate battlefield).

Above all, the commanding corps needed to be trained in the concepts of maneuverability, and the entire Red Army had to be trained to execute maneuver marches quickly and methodically.

This primacy of maneuver didn't exclude defensive operations or partisan warfare. But these were considered secondary and could only exist to enable the execution of general maneuvers. The civil war provided a wealth of experience on partisan warfare, a warfare that had to be thought out and prepared within this framework of the primacy of maneuver, which is what prompted Frunze to write *Instruction on Partisan Warfare* in 1933.

The maneuvering nature of future operations led Frunze to reassess the role and importance of cavalry in future battles. He took issue with those who, based on the experience of the World War, doubted that the cavalry could play the role of an independent active force. But while he asserted that the Red Cavalry would have an extremely important role to play in future operations, he no longer referred, as Gusev had done, to a new type of cavalry—the armored cavalry.⁵⁰⁴ Frunze did not take up Gusev's proposal, which Tukhachevsky would theorize and put into practice, perhaps because Soviet Russia's economy in 1921 could not afford to do so, and because Frunze had decided in this essay to be more specific about his proposals than in the draft resolution of the 10th Congress.

Frunze then reexamined the militia system, stating that its secondary character was to be assumed: a permanent Red Army was the only possible choice, given the nature of the military tasks. He considered the question settled definitively, in relation to the corresponding resolutions of the 10th Congress and the government decrees that followed them. Frunze only accepted, with reservations, a transition to a militia system that was based on the *Vseobshcheye Voyennoye Obucheniye*, the universal military training program that existed in Soviet Russia from 1918 to 1923 to provide sports and paramilitary training for poor workers and peasants. The existence of a militia was permissible to Frunze only if it enabled budget savings without undermining the Red Army's ability to carry out offensive missions.

⁵⁰⁴ Armored cavalry refers to military units equipped with heavily armored vehicles, such as tanks or armored personnel carriers, serving roles traditionally associated with horse-mounted cavalry, including reconnaissance, rapid mobility, and shock action on the battlefield.—Ed.

At the end of his article, Frunze discussed the internal life of the Red Army, which should correspond with the ideals of communist society by limiting commanders' privileges to the direct requirements of service. Stultifying and repetitive drill, the training of soldiers to march at parade pace, etc., had to give way to freely consented discipline, the voluntary and conscious performance of service duties, and the maximum development of each Red soldier's personal initiative.

Frunze's conclusion was a modest one; he presented his work as an outline of the general ideas that should be borne in mind by those working on questions of military theory. The final answers, he said, could only be the result of a long collective effort.

Nothing in Frunze's article is directly aimed at Trotsky, nor did it mention the incident at the 10th Congress, even granting (to Trotsky, without mentioning him) that his initial proposals were rightly criticized for being imprecise. This is worth pointing out, because Trotsky went on to write that Stalin loomed behind Frunze, and that the polemic was therefore part of maneuvers aimed at him personally. In making this judgment, it seems that Trotsky was inclined to see everything through this particular prism, although Frunze was not close to Stalin and, at the time of the debate, Stalin was not yet General Secretary of the Party.

Trotsky himself explained that he was good at making enemies and that, in the course of his work, he didn't care whose feet he crushed. To say the least, Frunze and the "military communists" had had their feet brutally crushed at the 10th Congress, and they didn't seem to mind.

But for Trotsky's opponents, the worst was yet to come.

8. Trotsky: Unified Military Doctrine

In November 1921, Trotsky delivered his first response during a debate organized by the Military Scientific Society on its first anniversary, in which Văcietis, Tukhachevsky and Svechin took part.

Trotsky warned against "mystical and metaphysical content" masquerading as revolutionary theory, and began by addressing the question of whether military doctrine was a theory, a set of methods, or the art of applying methods. Of course, his question was a rhetorical one: the presentation made it clear that he was of the opinion that it was the latter.

On this occasion, Trotsky criticized Tukhachevsky, who considered the war of position to be outmoded, accusing him of making hasty generalizations. He believed that if Soviet Russia enjoyed five or ten years of peace, it would be able to develop and equip armed forces capable of holding a front. Trotsky refused to accept that the valorization of maneuver could be based on an analysis of future warfare, denouncing it as an idealization of the past civil war.

He also attacked the “doctrine of the offensive,” explaining that there can and must be necessary retreats in strategy as there are in politics. This response seemed to ascribe the idea that one should attack in all circumstances to Tukhachevsky—something he had never practiced, said, or even, presumably, thought about. Historically, Trotsky has been criticized for caricaturing his opponents’ position in this exact manner.

Trotsky also criticized Thukachevsky for his preference for a standing army system and his rejection of a militia system. He emphasized that peacetime worked in Soviet Russia’s favor, allowing it to rebuild its economy, and concluded that in the military sphere, it was better to pay attention to details such as greasing boots and guns rather than theorizing. . .

A few weeks later, Trotsky took up, expanded and detailed his positions. At the end of the year, Frunze’s article was republished in the November–December issue of *Military Science and Revolution*, with a lengthy reply by Trotsky entitled “Military Doctrine or Pseudo-Military Doctrinairism.”

We will examine this text in more detail.

9. Trotsky: “Military Doctrine or Pseudo-Military Doctrinairism”

Trotsky starts his essay with a series of observations that concur with those of Frunze:

1. He observes an intensification of interest in theoretical problems within the Red Army, corresponding to the need to assess the progress made and draw theoretical and practical conclusions.
2. Future projections (New waves of civil war fomented from outside? An open attack on the USSR by bourgeois states?) must guide national and international, domestic, and military policy.

3. The overall situation is constantly evolving, and as a result, policies have to change with it. Up until now, the Soviets had managed to cope with the military tasks imposed on it by the national and international position. Its choices have proved more relevant than those of the imperialist powers. According to Trotsky, this superiority was due to the use of the scientific method of Marxism, and the ability to apply it to the complex combination of factors and forces of the period. The Soviet's enemies, on the other hand, were unable to rise to the level of the scientific method because of their class position: they were empiricists. Their vast experience gives them suitable keys for many situations, but Marxists have a universal key that is useful in all situations.
4. Marxism provides no ready-made prescriptions, especially not in the field of military development. But here, as in other contexts, it offers a method. And if it is true that war is the continuation of politics by other means, then it follows, according to Trotsky, that the army is the continuation and cornerstone of the social structure of the state.

Trotsky's approach to military questions stemmed not from any military doctrine (which he immediately characterized as a sum of dogmatic premises), but from the Marxist analysis of the working class's need for self-defense.

Trotsky spoke of "self-defense" right from the start, whereas Frunze had already taken into account, from the outset of his essay, the needs arising from the international extension of the revolution. This is a difference of approach that affected the entire debate.
5. The Red Army, writes Trotsky, was built up from detachments of the Red Guard, peasant atamans, and former czarist generals. Its starting point was not a doctrine; it was created from the material at hand, unifying everything from the point of view of the workers' state. But despite the diversity of practical measures and the array of means employed, there was no empiricism at play—everything was combined by the unity of

the revolutionary objective, by the unity of the Marxist method of orientation.

This alleged absence of doctrine in Bolshevik military policy is debatable, and we'll come back to it later.

Before turning to the debate against Frunze and the "military communists," Trotsky referred to three earlier debates.

1. The debate which, as early as 1917, pitted the maneuvering principle against the "imperialist" principle of the war of position. Trotsky's opponents wanted to subordinate the organizational form of the Red Army to maneuver strategy, proclaiming that the army corps or division, even the brigade (around 5,000 men) were far too cumbersome units and should give way to combinations of detachments or regiments.
2. Linked to this debate was that of partisanship, mentioned above.
3. There was also the debate on the employment of former officers. In March 1919, on the eve of the 8th Party Congress, the question of specialists arose following a series of spectacular betrayals. Lenin planned to dismiss all former officers. Trotsky disclosed to him that there were over 30,000 serving in the Red Army, making the proportion of betrayals negligible. This provoked a reversal of opinion of Lenin and the majority of congressmen.

It should be noted that opposition to the specialists was not only political (as with Stalin). Tukhachevsky was not opposed to them per se—he was one himself! And when he was appointed head of the 1st Red Army, he successfully rallied the thousands of former officers who had withdrawn to Simbirsk. Tukhachevsky's reservation was a military one: he felt that colonels over 50, caught up in the routines of the old regime armies, were detrimental to the Red Army, and that young men should be promoted to the highest ranks, provided they had demonstrated competence.

Trotsky evoked these three debates as if they were all manifestations of a single dogmatic flaw. He erased all the differences between his opponents and deemed them not only irrelevant, but even unintelligent.

The way in which these debates were introduced and presented leaves little doubt as to his intentions: to present Frunze's contribution as the latest embodiment in a long series of vain and sterile doctrinaire purists.

This was an attempt to disqualify Frunze's proposals before even addressing their contents, and is all the more regrettable given that Frunze was neither a defender of partisanship nor a critic of the use of officers.

Trotsky then returned at length to his idea that the Red Army was created without doctrine. And this was indeed a key question: if the Bolsheviks didn't need a doctrine at the worst moment of the civil war, why would they need one after triumphing over such perils?

This alleged lack of doctrine is questionable. Trotsky hadn't read much military literature, but *The New Army* had left a deep impression on his thinking. In fact, according to Radek, it was the military reading that influenced him the most.

In the early hours of the revolution, all military measures showed a resolve to apply the Jaurèssian doctrine. The Red Guard was the concrete expression of the limits of this doctrine. In the conditions of Russia in 1918, the first victories of the White armies led the Bolsheviks to shift away from it and return to the dreaded model of the standing army, with its hierarchies and harsh discipline. One of Trotsky's great merits is to have been among the first to recognize this necessity.

Trotsky didn't see it as a return to the classical model, but as the use of the habits, customs, knowledge, and means of the past, with the human and technical equipment at hand—all with a view to ensure the domination of the proletarian vanguard in the army.

Trotsky took the example of the appointment of commissars. The first Red Army units were staffed by officers of the old regime, whose loyalty had not been established. On April 4, 1918, to guard against the treachery of officers from the old regime, a decree introduced political commissars in each unit, starting with the company. This was the system of dual command: the commanding officer made the decisions, while the commissar had to countersign the order and could only oppose it if it implied treason or a hidden political agenda. The commissars, who were Communist activists, were also responsible for maintaining the morale and fighting spirit of the troops. This system was not the product of Marxism or military doctrine: it was the right instrument for particular conditions.

Trotsky's example was equivocal, because it was his only real innovation. All other measures that had been taken since the founding of the Red Army had later reverted to the forms and procedures of the old regime's army. In fact, the creation of the Commissar Corps was the means to make this return possible.

The transition from the Jaurèssian model to the classical one can be explained by the "rise towards the extremes" during the civil war; when volunteers were no longer sufficient, conscription was necessary, and with conscription came the fight against deserters, the reestablishment of military tribunals, and so on.

The Spanish Republic went through the same process.

The Red Army's only other major innovation was the creation of a cavalry army in September 1919. Initiated under the famous slogan "On horseback, proletarians," it was radically opposed by Trotsky. The strategic requirements of such formations, unknown in the West, were so stringent that, in the end, the equivalent of four armies were created: Budyonny's 1st Army (the famous *Konarmiya*), Philip Mironov's 2nd Cavalry Army, Gai's 3rd Cavalry Corps, and Boris Dumenko's 2nd Army. They all played a decisive role at some point in the civil war. Trotsky recognized his mistake only later, but it was one that had been born a long time before: Trotsky had never had any other model than the Jaurèssian militia army or the classical army. He abandoned the Jaurèssian model (or, more accurately, postponed its adoption until after victory) and from then on, with intelligence, methodology, and energy, confined himself to creating a kind of bourgeois army in the service of the proletariat.

For Trotsky, the Red Army was the military embodiment of proletarian doctrine only because:

1. The dictatorship of the proletariat is *secured* by the Red Army (which implies that it has a primarily defensive role);
2. Because the dictatorship of the proletariat would be impossible without the Red Army.

In short, in the face of those who feel that there was a lack of reflection on questions of doctrine, on what the Red Army should be, its historical tasks, its strategic perspectives, Trotsky replied that the Red Army

has been created, that it had conquered, and that it had developed and was developing very well without it. . .

When it came to the question of defining military doctrine, Trotsky eventually agreed to accept Frunze's, but again, "with certain reservations."

Like Frunze, Trotsky used the historical method. He began by explaining that the foundations of military science, common to all times and peoples, are limited to a few elementary truths. Since wars have certain common and relatively stable features, a military art has developed historically. Its methods and uses have undergone changes, along with the social conditions that determine them. The result is the emergence of relatively stable but temporary national military doctrines, a complex combination of calculations, methods, habits, slogans, and military temperment—corresponding to the structure of a given society and, above all, to the nature of its ruling class.

Trotsky illustrates his remarks with an analysis of the traditional military doctrines of England, France, and Germany—an analysis quite similar to that proposed by Frunze, and perhaps partly taken from him. But Trotsky brought up this illustration in order to argue that these doctrines were undermined by the ordeal of the World War, and even more so by the period of great instability that followed, to the point where no country had retained any principles or ideas stable enough to be designated as a national military doctrine.

This assertion was soon disproved. England simply updated its doctrine by integrating the airborne element into its traditional policy of naval supremacy, with the creation of the world's first independent air force, the Royal Air Force; France revised its doctrine by extending its defensive doctrine to the point of walling itself off behind the Maginot Line; Germany gave its old offensive doctrine new means (armor and assault aircraft) and new tactics (Blitzkrieg). Unquestionably, national military doctrines, very clear and specific, would continue to be asserted themselves, confirming Frunze's analysis and refuting Trotsky's.

Trotsky continued with his remarks: the absence of a military doctrine on the part of the imperialist powers made it impossible to predict the form their aggression against Soviet Russia would take. In these conditions, the only correct doctrine is to "stay on guard."

“Will our main theater of Soviet Russia’s military activity in the next few years be in the West or in the East?” One could give an unconditional answer to such questions, Trotsky said, even when they were put so crudely. The world situation was too complex. Class forces had to be assessed in all their combinations and changes to find an adequate solution in each concrete case.

Trotsky said as much in 1921, when the Red Army’s choices of equipment and organization were limited, but he was short-sighted. Choices soon had to be made. We are reminded of the dilemma posed by Rubashov’s interrogator in *Darkness at Noon*: building ocean-going submarines ran the risk of leaving the coast defenseless in the event of foreign aggression; building coastal submarines ran the risk of not having the means to support the world revolution. Choices had to be made. We can’t adopt every piece of equipment or every type of organization.

Quoting Clausewitz, Trotsky reminded us of the risks of elevating military affairs to a system, and yet he tried to respond to the “military communists” on the basis of a conception of military doctrine that he divided into four elements:

1. The fundamental orientation of the country pursued by the government on questions of economy, culture, etc.
2. The main thrusts of international policy and, linked to this, the possible theaters of military activity.
3. The organization, training, and development of the Red Army, in keeping with the nature of the state and the tasks of its armed forces.
4. Strategic and tactical training of the Red Army.

In Trotsky’s view, the principles relating to points 3 and 4 constitute military doctrine in the proper (or narrow) sense of the term.

On the basis of this division, Trotsky took issue with those who denounced the absence in the Russian Soviet Republic of a military doctrine. And he challenged them to show that the Red Army lacked a shred of this military doctrine, an element that had not already been formulated in Party resolutions, decrees, regulations, laws, and instructions.

It's hard to know whether Trotsky didn't bother to understand the issues that Frunze raised, or if he pretended not to for the sake of polemics. The texts he referred to (the "Decree on Formation of the Worker-Peasant Red Army" and dozens of others) addressed all the tasks of the Red Army, but did not help to define the priority axes or directions that needed to be developed for the period of consolidation of Soviet power.

Trotsky then attacked not Frunze, but another speaker in the debate, Solomin, who had emphasized the Red Army's international role in an article in *Military Science and Revolution*. In response, Trotsky provided an incredibly long quotation from one of his own articles from 1905 (!), in which he mentioned the possibility of a revolutionary Russian army spreading revolution in Europe and concluded that the issues addressed by the "military communists" had been clearly settled (by him) fifteen years earlier.

Once again, Trotsky is singularly short-sighted.

It's one thing to say that perhaps Soviet Russia will be attacked (perhaps in the West, perhaps in the East, perhaps everywhere at once) or that perhaps it will be called upon to intervene in support of a foreign revolution (perhaps in the West, perhaps in the East, perhaps everywhere at once) and that we must be "ready for anything."

It's another thing to organize, equip, and train the Red Army on the basis of a reflection on objective conditions. Here, choices have to be made: standing army or militia army? Mechanized army or horse-drawn logistics? Construction of barracks and arsenals on the borders (to defend against foreign intervention) or in the heart of the country (to give depth to defense)? For the same amount of steel and labor, you can build one tank (offensive choice) or ten anti-tank guns (defensive choice): which choice should be made?

The answer "you have to be ready for anything" sounds like common sense, but it doesn't help with these crucial questions.

Trotsky then went on to attack, at length, the weakest point of the "military communists" position: their doctrine of the offensive. Referring to the previous Comintern Congress which had stated that only a traitor could renounce the offensive and only a fool could reduce proletarian strategy to the offensive, Trotsky declared that there are quite a few "offensive fools" among the "doctrinaires *à la mode*." He rightly denounced the

logic that in revolutionary times we must go on the offensive, and saw in it the simple application of leftism in the military sphere.

It's worth noting that here that, out of ease, contempt, or polemical disposition, Trotsky is attacking real or imaginary advocates of the "all-out offensive," whereas Frunze's essay clearly contemplates the possibility of defensive phases and battles at both levels of the debate:

1. At the general politico-strategic level: we have to be prepared for a defensive war, but the main historical trend is towards an offensive war.
2. At the military level: we need to know how to wage defensive battles and combat, but within a general strategy where victory will be won through maneuver and attack.

Trotsky sees the supporters of the offensive as victims of "Methodism." This concept, coined by Clausewitz, refers to the tendency to take a series of specific conditions and make out of them a stable strategic system from a certain combination of actions, generally based on previous war experience. Trotsky accuses the proponents of the doctrine of offensive revolutionary war of "Methodism" and goes on to distinguish two constituent elements of this doctrine:

1. An offensive international policy to accelerate the revolutionary process;
2. An offensive strategy for the Red Army.

Yet here, he returned to his simple credo of "we must be ready for anything": for a counteroffensive, as was the case after Poland's aggression, for a retreat, as was the case after Brest-Litovsk, and so on.

Internationally, the revolutionary wave of 1918–1919 subsided and, as confirmed by the 3rd Comintern Congress, communists in many countries were forced to make major strategic retreats. In Soviet Russia itself, there was a retreat in the economic sphere (authorization of economic concessions, abolition of the grain monopoly, etc.).

The reason for these retreats lay in the maintenance of the capitalist encirclement, and hence the relative stability of the bourgeois regimes.

What, Trotsky asked, did those hoping for a Red Army geared to offensive revolutionary warfare want? Recognition of the principle? Then

they were pushing on doors that were already open. To put a revolutionary offensive on the agenda? Then they opposed the analysis of the Party and the Comintern. . .

Here again, Trotsky sidestepped the major implications of the question of doctrine, i.e., the priorities to be established in the development of the armed forces, except in one aspect, which was very particular and well chosen for the needs of his polemic: the education of soldiers.

Once again, Trotsky avoided addressing Frunze and came down hard on poor Solomin.

The latter had had the misfortune to point out that, although Soviet Russia was interested in a period of peace, revolutionary wars, despite a defensive policy, were inevitable. And to prepare for them, it was necessary, among other things, to equip the Red soldiers with an offensive spirit. "In other words, [Trotsky commented sarcastically] Comrade Solomin wants to have, ready for mobilization, along with a supply of army biscuits, also a supply of enthusiasm for the offensive."⁵⁰⁵

Trotsky chose an easy prey: it was easy for him to explain that the country and its workers were exhausted by war and deprivation. Red soldiers were told that the only reason they were not demobilized was because new attacks were looming. And it was on the basis of these conditions that Solomin concluded that the Red soldiers had to be educated for offensive revolutionary warfare. . . Trotsky pointed out that nine-tenths of the Red Army were made up of peasants who were deaf to the sirens of offensive revolutionary war. In his view, the only education policy was to emphasize the will to preserve peace in order to rebuild the country, without ever hiding the possibility of an offensive revolutionary war to help the emancipation of workers in other countries.

He invoked the Polish war, a defensive war which, as such, mobilized the masses and gave them the impetus to transform it into an offensive war, and contrasted this "good dialectic" (defensive propaganda generating an offensive war) with Solomin's "bad dialectic" of offensive propaganda in a defensive era.

Following a brief passage on the limits of historical analogies with the French Revolution, Trotsky insisted that revolution cannot be imported

⁵⁰⁵ Leon Trotsky, "Military Doctrine or Pseudo-Military Doctrinairism," in *The Military Writings and Speeches of Leon Trotsky*, vol. 5 (London: New Park Publications, 1981).

from abroad: military intervention from outside could only be a complement to the national revolutionary struggle.

Trotsky then went on to examine the strategic and technical content of the proposed military doctrine—namely, the questions of maneuverability and aggressiveness.

If the operations of the civil war were indeed characterized by extraordinary maneuverability, Trotsky opportunely questioned their origin: the Red Army's intrinsic qualities (class nature, revolutionary spirit, etc.), or the conflict's objective conditions (vastness of military theaters, small number of troops, etc.)?

The Red Army, he rightly pointed out, was not alone in distinguishing itself by its maneuverability. Outnumbered, but with superior military technique (and, Trotsky might have added, with an initially larger cavalry), the White Army was the first to understand the advantages of a maneuvering strategy. In the initial phases, they gave the Red Army lessons in maneuverability. As for von Ungern and Makhno's forces, they too were characterized by their great maneuverability. Maneuverability, Trotsky concluded with absolute conviction, was not peculiar to the revolutionary army, but to the Russian Civil War as such.

In wars between nations, an army moving away from its base sinks into an environment with no available support, cover, or assistance. In a civil war, each side finds support in its opponent's rear position. Wars between nations are fought by huge numbers of masses, whereas civil wars divide the country's forces and resources, and in their early stages, pit limited, mobile forces against each other, that resort to improvisation and are prone to make mistakes.

Trotsky concluded that considering maneuverability as a particular expression of the Red Army's revolutionary character was therefore invalid.

Trotsky referred to another article in the journal *Military Science and Revolution*, written by Varin, asserting that the mobility of Red units surpassed all historical precedents. Trotsky regarded the assertion as interesting, but in need of verification. He acknowledged that the incredible speed of operational movements, requiring endurance and self-sacrifice, was conditioned by the Army's revolutionary spirit, but once again denounced any attempt to "dogmatize" the characteristics of the Red Army's strategy and tactics during the Civil War as detrimental.

In his view, if Red Army operations were to take place on the Asian continent, they would necessarily have a profound maneuvering character. Cavalry would have to play the most important role, and in some cases, the only role. But military activities in the Western theater would be more restricted. Operations in territories with a different national make-up and higher population density would lead—if not to a war of position—at least, to limits on freedom of maneuver.

Thus, Trotsky's rejection of the defense of fortified positions (as expounded on by Tukachevsky) may sum up the lessons of the previous period (the Red Army having neither the equipment nor the specialized troops to do so), but cannot become a rule for the future. As the Red Army was able to equip itself with troops capable of defending a fortress, it could develop and use them. Over time, Red units had been able to acquire the qualities necessary for positional warfare (the ability of units to hold a front line by leaning on each other), and over time, these capabilities would have developed further.

Here again, Trotsky did not go to the heart of the theory he was criticizing. Tukachevsky was a brilliant military thinker. His rejection of the defensive was based not only on the "original" qualities of the Red Army, but also on the evolution of military technology. In 1921, Tukachevsky had not yet developed his theories on the massive, combined use of aircraft and armor for military operations going deep into the enemy's territory, but he had already rejected the idea of enclosing the Red Army in fortified lines on the basis of advances in military technology. Trotsky's response was limited to saying: we didn't have the means to lock ourselves into a fortified line, but now we do. Marxism decrees that no means should be ruled out a priori, and so on.

Trotsky's presentation seems solid, and many of his criticisms and observations are relevant, but when confronted with the proposals he claims to be responding to, he's simply "off the mark." He's in over his head when it comes to the major issues of future wars.

By challenging the "attack/offensive paradigm," Trotsky exposed that this paradigm is not exclusive to the Red Army. Hitler's military doctrine proved the point, but Trotsky again demonstrated his lack of strategic insight by criticizing Frunze's analysis of French military doctrine. According to Frunze, the historical position of the French bourgeoisie (wealthy and sat-

ified in its position, having received the lion's share of the colonial division of the world and complete gratification in the Treaty of Versailles) dictated a defensive military doctrine. Trotsky disputed this: the official doctrine of the French Republic was attack, he said, and quoted articles from the French military press. But Frunze was right: over the years, the defensive nature of French military policy asserted itself and became embodied in what has become the archetype of the genre: the Maginot Line.

After the "attack/offensive paradigm," Trotsky turned to the paradigms of aggressiveness, initiative, and energy. Here too, he asserted that these traits were more characteristic of the White Armies than the Red ones at the start of the civil war. During the first period of the revolution, the Red Army generally avoided attack, preferring fraternization and discussion, and this method proved effective. It was the White Army that showed aggression, forcing attacks. Only gradually did the Red troops acquire the energy and confidence to take decisive action.

The great cavalry raids were the most explicit expression of maneuverability. Trotsky was quick to point out that the pioneer of those raids was the white general Mamontov. But Trotsky generalized: it was the White Army that taught the Red Army how to make sudden breakthroughs, envelopment operations, and infiltrate the enemy's rear. In the initial period, Soviet Russia thought it could defend itself with a long cordon of troops placed side by side. Maneuverability, aggressiveness, and initiative were not the primary qualities of the Red Army, but of the White Armies.

Indeed, the raid by General Mamontov's 4th Don Cossack Corps (9,000 cavalry), which devastated the Red Army's Southern Front in August 1919, was the first major cavalry raid of the civil war. But there are other examples that undermine Trotsky's objection. And the most obvious example did not let him off the hook, almost costing him his place at the head of the Red Army.

In January 1918, Frunze, who had ensured the victory of the Moscow uprising, had built up the 4th Red Army by bringing together various detachments of mainly partisans. With Kolchak's offensive in full swing, Frunze felt that the White Armies' own successes had put them in a weak position, by lengthening their lines of communication. He therefore proposed to Red Army Chief of Staff Văcietis not to resist head-on, but to carry out a vast maneuver: the 1st and 4th Red Armies, together with the

Turkestan Army, would overrun the Whites' southern flank. As Vācietis remained indecisive and evasive, Frunze proposed this maneuver to Lenin, who approved it. The forces placed at Frunze's disposal were even increased, as he was joined by the 5th Army, of which Tukhachevsky had just been given command. The maneuver was a complete success; the White forces collapsed and retreated towards the Urals.

Tukhachevsky's 5th Army contributed to the general plan dictated by Frunze through its own maneuvers, such as the forced march across the Ural Mountains via the Yuryurani valley. Tukhachevsky was awarded the Order of the Red Flag, and the government, attributing him an official army commendation,⁵⁰⁶ praised his "wide-ranging, daring, risk-taking maneuvers."

And the story didn't end there: Frunze and Kamenev, the commander of the Eastern Front, wanted to pursue the White Armies, annihilating their forces to liberate the Urals and Siberia. Vācietis, who feared the entry onto the battlefield of powerful White reserve forces (in fact, nonexistent), opposed this and ordered a halt to the offensive on the Urals. Trotsky, who wanted to concentrate efforts on the Southern Front, supported Vācietis. When Kamenev persisted, Trotsky and Vācietis relieved him of his command. The commissars of the Eastern Front (Smilga and Lashkevich) supported Kamenev and appealed to Lenin, who agreed with them.

The pursuit offensive called for by Frunze and Kamenev went ahead, and it was once again a complete success: the Red Army swept from victory to victory, liberating the whole of Siberia almost without the need to fight, and seizing an immense war treasure.

Given Vācietis's misjudgment, on July 3, 1919, Stalin asked the Central Committee to replace him with Kamenev. A new Revolutionary Military Council was formed: people close to Trotsky (Smirnov, Rosengoltz, Raskolnikov) were replaced by Smilga and Gusev. Trotsky offered his resignation, which was demonstratively refused.

The episode is worthy of mention here only insofar as it shows that the Red forces had great maneuvering skills right from the start of the civil war. It should also be noted that Trotsky's opponents in the 1920–21 debate, such as Frunze and Tukhachevsky, excelled at it.

⁵⁰⁶ That is, an honorary military mention.—Ed.

Trotsky was right, however, to say that the Red Army (and not the original Red forces) learned the art of maneuver from the White Army.

Initiative and enthusiasm were indeed the primary qualities of the initial Red forces (Red Guards, Red Partisans, and a number of units such as the Latvian Riflemen⁵⁰⁷ and Baltic sailors). But:

1. These qualities were originally linked to the “partisan spirit” that were extinguished by their transformation into classic units commanded by old-regime officers.
2. The enthusiasm of these troops was diluted by the mass of peasant recruits resulting from the introduction of compulsory military service on May 29, 1918.

As these recruits were often poorly motivated, desertions and drop-outs took on the character of a mass phenomenon. On August 29, Trotsky issued his first order to shoot deserters. Before the year was out, the election of officers was abolished, the death penalty and military tribunals re-established, and the soldiers' soviets dissolved.

The history of the Red Armed Forces can therefore be divided into three phases. First, that of the first qualities of initiative, offense, and maneuver, resulting from a revolutionary spirit specific to volunteer detachments organized around elected commanders. These forces were subsequently disbanded and their members transferred to standardized regiments, along with an overwhelming number of soldiers who were forced to fight, all under the command of old-regime officers. The loss of the initial qualities was inevitable, but it was compensated for by quantitative development and the process of acquiring new qualities. And in a third phase, partly from being schooled by the White Army, and partly as the product of immense political work, this new army rediscovered a sense of offensiveness, initiative, and maneuver, this time under centralized command, on a large scale, and with a rational distribution of forces.

But let's return to Trotsky's article.

He rightly pointed out that in maneuvering warfare, the distinction between defense and attack disappears: all that counts is winning the ini-

⁵⁰⁷ The Latvian Riflemen were a group of military units formed during World War I, initially composed of Latvian volunteers who fought for the Russian Empire and later played a significant role in the Russian Civil War, primarily supporting the Bolsheviks.—Ed.

tiative. The confusion between initiative and offensive was in fact a major weakness in the “military communists” analysis. The Red Army was able to take the offensive on the most important front of the day only by temporarily weakening itself on all the others. Trotsky found this observation in Varin’s article and validated it. In operational plans, the offensive was linked to the defensive, and even to retreat.

Trotsky concluded that the work of training troops must therefore introduce the idea that retreat is not an escape, but sometimes the means of preserving forces, reducing the front, deceiving the enemy, and so on. And if strategic retreat is legitimate, then it is wrong to reduce all strategy to the attack.

Returning to Solomin’s article (which Trotsky decidedly preferred to attack, rather than Frunze’s), he denounced even the way in which the problem was posed: “What kind of army are we preparing, and for what tasks?”⁵⁰⁸ In other words: “what enemies threaten us and by what strategical methods (defensive or offensive) shall we deal with them most quickly and economically?”⁵⁰⁹

Trotsky compared this approach to the way in which the old Austro-Hungarian general staff had envisaged possible wars (against Italy, against Russia, etc.) for decades, detailing variations arising from the evolution of the strength of potential enemy armies, their armament, conditions of mobilization, fortifications, concentrations, and deployments, etc.

Trotsky swept aside this type of work with unprecedented casualness and tiresome irony, believing it to satisfy only stubborn, routine minds dreaming of stable patterns—as the times were unstable, it was impossible to foresee every possible scenario.

Trotsky followed this path, caricaturing and disqualifying staff work by associating it with conservative, routine methods and contrasting it with the Party’s work of evaluation. Party congresses and its Central Committee analyzed the situation and forged the directives that were all the Army needs.

Trotsky’s disdain for military thought leaves one speechless. He had already had occasion to say that the great military principles were noth-

⁵⁰⁸ Solomin (one of Toukhatchevsky’s pseudonyms) in the journal *Voyennaya Nauka i Revolyutsiya* (“Military Science and Revolution”).

⁵⁰⁹ Solomin, *Voyennaya Nauka i Revolyutsiya*.

ing but truisms: a donkey eating grain out of a sack and avoiding the blows of a stick with a movement of its rump was, according to Trotsky, applying all the great military principles (exploit the weak point, take over the flanks. . .) without having read Clausewitz. Of Clausewitz, moreover, he cited only the passages warning against dogmatism, glossing over the immense theoretical scope of *On War*. It's hard to believe, but there's no doubt that in writing those lines, Trotsky considered preparatory staff work unnecessary in peacetime.

Trotsky then turned to Tukhachevsky's proposal that an international staff be set up and attached to the Comintern. Trotsky considered it "of course" wrong: it did not correspond to the tasks formulated by the Comintern Congress and was premature. In his view, such a general staff could only emerge from the national general staffs of several proletarian states.

Trotsky also criticized Tukhachevsky for his criticism of the militia system (more on this later) before returning to Solomin's objection that it was impossible to train Red soldiers in the spirit of defense and attack at the same time. This was certainly not Solomin's most intelligent reflection, and Trotsky was very convincing when he explained that the basis of military construction in Soviet Russia is the revolutionary and defensive tendencies of the peasant masses and even of large segments of the working class. This corresponded to the international situation, with the revolutionary movement on the defensive. In explaining this situation to the advanced elements of the Red Army, Trotsky wanted to teach them how to correctly combine defense and attack.

But in the process, Trotsky also attacked Solomin's assertion that the army was trained for one specialty—either defense or attack. He deemed it "erroneous to the point of absurdity," because according to Trotsky, defense and attack constituted variable moments in the combat, and so on.

The rifle and the bayonet are just as good for defense as for attack, decreed Trotsky, who missed the insights gained in the final months of the world war—whether it's the mass appearance of the tank on the battlefield or the emergence of strategic aviation. And while in his essay Frunze noted that the technical means of combat were constantly developing, creating new specialties and new types of weapon, Trotsky remained with the universal infantryman armed with his universal rifle. . .

Admittedly, in 1921, the Red Army only had the weapons it had inherited from the civil war, but the question of replacing them soon presented itself. Production of the first Soviet military aircraft began in 1920: the first Polikarpov R-1s⁵¹⁰ rolled off the production line, while in Italy, Giulio Douhet published *The Command of the Air*—the first apology for strategic bombing. The Soviet Republic still possessed only the old tanks abandoned by the interventionists, but debates had begun on their role in the future war: J. F. C. Fuller had already published his *Tanks in the Great War, 1914–1918*. Trotsky, the War Commissar, seemed oblivious to these great debates.⁵¹¹

Trotsky recognized certain elements in the web of international relations that could guide military work in the medium term. In the West, there were Poland and Romania (and behind them, France), in the Far East, Japan, and around the Caucasus, England.⁵¹² The Polish question seemed to be the clearest. Soviet Russia stuck to the strict enforcement of the Treaty of Riga. If Poland were to attack, the war would be defensive, which would galvanize the people and the army.

Only in the very last lines of his essay did Trotsky pose the central question: what should the concrete direction of military construction be? How strong should the Red Army be? In what type of units? How should it be distributed?

But these questions served to declare that only empirical approximations and opportunistic rectifications are possible, depending on changes in the situation. Only “hopeless doctrinaires,” Trotsky declared, believe that the answers to questions of mobilization, training, education, strategy, and tactics can be obtained by deduction.

At this point Trotsky sank to the level of “Mr. Common Sense” with a conclusion worthy of a Prussian adjutant: no need for doctrinal studies,

⁵¹⁰ Polikarpov planes were a series of Soviet aircraft designed by Nikolai Polikarpov, renowned for their use during the interwar period and World War II.—Ed.

⁵¹¹ This is all the more astonishing given that these seminal essays had been read and translated in the USSR. When Liddell Hart met Radek in Geneva, on the occasion of the International Conference on Disarmament organized by the League of Nations, he was told that “everyone” in the USSR had read and discussed his and Fuller’s works.

⁵¹² From the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 onwards, the British Empire exerted an “official” influence in the South Caucasus by controlling part of Iran, thus consolidating its strategic presence in the region.—Ed.

we need to cook good cabbage soup, teach how to kill bodily parasites, run drills properly, teach how to grease rifles and boots, instruct how to shoot, help command staff to assimilate regulations properly, wrap their feet properly in cloth; and once again (Trotsky repeated) grease the boots. . .

10. Initial Assessments

Despite a few bright spots, the entire essay shows Trotsky falling far short of the standards set by the debate. It would be an understatement to say that we have known Trotsky to be a more inspired debater, and even his methods were somewhat undignified. Faced with such crude methods and conclusions (where was it said that Frunze advocated not greasing one's army boots?), the fierceness of the attack and the poverty of its content, it's easy to imagine that Frunze, Gusev and the other "military communists" were a little taken aback.

As we have seen, Frunze's proposal had a solid Marxist foundation: a new political, social, and economic situation opens up the possibility of a new way of waging war. He no longer proposed, as Engels and Mehring did, to analyze its characteristics retrospectively, and then, as Cromwell and Napoleon did, to use its characteristics empirically. Instead, Frunze aimed to deduce methodically what Russia's new social, political, and economic situation implied in military terms. And that the combination of this analysis and the characteristics of the situation (who are the enemies of Soviet Russia? What are their intentions? What are their strengths?) should give rise to the "unified military doctrine."

But Trotsky's short-sightedness did not disqualify all his critics.

His victorious experience of the civil war had two aspects:

Positive: That of a practice successfully carried out, the best means of asserting the true over the false;

Negative: That of an absence of critical analysis of former choices that proved to be right.

Ultimately, Trotsky criticized his opponents for setting up an empirical experiment as a "model," or even more harshly, for idealizing shortcomings.

To a certain extent, surely, some of them were simply generalizing and theorizing their experience in the civil war. Voroshilov and Budyonny

were great war commanders: the results they achieved at the head of their 1st Cavalry Army weigh far more heavily than the criticisms that Trotsky continually hurled at them, and which are perpetuated in a Western historiography that likes to regard them as incompetent. In fact, both Voroshilov and Budyonny idealized, theorized, and generalized this experience, defending the importance of large cavalry corps well into the 1930s. They did not go so far as to prevent the mechanization drive launched by Tukhachevsky, but ensured that large horse-drawn forces were preserved.

At all times during the debate, Trotsky's position remained unchanged; there were, according to him, only two ways to wage war:

1. The scientific way, reaching the highest degree of efficiency, based on a body of knowledge accumulated from war to war over the centuries, enriched by the "discoveries" of great captains or theorists, and modified with the appearance of new techniques;
2. The empirical way, unjustified when a historical knowledge (or the experts who possess it) is accessible.

Hence, there should be no difference between Red and imperialist forces, except that the former have the innate advantage of soldiers fighting for their class interests, and the latter the conjunctural advantage of superior know-how and more modern equipment. According to Trotsky, all that was needed to secure the advantage is to catch up in terms of know-how and equipment.

All that mattered was carrying out this effort to catch up technologically under the general leadership of the Party, as effectively or better than the bourgeois military leaders, based on their methods, organization, doctrines, and so on.

While Trotsky dismissed out of hand the possibility of a proletarian military science, he recognized the existence of a proletarian sociological science: historical materialism.

How can we explain this contradiction?

Firstly, and incidentally, Trotsky's polemical side, which rarely resisted an assassination method that made his opponent look like a fool.

But there were more fundamental reasons: remember his irony regarding "proletarian veterinary medicine."

If he had drawn a parallel with the art of treating people rather than animals, he would have realized that medicine is different in socialist and capitalist countries, not in the description of a particular pathology or in the assessment of the efficacy of a particular molecule, but in its organization and orientation; we don't treat the same people, and not in the same way (on the one hand, the whole population, with an emphasis on preventive methods; on the other, the "profitable" part of the population, with an emphasis on curative methods).

Ultimately, Trotsky thoughtlessly moved from the uniqueness of scientific truth to the neutrality of techniques and forms of organization.

When he did meddle in the organization of production, it was to impose the most commandist, back-breaking forms of organization, derived from American Fordism and Taylorism. The only political role of the proletariat would be to understand the need for them, to accept this need wholeheartedly, and to develop themselves based on their own experience.

Here, we won't attempt to explain the origins of this train of thought, or to distinguish between Trotsky's personality and the state of debate among the Bolsheviks on the new problems posed by the construction of socialism in a context of civil war.

Suffice it to say that, in the ranks of the Bolsheviks, a form of organization of production (or combat) would often be considered "neutral" (equally usable by the Soviet authorities as by the old regime), as a tool—whether a rolling mill or a cannon. This was the hallmark of the Stalinist period. The distinction between modern and progressive was not always clearcut, as witness the official, almost obsessive fascination with the US in the USSR.

11. A Parallel Debate: The Cultural Debate

In the early 20s, the cultural debate in the USSR was of a rare intensity, and the arguments put forward, as well as the different aspects of the debate (importance of new ideas, evaluation of past experiences and traditions, as well as calling in the "experts" from the old regime), corresponded almost term by term to the military debate.

For the artistic movements that had embraced the revolution, and made it their own, the elimination of the old culture was seen as a condition for the emergence of a culture worthy of the new world.

The two main movements were the Futurists and the Proletarians, who were at odds with each other.

1. The Futurists saw the coming of a new literature through a radical change of form, a renewal of language. Their contempt for traditional art was at the heart of Mayakovsky's 1912 manifesto, *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*, which called for Pushkin, Tolstoy, Gorky and others to be thrown "overboard." After the October Revolution, they founded the Komfut (COMMunist-Futurist) collective, claiming to be admitted to the Party as a collective and on the basis of their criticism of the Bolsheviks' shortcomings on the cultural front. The Komfut said that under the guise of indisputable truths, the masses were being served the false doctrines of their lords; under the guise of universal justice, the morality of their exploiters; under the guise of the eternal laws of Beauty, the perverted taste of their oppressors;
2. The "Proletarians," hostile to the formalism of the Futurists, considered that new art was a matter of content, to which the search for appropriate forms was subordinate. They called for the rejection of any work whose author was not proletarian. Their theoretical roots lay deep in the Russian workers' movement, with Bogdanov's Capri school and the Marxist aesthetic theory elaborated by Plekhanov long before the revolution. They, too, criticized the relative value of past culture as that of the oppressors of the people.

The condemnation of art of the past ran through all the avant-gardes. Malevich called on the government not to oppose the destruction of the country's historical cultural assets; the culture of the new society could only be revealed once the old had been eliminated, just as, for scientists, the truth is revealed once prejudices have been overcome. For Bogdanov, the culture of the past was a vector of the ideology of the old ruling classes, all the more dangerous because the proletariat was disarmed by its prestige.

The Party's policy was different, promoting the masses' reappropriation of the cultural riches of the past. Soviet artists had to interpret the artistic heritage and emphasize its national and popular character. Art was not the expression of the ruling class, but a field for the expression of social contradictions.

Lenin's "On Proletarian Culture"⁵¹³ is best known for its rejection of an independent cultural organization (Bogdanov, founder, theoretician and leader of the Proletkult, defended the idea of a division of responsibilities: politics belonged to the Party, economics to the trade unions, and culture to the Proletkult). But the fourth thesis of Lenin's text targets those currents that rejected all past cultural traditions, taking as a counterexample Marxism itself, which, far from rejecting the intellectual conquests of the bourgeoisie, assimilated, reworked, and surpassed them. The new society was being forged by and under the leadership of the proletariat, which was transforming itself in the process, acquiring a culture that was not a return to an original proletarian purity, but an advance towards a new culture altogether—borrowing from the classics, the specific cultural elements of the proletariat, and the new factors arising from socialist social relations.

The question of "experts" arose in the cultural sphere in the same terms as in the military sphere. In 1925, Bukharin called for a literary-political bloc to be formed with the writers of the old regime, and for them to be educated in the same way as "experts" in industry (he could have added: and in the army). Kerzentsev grudgingly agreed to a compromise whereby the cultural "experts" (actors, directors, and set designers) would teach their art to proletarian amateurs. But other Proletkult theorists rejected what they saw as a harmful compromise, believing that these specialists would taint proletarian creativity with "bourgeois nuances."

The Party didn't intervene directly in literary life until the conflicts between the various tendencies escalated as a result of the proletarians' claim to be in charge of literature, deciding who would publish what. A commission was set up to study the literary situation and make detailed proposals to the Central Committee. It included leading political figures such as Lunacharsky, Radek, Bukharin, Frunze, and Trotsky. . .

⁵¹³ V. I. Lenin, "On Proletarian Culture," in *Collected Works*, vol. 31.

In 1922–23, Trotsky dedicated a highly acclaimed work to literary policy: *Literature and Revolution*. In it, he defended the idea that the main task of the proletarian intelligentsia was not the development of a new culture, but the concrete work of enabling the backward masses to assimilate existing culture. In his usual style, Trotsky described “proletarian culture” as “puerile charlatanism.”

As in the military debate, Trotsky did not completely close the door on the emergence of new concepts. But he claimed that the conditions were lacking, and it was therefore necessary to stick to tried-and-tested formulas. Trotsky then made a generalization that sheds light on his position in the military debate: he believed that while Marxism was already effective in the political sphere, its capacity for methodological development and broad application to knowledge in general was still far in the future. Only in a socialist society, Trotsky asserted, would Marxism cease to be solely an instrument of political struggle and become a method of scientific creation, and the essential element and instrument of spiritual culture.

Unlike Trotsky, Lenin saw a socialist art in the making, alive as the first shoots of socialism grew in other areas of social life in Soviet Russia.

Frunze’s position (expressed in his speech at the meeting of March 3, 1925) was widely echoed in the Party press. He showed his concern not to repulse the other social strata that were joining the working class, on the condition that ideological leadership was left to the Party. While he condemned the authoritarian methods of the proletarians, he supported the emergence of proletarian literature. In his view, the proletariat should aim to develop solid positions in literature and art as a whole. Frunze shied away from speaking as an expert and transposed his experience of the civil war into literature: the gathering of the nation’s vital forces around its proletarian vanguard, as in Furmanov’s *Chapayev*, about a political commissar who had worked with Frunze.

Frunze’s main lines on military as well as literary policy are as follows:

A proletarian literature (military doctrine) is not only possible, it already exists in embryonic form, and its development must be made a priority, until it is completed, comprehensive and hegemonic. Experts of the old regime may contribute to the constitution of this proletarian literature (military doctrine), provided they rid themselves of what characterized the literature (military thought) of the old regime.

12. Army or Militia?

The old Bolsheviks were unanimous in distinguishing between a bourgeois army (permanent and encased) and a socialist army (militia). It's astonishing that, in his denial of the possibility of a proletarian military doctrine, Trotsky failed to realize this. By the time of his debate with Frunze, militia doctrine had, under the pressure of events, given way to the Red Army, and Trotsky himself had transformed the Red Guards and Partisans into enlisted and encamped soldiers. But this transformation, in the minds of Trotsky and other Bolshevik leaders, was only temporary.

According to Trotsky, the militia system could only be fully effective in an industrialized, organized, and civilized society. In Russia, this was far from the case, but the militia system remained the goal. He expounded these theses at the 8th Party Congress in March 1919 (in Trotsky's absence, Sokolnikov defended them).

Trotsky imagined a future in which citizens would receive their military training locally, i.e., where they lived and worked, rather than in barracks. As a transitional measure, barracks could be transformed to make them more like military schools. At the same congress, Trotsky envisaged a return to the system of electing commanding officers.

The 8th Congress adopted these theses (the 9th also took them up), but argued in its final resolution on the militia question that, in the event of open war, a centralized army, with unity of organization and command, was the only way to achieve optimal results with minimal sacrifice.

With the civil war over, Trotsky set about implementing his program of militia and territorial organization.

The "experts" were surprised to see the man who had so vigorously centralized the army and who had driven the guerrilla spirit out of it, defending a military system which, in their eyes, was unpleasantly reminiscent of the chaotic early days of the civil war. Among them was Svechin, whom Trotsky attacked in an intriguing article in which he defended the idea that he had previously opposed in Frunze's theses: that new conditions demand new structures.

Trotsky accused Svechin of not having understood that the Revolution had turned social relations upside down; the Red Army didn't need

barracks for discipline —it relies on the natural desirability of the Soviet system and the Communist Party.

Socialism develops the spirit of cooperation, and education is combined with physical work and the widespread, intelligent practice exercise. If militias are based on the natural economic and professional groups of the new society (village communes, local collectives, industrial associations), then the quality of their *esprit de corps* will be far superior to that of regiments trained in barracks.

Trotsky even criticized Svechin for equating the ignorant, drunken mercenary, riddled with syphilis, stultified by Catholicism, and employed by Wallenstein in the 17th century, with the Russian working-class citizen serving in the Red Army.

In the end, after much vacillation, Trotsky put forth that military organization was dependent on the political system, and that a proletarian government should therefore have a proletarian military organization.

Trotsky's proposal came up against four major oppositions:

1. Supporters of traditional military science, who rallied behind the Soviet government and who, while sometimes broad-minded, were wary of Trotsky as a “Jaurès-like dreamer”;
2. Bolsheviks like Smilga, who, at the 1920 Congress of Army Commissars, pointed out that with the militia system, most regiments and divisions would be composed almost exclusively of peasants. Units composed of workers would be few in number and isolated from the rest of the army, which could jeopardize the dictatorship of the proletariat. For Smilga, it was important to distribute proletarian elements throughout the army, which was incompatible with a territorial militia;
3. Bolsheviks who at the same Congress, again with Smilga as their spokesman, criticized the militia system on the grounds that the general backwardness (further aggravated by the devastation of the civil war) of Russian infrastructures, starting with the railways, would make the mobilization and concentration of militia forces confusing and interminable. The enemy forces would be at the banks of the Volga before the militia-based Red Army could regroup. “To be viable, [Smilga

summarized,] a system '*à la Jaurès*' presupposes a high degree of industrialization, a large working class and a good communications network";

4. Commanders such as Tukhachevsky and Frunze, for whom the Red Army had to be an offensive force, ready to launch an attack on the Western imperialists in support of proletarian revolutions in Europe. This project called for a permanent, encamped army ready to intervene rapidly, highly qualified, trained, motivated, mobile, and maneuverable.

As we have seen, Trotsky opposed the first and last of these objections.

However, he recognized the relevance of most of Smilga's critical analysis, though retaining a militia system was his ultimate goal.

In 1921, as an experiment, Trotsky created three militia divisions in Petrograd, Moscow, and the Urals. With the consolidation of Soviet's power in the following years, the militia system was extended to three-quarters of the Red Army. But later, with the rise of threats from abroad, the marginalization of Trotsky, the affirmation of Frunze's and Tukhachevsky's theses, and the increase in state funding for military defense, this trend was reversed.

13. The Aftermath of the Debate

The debate between Trotsky and the "military communists" seemed to end in a victory for Trotsky. He met no opposition and, for the next two years, continued to defend his position in speeches and articles.

But the state of the Red Army continued to deteriorate. In 1923, the armed forces' budget fell to 2% of the national one. In addition to the deliberate demobilization of soldiers, there was a severe loss of cadres; of the 87,000 men trained as commanders during the civil war, 30,000 died and 32,000 left to take positions of responsibility in the economy and administration (where they would bring an authoritarian style that would have an impact on Soviet society). The number of Communists in the Red Army fell from 278,000 in August 1920 to 86,000 in early 1922. The army had almost no resources: just 87 armored cars for the whole of Russia. . .

In October 1923, at a plenum of the Central Committee, Frunze attacked Trotsky with a devastating assessment of the situation: the Red Army was incapable of taking part in any conflict, it was chaotically managed, there was a staggering turnover of cadres, no strategic thinking, no mobilization plan, and no manual for the use of the various weapons. The Central Committee followed Frunze's lead and, in early 1924, Trotsky lost his position as People's Commissar for War to Frunze.

Frunze began his reforms at a time when the Red Army was down to 562,000 men, ten times fewer than in 1920. He pushed the former czarist military, who in 1923 still accounted for 34% of commanders and three-quarters of senior posts, into retirement to make way for young commanders who had emerged from the civil war and were trained by the tens of thousands in the new military schools (25,000 in 1924). This choice of a new generation of Red commanders created the conditions for the transition to a single command system, and thus the end of Trotsky's system of attaching a political commissar to an "expert."

At the beginning of 1925, Trotsky lost the presidency of the Military Revolutionary Council and Frunze replaced him there too, decreeing that wherever the unit commander was a member of the Communist Party, the dual command system would be abolished. This was another step towards the single command system.

In the summer of 1925, Frunze fell ill. His death on October 31, 1925 during a surgical operation gave rise to rumors of a disguised assassination. However, the declassification of the Soviet archives did not invalidate the official version.

At the time, the Red Army comprised 62 infantry divisions: 26 of the "cadre" type, 36 of the territorial militia type. The latter were rather recruited from industrial regions to ensure a proletarian character. Their men had to undergo eight weeks' military training, once a year, for four years in a row. The cadre divisions were professionally staffed and the troops were made up of conscripts who had to perform two years' military service. All cavalry and artillery units were cadre units. Gradually, in line with Frunze's plans, all Red Army units became cadre units.

During this period Soviet military theorists developed the concept of an "operational art," a major conceptual breakthrough, resulting in the publication of a number of landmark works. Svechin published *Strategy*,

Chaposhnikov *The Brain of the Army*, Isserson *The War of the Future* and Triandafillov *The Nature of Operations in Modern Armies*. These seminal works were supplemented by thousands of studies and articles.

The basic thesis was that large, modern armies, backed by an entire country, could no longer be defeated by a single decisive battle that had to be achieved in a single campaign. For Frederick II, for Napoleon or, in theoretical terms, for Clausewitz, the aim was to seek out the enemy army, maneuver in order to confront it in a favorable situation and inflict a decisive defeat. It was this very approach that determined Hitler's future plans.

In opposition to this "single-point strategy," to use Isserson's expression, Soviet theorists emphasized the need to carry out a series of operations, strictly defined in terms of space and time, affecting the enemy's structure from top to bottom. These operations presume a sequence of actions for which appropriate and proportional forces have been assembled and prepared each time over the entire Front or even several Fronts. The operation assumes the enemy's defenses breaking down, and the exploitation of a breakthrough by other units grouped together for this purpose and adapted to this task (generally mechanized units), disarticulating the enemy's position at every level.

This strategy is no longer simply one of winning a decisive battle, for there is no such thing as a decisive battle. It is a strategy based on an "operational art" which, by combining battles, breakthroughs, and military exploits, is the only way to ensure decisive success in modern warfare.

At the time of these theoretical breakthroughs, the Red Army did not have the means to implement this operational art. At the end of 1928, it only had 200 tanks and armored cars and 350 trucks!

But on July 15, 1929, the Party Central Committee decided to mechanize and reequip the Red Army. This huge program, driven by Tukhachevsky (and supported by Voroshilov), exploited the industrial possibilities offered by the First Five-Year Plan. One of the plan's priorities was to provide the Red Army with equipment that was not only modern, but also in line with the new principles of operational art (developing break-away tanks, such as T-28 and T-35, as well as exploitation tanks, such as BT-5 and BT-7. It also included artillery capable of striking deep into the enemy's defenses, as well as assault and long-range bombing aircraft, etc.).

When Stalin wanted to use the army to collectivize the countryside, in particular by training 100,000 peasant recruits each year in the use of agricultural machinery, he met opposition from all military leaders, from Tukhachevsky to Voroshilov. The idea that a peacetime army should concentrate on preparing for war took hold and Stalin abandoned his project.

Progress was spectacular; the first mechanized corps was created in 1932, with 450 tanks, and 1,440 vehicles—twice as many as the entire army had been equipped with four years earlier. The intellectual effort also continued: Georgii Isserson published his *The Evolution of Operational Art*.

By 1935, the Red Army had 930,000 men, over 3,000 aircraft, and 10,000 tanks, and the following year saw a major maneuver in Belarus: 100,000 men and 1,000 tanks experimented with operations going deep into the enemy lines for the first time. After this breakthrough, exploitation forces advanced up to 60 km behind “enemy” lines, facilitated by a massive parachute airdrop—the first in the world. Finally, the forces engaged in pursuing the enemy took advantage of the dislocation of the “enemy” lines to accomplish the territorial objectives of the operation, paving the way for the next operation.

On June 11, 1937, purges within the Red Army were initiated, weakening it in at least four ways:

1. The quality of leadership collapsed, with the wholesale disappearance of officers who were, if not talented, at least trained and experienced;
2. Having escaped the purges, the remaining officers were afraid to take initiatives that might not be approved and then punished, with disastrous effects lasting until 1942 (exemplified by the use of stereotypical and “approved” tactics, without consideration of actual conditions);
3. Management was paralyzed by fear of being exposed and irregular absences and breaches of discipline among recruits increased dramatically;
4. Free theoretical debate came to an end with the disappearance of several outstanding theorists and the intellectual paralysis of those who survived.

This marked the end of some fifteen years of an immensely rich politico-military debate.

Not since the intellectual ferment that had taken place in Prussia after the humiliation of Tilsit had theoretical activity been applied to military questions with such depth and breadth of vision.

The USSR under Stalin produced only one conceptual advance in the military sphere: the theory of permanent and temporary factors determining the outcome of wars—which would be called into question, as far as the factor of surprise was concerned, with the advent of nuclear weapons.

It wasn't until Mao Zedong that revolutionary military thought was revitalized with new experiences and new theses.

But that's another story. . .

Categories of Revolutionary Military Politics

Conference presented as part of the Bloc Marxist-Léniniste training program, April 3 and 10, 2006

"It's true that, sometimes, the military does abuse its power relative to intelligence, by neglecting to use any."

"Major" Charles de Gaulle, 1936

"Reading is learning, but applying is also learning and the more important kind of learning at that.

. . . Our chief method is to learn warfare through warfare."

Mao Zedong, 1936

1. Introduction

Dear Comrades,

Louis XIV famously had his cannons engraved with the words "*ultima ratio regum*": the kings' last argument. Any project for social revolution must anticipate the question of armed confrontation with the forces in power and those of reaction. Postponing such an analysis on the grounds that the question of armed confrontation "is not yet relevant" exposes us to making choices (political, strategic, organizational) which, when the question of armed confrontation "becomes relevant," risk putting revolutionary forces in a position of powerlessness and vulnerability, giving them a totally inadequate character, and ultimately exposing them to defeat.

Organizations with revolutionary ambitions that refuse to develop a military policy as soon as the question of confrontation arises practically, disqualify themselves as revolutionary forces; they behave in advance as gravediggers of the revolution, as fodder for stadiums⁵¹⁴ and cemeteries.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹⁴ Reference to the detention and then slaughter of opponents in stadiums during the fascist coup in Chile.—Ed.

⁵¹⁵ To the right-wing deviation of rejecting the importance of strategic thought, which indicates (and ultimately produces) a shift from revolutionary struggle to the most trivial form of protest, corresponds a left-wing deviation that rejects the principle of strategic reflection as a prerequisite to political-military action. This deviation is the trademark of revolutionary forces—anarchists, militarists, subjectivists, etc.—who claim that strategic reflection only has the effect of "dividing" revolutionaries whom action alone would bring together. In the heyday of Focoism, some even claimed that strategic thinking was a "bourgeois concern."

The subject of this conference is revolutionary military policy, which can be defined as the analysis, preparation, and use of armed force in the service of the revolutionary objective.

The question of what constitutes a revolutionary military policy is back on the agenda. Whether through the study of protracted people's wars led by parties of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist type (in Peru, Nepal, India, and elsewhere), or through the reassessment of urban guerrilla warfare experiments in imperialist metropolises over the last thirty years—or in still other ways, debates on revolutionary military policy are experiencing a timid renaissance. Even if the positions that emerge from these debates remain very different (from the unvarnished reaffirmation of Leninist-Cominternist insurrectionist principles to the complete, unnuanced adoption of recent experiences in oppressed countries), the renewed interest in the question of revolutionary military policy is both necessary and positive.

Yet revolutionary military thought remains rather underdeveloped. Its proposals are bastardized products of the historical method (based on experience and historical antecedents, with the associated risks of dogmatism and conservatism) and the philosophical method (based on theory and deductive reasoning, with the associated risks of subjectivism), both of which are employed without any methodological or epistemological hindsight.

This is illustrated by the conceptual vagueness with which, for example, the notions of “strategy,” “military policy,” “military theory” and “military doctrine” are used interchangeably. This conceptual vagueness is such that it allows for real political manipulation through the abuse of language, as we saw when analyzing the (n)PCI⁵¹⁶ document in our previous discussion.

This conference is not about what today's revolutionary military policy should be. It is intended as a tool to assist in the rigorous, methodical, scientific elaboration of revolutionary military policy.

The limitations of this conference are obvious. As such, it is not tied to any particular line, but refers to a field where categories are dependent on political-theoretical analyses and choices. The old debate on the existence or non-existence of a proletarian military science illustrates this

⁵¹⁶ New Communist Party of Italy.—Ed.

difficulty.⁵¹⁷ Between the leftist deviation, which denies any validity to the body of military science developed under the bourgeois regime, and the rightist deviation, which professes a slavish imitation of bourgeois military thought, there is a narrow path that has yet to be marked.

On the other hand, unless the speaker wants his talk to be the product of precise strategic thinking, i.e., based on the concrete analysis of a concrete situation, i.e., still linked to political practice, his lecture will tend towards academicism. But insofar as this conference is a tool, it is what will be done with it, i.e., its application to concrete situations, that will lead to the elimination of any elements that are of interest only to the nomenclature. As Maurice Biraud said in *Taxi for Tobruk*, “a thug who walks goes further than two intellectuals who remain in their seats.”

So, shall we?

Let's get started. . .

2. Objective and Subjective Factors

The first consideration with regard to revolutionary military policy is its inherent limitations. It is well known that counterinsurgency staffs draw their inspiration from Colonel Trinquier's theses on subversion. But these theses are crudely anti-dialectical, assuming that revolution is the product of a planned plot involving two categories of people: the “agents” of subversion and the “masses” manipulated by said agents. According to Trinquier, revolutionary crises are triggered when the underground general staff decides to act: this is when their plan really comes to fruition.

In reality, revolutionary crises are triggered by a combination of objective and subjective factors. More often than not, revolutionary forces are taken by surprise by the momentum of events. Such was the case with the 1905 crisis, which surprised the unarmed Bolshevik party, as was the case with the 1917 revolution (we know how hard Lenin had to fight within the party—particularly against Zinoviev and L. Kamenev—to push through to insurrection). The scale of the success of the Santa Clara campaign (September–December 1959) came as a surprise to the Castro guerrillas, as did the general insurrection in Managua in July 1979. Party preparation and action are indispensable to revolutionary victory, but they

⁵¹⁷ In this debate Trotsky first opposed Stalin and Voroshilov in 1918, then Frunze in 1921.

are never enough to explain the revolutionary phenomenon. A revolution is above all the expression of the contradictions inherent in society. Thus, according to Lenin, no insurrection is possible unless the ruling classes are in a state of acute political crisis, unable to govern as before, and unless the oppressed classes are driven to revolt by the degradation of their living conditions. The failure of subversive counterrevolutionary wars testifies to the importance of these socio-historical conditions (ending in failure because they never brought the counterrevolutionaries to power by means of “people’s” war, although this did not prevent them from playing their part in ruining the Nicaraguan and Mozambique economies).

3. Military Doctrine

The first question facing the party⁵¹⁸ is that of its military doctrine. Military doctrine is the expression of opinions accepted by the party on the political assessment of problems covering the war to be waged, the Party’s attitude towards it, its definition, the organization and preparation of forces, and the choice of strategy and methods. It is, in Clausewitzian terminology, the Party’s war plan.

Military doctrine is therefore dependent on the socio-historical context. When the Nazis began to invade, the European communist parties had been *shaped* by a doctrine of *internal* (national) class struggle, from which they had construed a proletarian-insurrectional strategy, i.e., a largely legal party flanked by a clandestine military apparatus. This configuration, unsuited to the new conditions, meant heavy initial losses (the Belgian Communist Party was decapitated by operation “Sonnenwende”), and the other communist parties were forced to improvise a practice of protracted people’s war.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁸ The question of whether the existence of a working-class party is necessary for social revolution is essential, but largely beyond the scope of this talk. Just as the equally essential question of whether, if the party is deemed necessary for social revolution, the founding of the party is a necessary precondition for the outbreak of armed confrontation is beyond the scope of this talk. I use the term “party” for convenience, but if one prefers, “force,” “organization,” “movement,” etc., can also be used in this context.

⁵¹⁹ The successes achieved by the different communist parties down this new road were remarkable; they were able to militarily organize large masses, despite fierce repression. What restricts the lessons to be learned from this experience for the future is that the communist parties did not put forward socialist revolution, but national liberation. This brought in large sections of the petty-bourgeoisie and peasantry who would have been hostile to a program of proletarian dictatorship.

The party's military doctrine can be defined as the answer to the following questions:

1. *Who is (and who will be) the enemy?*

This presupposes an analysis of the state and its forces, and also a class analysis of society (to define the possible attitudes of the intermediate classes), an analysis of the international situation (to assess the support that the state can hope to receive from the imperialist bourgeoisie or the forces likely to come to the aid of the revolutionary camp), and so on.

2. *What is (and will be) the nature of the war to come?*

Will it be a "pure" class struggle, pitting proletariat and bourgeoisie against each other in a fight to the death? Will it be a struggle combining class and national factors? And if so, is there a process uniting these two factors? Or are there two distinct stages (a national liberation stage, in which the aim is "only" to get the occupying forces to leave, and a social [socialist] stage, in which the aim is to wipe out the reactionary forces)? Is it a struggle combining a stage of democratic revolution and a stage of proletarian revolution? And if so, is the process interrupted, or are there two distinct stages (one in which the proletarian forces can count on the support of the revolution by large sections of the middle classes, and the other in which the proletariat stands alone in the struggle to establish its dictatorship)?

3. *What will be the objectives and missions of the armed forces that result from the nature of the war to come?*

To annihilate armed enemy forces? Make the human and/or material cost of war too high for the enemy? Combine these missions (e.g., annihilate the indigenous bourgeoisie's armed forces and dissuade potential imperialist interventionists by making the cost of war too high for them)? Limit armed action to national borders, or integrate it into a regional strategy? Etc.

4. *What armed forces are (and will be) needed at the outset, and what organizational and technical developments will be required to reach that stage? What armed forces will be needed in the later*

phases of the war and what military, organizational, and technical developments and operating methods will they require?

This concerns not only the size of these forces, but also their nature—militias (workers and/or peasants) and/or regular units, and their relationship to the Party, organic unity of the political and military or (relative) separation of the armed wing in the form of a Red Army, for example.

5. *How should the Party prepare itself?*

From the point of view of its internal organization (“clandestinization,” choice of operating methods relating to democracy and discipline, militarization of part of its cadres and activists, compartmentalization, creation of an ad hoc security and intelligence apparatus, etc.), its links with the masses of the working class (positioning of activists in mass organizations, for example), gathering resources, etc.

6. *What strategy and methods will be used to wage and win this war?*

Guerrilla warfare? Insurrection? A “coup de force”?⁵²⁰ etc. This presupposes an analysis of the political-military balance of power (objective and subjective factors, such as the will to fight). This also requires an analysis of the impact of geographical, economic, and social factors and on the ability of the opposing forces to move, strike, gather information, conceal themselves, concentrate, disperse, withdraw, communicate, and so on.

⁵²⁰ A “*coup de force*” is a decisive action aimed at overthrowing or influencing the political system in power, usually by coercive means. Where insurrection has a mass character, a “*coup de force*” is closer to a “*coup d'état*.”—Ed.

4. Military Development

The party's military doctrine guides military development, which includes all aspects contributing to its military strength:

1. *Organizational aspects*

In the case of the strategic choice of a “fighting party,” a “politico-military party”⁵²¹ or a “militarized party”⁵²²: need to reflect on the configuration of Party structures in order to make them suitable for both political and military work;

In the case of the strategic choice of a party leading a specific military force⁵²³ (i.e., embryo of a Red Army): need to create this specific structure, or at least reflect on what it should be and prepare for its creation (choice of cadres, etc.);

In all cases: need to move the Party underground or prepare to do so; need to train cadres for underground work; need to create an underground apparatus (housing, documents, communications); need to adopt security measures (compartmentalization, etc.);

2. *Military aspects*

Gathering military resources (weapons, equipment) defined as necessary or desirable by military doctrine and/or choice of plans, methods, and accomplices to gather these resources when the time comes⁵²⁴ (e.g., plan to attack military barracks); general introduction of managers to military issues and training of specifically military managers.

3. *Economic and logistical aspects*

Assembling the economic and logistical resources (money, accommodation, vehicles, means of communication, falsification of documents, etc.) defined as necessary or desirable by

⁵²¹ Hypotheses defended by forces in the European communist combatant current.

⁵²² Hypothesis defended by part of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist current.

⁵²³ Hypothesis defended by other communist currents.

⁵²⁴ The *right* moment is not necessarily the moment one has *chosen*; it can be imposed from without by an enemy initiative, as happened in 1933 when the Nazi *coup de force* preempted the insurrection prepared by the KPD.

military doctrine, and/or choosing the plans, methods, and partners that will make military resources available when the time comes.

4. *Political aspects*

Implementation of the program to prepare party activists and cadres politically for war, as defined as necessary or desirable by military doctrine.

5. *Scientific and technical aspects*

Gathering the scientific and technical resources required and/or available (for the production of weapons, equipment needed for combat and clandestinity, interception of enemy communications and protection of one's own communications, etc.) defined as necessary or desirable by military doctrine, or developing the plans and methods that will make these resources available when the time comes; training of cadres.

6. *Ideological and moral aspects*

Implementation of the ideological and moral preparation of activists, the sympathetic masses and the masses in general for the war defined as necessary or desirable by military doctrine. In this way, for example, the development of solidarity with revolutionary prisoners can play a role in the ideological battle favorable to armed confrontation.

7. *Operating methods regarding discipline and democracy*

Implementation of operating methods concerning discipline and democracy defined as necessary or desirable by military doctrine. For example, during the years of the Resistance, the Vietnamese communists opted for the "three great democracies" system, which helped to develop the initiative, dynamism, and creative faculties of cadres and troops, strengthen the cohesion and solidarity of the armed forces and increase their combat power:

- A. Political democracy: in base units, held regular democratic conferences and assemblies of soldiers to enable soldiers and officers alike to express their opinions on all matters

concerning combat, work, training, study, and group life; officers had the right to criticize soldiers, but soldiers also have the right to criticize officers.

- B. Military democracy: in combat as in training, (as soon as conditions allow for it), held democratic conferences to communicate the operational plan to everyone, allow initiatives to flourish, and work together to find ways to iron out difficulties in order to successfully complete the assigned task.⁵²⁵
- C. Economic democracy: soldiers and officers alike had the right to take part in the management and improvement of material life within the framework of an “open-book” system.

Revolutionary armed forces generally apply a system of strict voluntary discipline. Voluntary discipline, because it is built on the political consciousness of cadres and troops, is maintained essentially by methods of permanent education and continuous persuasion, thanks to which all people respect the rules and help each other to observe them. Strict discipline means that all members of the army without exception, cadres and troops, superiors and subordinates, must strictly adhere to it, and that no one may violate it.

Democracy and discipline must serve to reinforce the military power of the revolutionary forces. From this point of view, the distinction between democracy and “democratism” is essential; the former strengthens military power, the latter weakens it.⁵²⁶

⁵²⁵ In bourgeois armies, soldiers are only entitled to information that is strictly necessary for the accomplishment of their mission. They obey orders because they have been trained to do so. Murat didn't bother to explain anything to his hussars (light cavalry soldiers). He would shout: “Direction: my asshole!” and then lead them to their destination. . .

⁵²⁶ The Spanish Civil War offers numerous examples of the disastrous effects of “democratism.” In the battles of Alto de León and Somosierra in July-August 1936, for example, the militiamen refused to launch an attack without first voting by show of hands. . . Despite their superiority in terms of numbers, motivation, equipment and position, the militia units were soundly defeated by the regular units commanded by Fascist officers. The question of “democratism” was central to Lin Biao's attack on General He Long during the Cultural Revolution.

5. The Science of War

The Party's military doctrine is developed with the help of the science of war, a unified system of knowledge encompassing the material and psychological aspects of combat. Its content is organized around two fundamental laws:

1. The submission of war to political objectives;
2. The dependence of the outcome of a conflict on the correlation between powers: military (the number and quality—courage, discipline and self-discipline, motivation, instruction—of combatants, the quality and quantity of military equipment, the capacity and character of commanders, etc.), political, moral, technical, social, and economic.

The science of war is divided into four chapters:

1. The study of war, which includes the history of wars (more specifically, as far as we are concerned, civil and revolutionary wars).
2. The laws of war, i.e., the few principles whose application is imperative at all levels (strategic, tactical, etc.), and the few rules whose application, while always desirable, is not always possible under the conditions that make them truly productive:⁵²⁷

The principle of proportionality between means and ends;
The principle of freedom of action, which dictates that one's system of forces should be arranged in such a way as to pursue one's own goals without exposing oneself to those of the enemy, and which calls for a number of rules, such as the combination of forces (allowing them to be engaged in combat as and when required); security (constant search for intelligence on the enemy, active and passive security measures, etc.); initiative; mobility; concealment of intentions

⁵²⁷ For example, *initiative* is only worth taking if you have the means to keep it; the Paris Commune took the initiative against the government forces based in Versailles, but after the first setback it turned out that the Commune didn't have the means to keep the initiative. Similarly, *surprise* is only worthwhile if you can exploit it, and so on.

from the enemy; prevention of enemy reactions; creation of reserves; etc.;

The principle of conservation of forces (i.e., maximum efficiency of the means of warfare through the active and intelligent use of all forces), which also calls for rules such as: bringing together the maximum number of resources where the stakes are highest, saving resources on secondary fronts;⁵²⁸ maximum intensity in the use of forces; cooperation of all resources to multiply their respective effectiveness; choice of time; choice of place; surprise (strategic, tactical, technical, through the use of new means of warfare or the original and unforeseen use of old ones); speed (which prolongs the effect of surprise and guarantees freedom of action); continuity of effort; exploitation of the enemy's unpreparedness; etc.

3. Theoretical foundations of the party's preparation for war.
4. The art of war.

6. The Art of War

Unlike the science of war, of which it is a part, the *art of war* is not a rigorous system of knowledge of phenomena and their laws. As a concrete (and not a speculative) activity, the art of war never presumes two identical conditions: the means of warfare, the enemy, the terrain, the socio-economic conditions are never the same. Moreover, war is not only a confron-

⁵²⁸ The universality of the principle of *conservation of forces* underpins the strategic value of guerrilla warfare. Guerrilla warfare (and even more so in the case of urban guerrilla warfare in comparison with rural guerrilla warfare) allows optimum use to be made of small forces, and obliges the enemy to disperse innumerable forces into surveilling potential targets—and thereby makes it impossible for the enemy to conserve *its* forces. But while guerrilla warfare by definition enjoys the benefits conferred by the principle of the *conservation of forces*, this principle still has to be consciously applied by guerrilla forces, both in allocating and employing their forces. When an insurgency (or “*coup de force*”) meets the required conditions for a surprise attack, it also benefits from the principle of conservation of forces, which explains why small forces employed wisely are able to dismantle a numerically superior enemy force. The insurgent forces can capture certain areas, leaving others temporarily in the hands of enemy detachments. However, the principle of the *conservation of forces* has its limits—it alone cannot compensate for all disparities in the balance of forces.

tation of material forces, it is also a confrontation of political intentions, of moral forces that often radically alter the value of material forces.

The main parts of the art of war are:

1. Strategy
2. Operational art
3. Tactics
4. Logistics (related to the movement, stationing and supply of armed forces)
5. Organization (relating to the organization and preparation of equipment and men).

The art of war lies in the mastery and articulation of these different levels, in all their specific aspects (bearing in mind, for example, the importance of building up reserves at the tactical level, where combat often takes the form of a succession of armed confrontations, but also where the strategic level requires strict adherence to the principle of economy of forces, i.e., their full deployment wherever the decision can be made).

7. Strategy

Strategy is the implementation of concepts and recommendations derived from military doctrine. It does this by bringing together military and non-military factors, converting the Party's *military strength* (a quantitative concept) into *military power* (a dynamic, non-quantifiable concept), and superseding military doctrine from the onset of combat.

Strategy therefore has as:

1. Definition: the proper use of combat for the purposes of warfare.
2. Foundation: the desire to obtain the greatest, quickest, and least costly result by rationalizing one's forces—strategy therefore obeys the law of minimal action.
3. Methods: victorious operations (enabled by the accuracy of strategic analysis and achieved by revolutionary forces' mastery of operational art and tactics) as well as military, political (propaganda, etc.), and organizational (integration of new fighters, etc.) exploits.

4. Principles: the (absolute) importance of superiority at decisive points (you can't "defend everything" or "attack everything"); the (relative) importance of surprise and deceit; the proportionality between the objective and the forces and obstacles involved.
5. Goals: objectives that must lead to peace, i.e., in the context of revolutionary warfare, to destroy the enemy's armed forces, to break the enemy's will to fight.

Nothing implies the correlation of means and ends; not every victorious operation is necessarily strategically advantageous (it may lead, for example, to further escalation that the revolutionary movement is not ready to undertake—as in the case of foreign intervention). It is strategic analysis that determines which operations should be carried out and within what framework.

In addition to the principles and rules of the art of war—of which strategy is an essential part—strategic analysis is based on a field of its own which includes:

1. The laws governing war. Already enumerated, they are objective and apply impartially to both opposing sides;
2. The factors and nature of the war to be waged, the distribution of forces (social, military, political, etc., both real and potential and qualitative and quantitative), the prospects for duration, intensity and scope of the conflict, the possibilities of external intervention (friendly or enemy), geographic and social conditions, etc.;
3. The party's preparation for war;
4. The material and technical base (military and technical resources, intelligence, cadres, manpower, scientists);
5. Command of forces;
6. The enemy's most likely choices, since the strategic field is one of action-reaction between belligerents.

On this basis, strategic analysis involves:

1. A meticulous calculation of risk-taking; i.e., in particular, forecasting the qualitative leaps in counterrevolution (torture,

- extra-legal executions, etc.) that will be induced by revolutionary progress;
2. A perfect, sustained balance between operations and the politico-military objectives (e.g., not reacting on the basis of prestige);
 3. Preparation of a fallback position;
 4. Decisiveness once an operation has begun;
 5. Flexibility of resources to cope with unforeseen developments.

8. General Principles of Revolutionary Strategy

What are the general principles of revolutionary strategy? There are six:

1. Revolutionary strategy is based on the primacy of the political over the military (and this is not simply a general principle of subordinating military options to political objectives, but of the general primacy of the political; thus, the political training of revolutionaries is more important than military training, the politico-ideological impact of an operation can take precedence over its effect in the relationship of material forces, military operations can be suspended but never political work, etc.);
2. It is based on the primacy of man over material;⁵²⁹
3. It is based on the primacy of the internal (what's happening in the country, what's happening within the ranks of our class forces) over the external;
4. It is continuously concerned with the link to the popular masses;
5. Whatever its main form of struggle (insurrection, guerrilla warfare, etc.), it uses all other forms of struggle: mass struggle (strikes, demonstrations), guerrilla warfare, conventional war-

⁵²⁹ In the Chinese People's Liberation Army, these views were laid down in a system known as the "Four Primacies": the primacy of man over material, of political work over other activities, of ideological work over other aspects of political work, and lastly, the primacy within ideological work of living ideas over ideas contained in books.

fare, sabotage, legal struggles, psychological warfare, secret warfare, terrorism, and insurrectionary movements.

6. Its end is the total destruction of the enemy's armed forces. Revolutionary war is a war of annihilation, which cannot be settled by peace negotiations with the enemy, as can be the case in other types of war.

9. Overview of the Main Revolutionary Strategies

To be a little more concrete, let's take a quick look at the main revolutionary strategies theorized since the entry of the proletariat onto the historical stage. I've listed eleven, but this is somewhat arbitrary; some categories can be subdivided to create new ones.

1. *Blanquist insurrectionist strategy*

The most accomplished form of this strategy is the Blanquist strategy, theorized in *Instructions for an Armed Uprising*.⁵³⁰ A small group of armed conspirators (between 500 and 800 in the case of the May 12, 1839 insurrection attempt) strike when they believe the people are subjectively ready for insurrection, acting in the place of the unorganized proletariat. They seize armories and distribute weapons, strike at the head of political power and repressive forces (attacking the police headquarters), draw up a systematic plan for setting up barricades and organize the masses rallied to insurrection. In tactical terms, Blanqui placed great importance on the barricade tactics, which was rightly criticized by Engels. The passive tactic of the barricades, pursued by the revolutionary proletariat until 1848, pinned its hope of victory on the soldiers of the bourgeois army's widespread refusal to obey orders by or even their transfer to the insurrectionary side.

⁵³⁰ The way Lenin defended himself against accusations of "Blanquism" should not obscure the fact that the Blanquist *take-up of arms* (*prise d'armes* in French) was the intermediate stage between the Babouvist (Gracchus Babeuf-inspired) plot and the Leninist insurrection. The epithet "Blanquist" that Plekhanov and Martov threw at Lenin's head had only a distant connection with genuine Blanquism. In the political vocabulary of the time, it meant conspiracy rather than mass action.

2. *The strategy of the insurrectionary general strike*

Inherited (whether claimed or not) from Bakunin's theses, which aimed to bring about the abolition of the state through a single collective action, preferably a general strike, this insurrection is dependent on the spontaneity of the masses. According to this strategy, the insurrectional general strike will be triggered when the masses are subjectively ready, and these subjective dispositions will easily allow the objective questions (military, organizational) to be resolved through the revolutionary creativity of the masses. This strategy also relies on the widespread collapse of bourgeois power, again thanks to the subjective dispositions of the masses (mass desertions in the army, etc.). This strategy was proposed again between the two world wars by the revolutionary syndicalist movement (Losovsky, Neuberg Group) and has been revived by the "Maoist-spontaneists" and the Bordigist ultra-left.

3. *The "exemplary" terrorist strategy*

Practiced by a branch of the anarchist movement and by Russian populists. It is based either on individual practice, or on that of a secret organization—and in all cases it is devoid of any organic link to the masses. Their only connection to the masses is the example of their actions or the attitude of their activists in the face of repression, and, possibly, a few statements. Terrorist strategy may strike reaction at its peak, provoking terror in the enemy and admiration among the masses, but it has never been able to convert these factors into forces capable of overthrowing a regime. Throughout history, this strategy has met with nothing but failure: you can't "awaken" the revolutionary layers of the masses without organizing them.

4. *The Lenino-Comintern insurrectionist strategy*

This was first put into practice in October 1917, and then carefully theorized (particularly in the Neuberg group's work, *Armed Insurrection*) and planned by the Communist parties in the 20s and 30s. It integrates and systematizes the analyses of Marx and Engels (and the lessons of experiments such as those of 1905), giving a central role to the vanguard party, which works to bring together the elements necessary for revolutionary success (raising the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, political and

military organization of the masses, in particular through the creation of a red guard, training and equipping of shock groups and their use as a substitute for barricade tactics, creation of an insurrectional general staff, elaboration of battle plans, choice of the moment to launch the uprising, etc.). This strategy suffered serious setbacks in Germany (1923), China (1927), Asturias (1934), Brazil (1935), and elsewhere.

5. *The strategy of protracted people's war*

This strategy involves three phases: a guerrilla phase that is strategically defensive (but tactically very active, with a constant stream of new initiatives); a phase of strategic equilibrium; and a strategically offensive phase in which revolutionary forces are able to wage a war of movement and (secondarily) a war of position. The specific principles of protracted people's war were defined by Mao Zedong as follows:

- A. First attack dispersed and isolated enemy forces, then large forces.
- B. First establish liberated zones in the countryside, encircle the cities from the countryside, seize the small towns first, then the large ones.
- C. Ensure a strong numerical superiority in combat (the strategy is to fight one against ten, the tactics are to fight ten against one).⁵³¹
- D. Ensure high levels of political awareness among soldiers, so that they are superior in stamina, courage, and self-sacrifice.
- E. Ensure the support of the people and respect for their interests.
- F. Ensure the conversion of enemy prisoners to the revolutionary side.
- G. Use the time between battles to reform, train, and educate.

⁵³¹ This principle was theorized by Mao Zedong in *On Protracted War* and by Zhu De in *Anti-Japanese Guerrilla War*. But Giáp and the entire Viet Minh leadership did not approve of it, and in any case considered it unsuited to the Vietnamese situation. The limited size of the Viet Minh forces often meant that they had to fight with equal numbers on a tactical scale; surprise-based tactics, better knowledge of the terrain and the operational quality of the troops (preparation for the form of combat being waged combined with revolutionary heroism) were enough to make the difference.

While victorious in Yugoslavia, Albania, China, and Indochina, it suffered major setbacks, as seen in Greece ('45–'49) and Malaysia ('48–'60).

6. *The strategy of the "coup de force"*

This strategy is based on a balance of power that is extremely favorable to the revolutionary party. In the example of Prague in 1948, we have the presence of the Soviet army, the power and prestige of the Communist Party, the existence of popular militias (15,000 to 18,000 armed workers), the almost total infiltration of the National Security Corps and several army units, and so on. This strategy has the advantage of being infinitely more economical than those involving armed confrontation. It can even maintain the appearance of legality, which makes it possible to politically neutralize certain intermediate social strata. The coup de force is more often the fruit of an opportunity provided by an extraordinary historical conjuncture than a revolutionary strategy theorized and presented as a model. Nevertheless, it could be systematically used by young progressive Third World officers who were linked in one way or another to the Soviet Union in the '60s and '70s.

7. *The armed electoral strategy*

This is based on the thesis that a partial seizure of power is possible by legal means (provided that a broad mass struggle guarantees democratic rights), and that this partial seizure of power will provide the revolutionary movement with means which, added to the revolutionary forces' own means, will be sufficient to guarantee the deepening of the revolutionary process and ward off a reactionary counteroffensive (military coup or foreign intervention). Organizations adopting this strategy equip themselves with the military potential to ensure that the seizure of power is fundamentally achieved by legal means. General Pinochet did much to invalidate this strategic hypothesis, which had already met with bloody failure in the crushing of the Austrian *Schutzbund* in 1934.

8. *Focoist strategy*

This strategy is based on a systematized theorization of the specific features⁵³² of guerrilla warfare in Latin America in the late '50s and early '60s (e.g., Cuba). It made the creation and development of a mobile rural guerrilla base the central element of the revolutionary process. Focoism did not have a universal purpose and was largely based on the thesis that because Latin American societies were dualistic (the capitalist city and the feudal countryside), it was impossible to establish liberated zones in the Chinese and Indochinese style, and so on. The mobile guerrilla units were to develop into a people's army, encircling the cities until the regime was dealt the final blow by an insurrectionary general strike in the urban centers. The role of the proletariat was limited to supporting rural guerrillas until the final blow.

9. *The neo-insurrectionary strategy*

This strategy was forged in the wake of the victory of the Sandinista revolution in Nicaragua. Following this victory, several revolutionary forces totally or partially abandoned the protracted people's war that they had, in some areas, been waging for decades, in an attempt to force matters through by provoking urban uprisings. This was the case of the New People's Army, led by the Communist Party of the Philippines⁵³³ until the rectification campaign of 1992, which led to a return to the theses of protracted people's war.

⁵³² This systematization of particularities (often born out of experience, and usually the product or expression of the weaknesses of the Latin American revolutionary movement) is the source of much confusion. This procedure enabled the main theoretician of Focoism, Régis Debray, to evacuate the Leninist-Maoist theses (such as the role of the class party) that were so strongly advocated by the man who, in Debray's eyes, embodied the Focoist "revolution in the revolution": Che Guevara.

⁵³³ It was mainly on the island-archipelago of Mindanao that the NPA rejected the strategy of protracted people's war in the early '80s, subjectively forcing the transition from the "defensive" to the "strategic counteroffensive" phase. The NPA's small, mobile units, well embedded in the local population, were prematurely merged into battalions, within which CPP cadres had to assume military responsibilities for which they were ill-prepared. The Party's clandestine political structures were severely weakened, and the NPA's large, easy-to-spot battalions suffered heavy losses at the hands of an enemy far from collapsing.

10. The PAS strategy (Politico-Military Fighting Strategy) and Combined Revolutionary Warfare (CRW)

This strategy was defined and practiced by Mahir Çayan and the founders of the People's Liberation Front-Party of Turkey, then adopted in the '70s and '80s by several organizations (Dev Yol, Dev Sol, MLSPB, THKP–People's Revolutionary Vanguards, etc.). According to this strategy, guerrilla warfare remains the mainstay until the stage of conventional warfare, and other methods of struggle (political, economic, democratic, and ideological) are subordinated to it. The PASS strategy is divided into three stages:

1. The formation of urban guerrilla forces (it is much easier to build up a fighting force in a city where armed actions have a greater resonance and the terrain is more socially disposed to accepting and assimilating high-level operations).
2. The spread of guerrilla warfare throughout the country and the formation of a rural guerrilla alongside the urban guerrilla (more decisive because a unit in the countryside can withdraw and develop by gradually and continuously integrating peasants, whereas the urban guerrilla, obliged to scatter to clandestine bases after each action, cannot hope to establish a continuous relationship with the masses and develop into a people's army).
3. The transformation of guerrilla forces into regular armed forces.

11. The strategy of protracted revolutionary warfare

This strategy has been defined and practiced by European communist fighting organizations. It is based on the principles of Maoist protracted people's war, but differs profoundly from them in that it abandons all forms of rural guerrilla warfare (and therefore the idea of encircling the cities with the countryside), substitutes liberated zones with clandestine networks of mass organizations (trade unions, etc.), gives greater prominence to the guerrilla movement, places greater emphasis on armed propaganda, and adopts new organizational forms combining party-related and military work (in some cases, even rejecting the traditional Communist Party/Red Army separation by formulating the thesis of the "Combatant Party," legitimized by the new political quality of armed struggle), and so on.

The above schematic list does not constitute a “catalog” from which to choose a readymade formula. Each specific situation calls for a specific response. Each concrete case contains elements of these different strategies, either through inertia (survival of old methods) or, rather, because the struggle brings out methods that will be theorized and systematized later. At best, this list can serve as a guide.

It should be noted that these strategies fall into two main categories: those which seek to achieve a verdict in a single battle (insurrectionist strategies) and those which seek to achieve a verdict through a succession of battles and campaigns (guerrilla strategies).⁵³⁴ Each corresponds to a deviation: right-wing deviation, in the case of insurrectionist strategies, whose adoption is sometimes no more than the means chosen by a force undermined by opportunism to defer the confrontation with power; “left-wing” deviation, in the case of guerrilla strategies, whose adoption is sometimes no more than the means chosen by a force undermined by subjectivism to dispense with the work of rooting itself in the working class.

10. Revolutionary Strategy and Vulgar Dogmatism

The insurrectionist and guerrilla strategic schools are in themselves neither dogmatic nor non-dogmatic.

Each school has “its” dogmas, and it is remarkable that in each case, a dogmatic interpretation of the strategic option is the work of forces which develop an opportunistic practice behind a warlike rhetoric.

1. For insurrection:

For the representatives of the “theology of insurrection,” insurrection is akin to a distant horizon: the further they advance

⁵³⁴ In our previous debate (on the [n]PCI document), we were led to reflect on the thesis according to which the Bolshevik Party had pursued a strategy of people’s war “without knowing it”—the 1917 insurrection corresponding to the third phase (the generalized offensive) of this strategy. This is a very stimulating theory, but we have not carried out the historical investigation required to assess the validity of this highly original hypothesis. Among the questions we need to answer are: can the Bolshevik party line from 1905 to 1917 be partly identified with that of the protracted war? If so, was it to this line that the party owed its development? The Bolshevik party led the armed struggle (breaking out activists from prison, eliminating snitches, financing operations), but what was the objective and subjective reality of this armed struggle (its importance in the eyes of cadres, activists, and the masses)? Were there still armed operations between 1908 and 1917?

towards it, the further away it appears. By dissociating medium-term objectives from their (alleged) long-term goal—armed insurrection—they pursue a line of party-building development, organization of the workers' vanguards, tactics in mass struggles, etc., which (sometimes) succeeds in strengthening the party and its influence in the medium term, but which objectively undermines the emergence of the objective and subjective conditions of revolutionary crisis calling for the outbreak of insurrection.

2. For protracted war:

For some “Maoists,” the project of slavishly imitating Mao's protracted people's war is proposed in conditions (politico-historical, socio-economic, geographical, etc.) so far removed from those of the oppressed countries, that the launch of armed struggle is constantly postponed for lack of the “preconditions” supposedly required. We sometimes see the emergence of substitutes for armed struggle, for example, the use of “spectacular” forms of propaganda (hammer and sickle in flames on the hills overlooking a city) practiced by forces (in this example: the PCP, Partido Comunista del Perú) that are actually engaged in armed struggle. What emerges is a true abuse of language: declaring oneself to be in a “people's war” without carrying out any armed action.⁵³⁵

11. Universal and Particular Characteristics

Overcoming dogmatism means:

1. Establishing military policy (and therefore making strategic choices) on the basis of a living analysis of historical experience and contemporary objective and subjective conditions. This analysis can lead either to the affirmation of the univer-

⁵³⁵ This is not exclusive to dogmatists. As we saw in our previous debate, the (n)PCI claims to be in the “first phase” of their people's war, yet not only does it not carry out any armed action, it also distances itself from forces that do (such as the Red Brigades). Depending on how much one trusts the revolutionary honesty of the (n)PCI, this is either a case of abuse of language (war being characterized, as Clausewitz explains, by the use of armed combat), or a political swindle.

sal character of one strategic option (i.e., either insurrection or protracted war must always and everywhere be retained as the sole revolutionary strategy⁵³⁶), or to the assertion that objective conditions determine the choice between insurrection and people's war. Affirming the universal validity of one strategic option is not in itself dogmatic. It can be, but it can also be the fruit of exhaustive, lively, and sincere analysis, aimed at identifying the laws of history in order to influence it. This is in line with the principles of historical materialism. As long as the only revolutionary victories were the Paris Commune and the October Revolution, historical analysis naturally tended to make armed insurrection the only possible path. The revolutionary victories in China and Indochina overturned this supposed historical self-evidence. Distinguishing between the exception and the rule⁵³⁷ is an absolutely necessary exercise, but one that goes beyond the scope of this conference.

2. Once the strategic choice has been made, turning one's back on dogmatism means confronting the question of the universal and particular characteristics of the strategic option chosen.

A. On insurrection:

The Comintern manual written by the Neuberg group offers an excellent example: armed insurrection is presented as a "necessity" and an "inevitability" of the class struggle. At no point does Neuberg's book call into question the insurrectionist strategic option; all the critical approaches (and they are numerous and interesting) concern errors committed within the framework of this option (bad timing, insufficient or badly distributed manpower, lack of coordination, etc.). On the basis of the "inevitability" of the insurrectionary option, the book proposes to

⁵³⁶ Which is not to say that we shouldn't seize exceptional historical opportunities, as in Czechoslovakia in 1948.

⁵³⁷ Was it the victory of the October 1917 revolution, which was a historical exception made possible by the extreme weakness of the czarist regime, or the victory of the protracted wars in China and Indochina, which were exceptions owing to the decisive presence of anti-feudal and national liberation factors?

study each concrete experience (Hamburg in 1923, Guangdong in 1927, Tallinn in 1924, etc.), so that revolutionaries can, in turn, adapt the insurrectionary strategy to their socio-historical reality: here, the insurrection should be preceded by a general strike, there, it should be launched by surprise, etc.

B. On protracted war:

The question of the universal and specific characteristics of the strategy of protracted people's war was mainly addressed by Chairman Gonzalo, for whom Mao Zedong, in establishing the principles of people's war, endowed the proletariat with its military line, its military theory and practice, which was "universally valid and therefore applicable everywhere in accordance with the concrete conditions."⁵³⁸ President Gonzalo responded to those who might see a mark of dogmatism in this recognition of the universal character of revolutionary warfare that the specificities of concrete conditions give rise to specific forms of tactics, struggle, and organization. He lists three of these for Peru: first, the importance of the urban struggle alongside the rural struggle (reflecting the importance of cities on the Latin American continent); second, the fact that it was possible and necessary to establish people's power in liberated areas before the defeat of the armed forces (due to the military's late intervention in 1982, after the initial failure of the police forces had long since been demonstrated); and third, the militarization of the Party.⁵³⁹

12. Support Bases, Guerrilla Zones, and Liberated Territories

Unlike the question of universal and particular characteristics, the question of "support bases" is specific to guerrilla strategies. Let's begin by examining the different categories.

⁵³⁸ "Interview with Chairman Gonzalo"

⁵³⁹ The Nepalese equivalent of "Gonzalo Thought" is the "Prachanda Path."

1. *The guerrilla zone*

This is a geographical category: the area in which the guerrilla is active—where it moves and acts.

2. *Support base*

This is both a geographical and a political/social category. It is an area where the enemy is present (or can easily penetrate), but where revolutionary counterpower is a reality. The revolutionary party is well-established among the masses, and the guerrillas find support in this area (recruits, supplies, shelter, intelligence, etc.). From a social point of view, relations are still those of the old society, but the balance of power between classes has changed: popular demands are backed by the revolutionary armed force.⁵⁴⁰

3. *The fixed or stable support base*

The fixed support base involves politico-military control of a given area, free of the regime's institutions and defended against enemy armed forces. This is the intermediate state between the support base and the liberated area.

4. *Liberated area*

This is an area where revolutionary power has driven out the forces and institutions of the old regime and where the new society is unfolding. Capitalists, landowners, and members of the oligarchy are expropriated and put on trial. The means of production are socialized, and so on. This presupposes, from a military point of view, the capacity and will to defend these zones.⁵⁴¹

The risk of confusion between these categories is all the more so in that, depending on the author or text, the same term sometimes designates

⁵⁴⁰ This was the case in China and Indochina, where the Communist Party set limits on land-leasing, usury, etc., to protect the interests of the poor peasantry. So it is today in Colombia, where in FARC support bases, drug traffickers are obliged to pay peasants a guaranteed price for coca seeds (and a tax to the FARC itself), while in regions controlled by paramilitaries, drug traffickers use white terror (starting with the systematic elimination of peasant trade unionists) to impose absurdly low purchase prices.

⁵⁴¹ Which is not to say that we should hold on to it at all costs. Liberated areas can be evacuated when military pressure is too uneven. The "Long March" is a case in point.

different categories. Mao Zedong most often used the term “support base” in the sense of a “stable support base,” i.e., one that presupposes total politico-military control of the region.⁵⁴² The Vietnamese resistance called “guerrilla zones” the territories it controlled at night, while the Saigonese forces kept control of them during the day. This explains why many paradoxes are in fact only of a superficial, terminological nature, as in the recent [as of 2006] texts of the Communist Party of Nepal, which considers itself “not in a position to create stable support bases,” even though it declares that

a certain form of support base exists in Rolpa and Rukum, we collect taxes, we hold people's justice courts, we control the forests, etc. . . . The police do not come to these areas.

On this question more than any other, it is important not to focus on words, but on the concepts they designate in each particular discourse.

The Focoist analysis highlights the fact that the Cuban guerrillas only set up a fixed support base after 17 months of continuous fighting and attributes the failure of the Peruvian guerrillas in '65 to the desire to establish bases prematurely. Focoism thus directly and openly challenges the principles of Maoist protracted people's war, which posits the establishment of a support base as a starting point for guerrilla warfare (and not as a distant endpoint). The Focoist critique rejects (in the Latin American conditions of the '60s) not only the idea of establishing a fixed base (which is understandable), but even the idea of relying on a “security zone” of several thousand square kilometers (miles). However, this criticism is based on the confusion between a support base and a fixed base. In reality, long before the 17th month, the Castro guerrillas had support bases in the Sierra Maestra. If we take the Focoist critique of the support base to its logical conclusion, we end up with pure and simple guerrilla nomadism.

The experiences of Latin American guerrillas deprived of support bases (and in particular the Colombian ELN guerrillas of the '60s) have given rise to the concept of “tacticism,” which designates the situation in which an isolated guerrilla, poorly supported by a political apparatus, loses

⁵⁴² Mao Zedong's notion of a *support base* is very flexible, referring to “permanent bases,” “temporary bases,” “seasonal bases,” bases “for small detachments,” and even “mobile bases” . . .

its revolutionary value by having to focus on tactical problems (ensuring stewardship, moving around, scouting the terrain, etc.). Guerrillas that have fallen into tacticism can neither carry out sufficient armed propaganda, nor educate the masses politically, nor develop by incorporating and training recruits.

13. Operational Art

Strategy is mediated by operational art. While strategy determines which operations are to be carried out, it is operational art that determines the conditions under which these operations are carried out. It concerns the foundations and preparation of military operations in line with strategic plans. In the words of Alexander Svechin, the great Soviet military theoretician of the '20s, operations are the means of strategy, operational art is the material of strategy; battle is the means of operational art; and tactics is the material of operational art. Svechin founded the concept of operational art on the realization that the outcome of war was no longer decided, as in the 19th century, by a single, great, Napoleonic-type battle. Instead, the outcome was decided by a series of interlinked operations. As we can see, operational art is more concerned with guerrilla strategies than insurrectionary ones. The revolutionary forces behind the latter use operational art only in the face of the civil war (and/or foreign intervention) that follows the victorious insurrection.

The intermediate category between strategy and tactics that in 1936 Mao called “the science of campaigns”⁵⁴³ clearly falls into the category of operational art.

In the case of Maoist-style protracted people's war, operational art also regulates cooperation and interaction between the three levels of armed forces: local militias (self-defense militias), regional forces, and regular forces (the offensive battle corps under the direct command of the general command). The spontaneous form of guerrilla warfare is, in fact, the strug-

⁵⁴³ See Mao Zedong, “Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War,” *Selected Works* vol. 1 (Paris: Foreign Languages Press, 2021). The footnote corresponding to the first appearance of this expression reads: “The science of strategy, the science of campaigns and the science of tactics are all components of Chinese military science. The science of strategy deals with the laws that govern the war situation as a whole. The science of campaigns deals with the laws that govern campaigns and is applied in directing campaigns. The science of tactics deals with the laws that govern battles and is applied in directing battles.”—Ed.

gle of small units born and supported by the local population fighting in the immediate vicinity of their locality of origin. To maintain and, above all, develop its forces, a guerrilla must break with this spontaneous practice and adopt the principle of “mobile/movement-based guerrilla warfare,”⁵⁴⁴ which is part of the operational art. This involves bringing together the forces of local guerrillas to form mobile forces capable of spreading out over a large area and actually moving within that area (by collaborating with local guerrillas). Movement protects the unit (the enemy being unaware of its situation), enables the initiative to be retained (both in attack and in retreat⁵⁴⁵), and the coverage of the entire territory reinforces the authority of the revolutionary force. In this context, “mobile/movement-based guerrilla warfare” evolves into “grand guerrilla warfare,”⁵⁴⁶ and then into conventional warfare.

Operational art is based on the following principles:

1. Mobility and the importance of accelerated rhythms in combat operations;
2. Concentration of effort at a decisive point(s) and moment(s);
3. Surprise;
4. Initiative and activity in combat;
5. Preservation of the capabilities and effectiveness of one's own forces;
6. Compliance of the operation's objectives with the conditions of the actual situation;
7. Cooperation of forces and resources.

To present the above categories in a more simple (and highly schematic) way, we can say that the conduct of war is a matter of strategy, that the conduct of campaigns is a matter of strategy and operational art, that

⁵⁴⁴ An expression coined by General Giáp (“*guérilla de mouvement*” in French).

⁵⁴⁵ Initiative does not mean attack. There are desperate attacks that reveal a loss of initiative (i.e., a form of reckless retreat), and daring retreats that enable the initiative to be retained (i.e., the Long March).

⁵⁴⁶ As defined by General Beaufre: a form of operation resembling conventional warfare in terms of the military strength involved, but entirely different from conventional warfare in terms of its combat methods—the “grand guerrilla” operates with considerable resources, but with the same concern for secrecy, surprise, and evasion as in ordinary guerrilla warfare.

the conduct of battles is a matter of operational art and tactics, and that the conduct of a simple armed confrontation is a matter of tactics.

14. Tactics

Whereas *strategy* determines the operations to be carried out and operational art determines the conditions under which these operations are carried out, it is *tactics* that determines the way in which these operations are carried out. Tactics are concerned with the preparation and use of weapons, men, and resources to carry out an armed confrontation.

Tactics have both *general* and *specific principles*, depending on the type of military operation.

As we have seen, no revolutionary strategy is dependent on a single method, and therefore on a single tactic: *insurrectionary strategy*, for example, applies not only *insurrectionary tactics*, but also (to a lesser extent) all the other tactics and particular forms used in revolutionary warfare. In revolutionary warfare, for example, sabotage takes on a dimension unheard of in conventional warfare; it is no longer a matter of a few strategic sabotage operations decided at the top, but of an infinite number of acts of sabotage committed by the masses, from the largest (paralyzing a power station) to the smallest (tearing down a government poster), and which by their sheer number overwhelm the enemy.

15. Principles of Insurrectionary Tactics

1. Abandon the use of barricades, relying instead on the use of small, mobile groups (some of them specialized in anti-tank warfare) who know the terrain inside out. Prepare the area to facilitate the action of mobile groups (pierce the walls of adjoining houses to create passageways, etc.).
2. Use all possible weapons. In 1956, Hungarian counterrevolutionaries electrocuted Soviet tankers by pulling tramway cables down onto the tanks, while layers of oil-soaked cloth on which the tanks were sliding made them easier to attack. During the Hanoi uprising in 1946, Vietminh militiamen dug anti-tank pits and masked them with obstacles, encouraging tankers to accelerate as they approached. Use decoys (false mines, false firing points, etc.), obstacles (metal spikes buried in the ground)

and traps (mine positions likely to be abandoned, or even simulate abandonments to lure the enemy into a mined area). Listen to the creativity of the masses, encouraging the generalization of useful ideas.

3. Make full use of the “third dimension” right from the start of the insurrection: roofs, floors, cellars, sewers, etc.
4. Hide perspectives (with screens stretched across streets, for example).
5. Make extensive use of snipers and concealed engineers to ensure that mines are detonated at the right moment. Adopt devices (caches, secret passages) enabling fighters to operate in areas the enemy believes he has secured.
6. Put pressure on the enemy, if necessary, by occupying a few buildings suitable for defense (made of reinforced concrete, with many stories and basements, with a clear firing range (parking lots, forecourts, esplanade, etc.) by groups of fighters determined to defend them to the end.

Points 5 and 6 are justified only as a complement to mobile groups, which remain at the heart of insurrectionary tactics.

Initiative is the key to insurrectionary tactics. No defensive system can survive if it limits itself to waiting for the enemy. New techniques (such as the ACSS reticle, which uses microphones to pick up the shock-wave emitted by a rifle bullet and instantly calculates the sniper's position) reinforce the importance of this principle.

16. Principles of Guerrilla Tactics

The struggle of the weak against the strong dictates the tactics of guerrilla warfare whose general principles (valid for both urban and rural guerrilla warfare) are the following:

1. Organize operations from the simplest to the most complex;
2. Conduct thorough intelligence and reconnaissance work (timing of the withdrawal route, etc.), including rehearsing part of the operation on site;
3. Select fighters wisely and allocate roles according to their skills;

4. Conceal one's forces until, and sometimes during, the operation;
5. Ensure that fighters are deprived of any object or document useful to enemy intelligence services should it fall into their hands;
6. Ensure that each fighter has a perfect knowledge of the terrain, the objective, his or her own unit, and the plan of action;
7. Concentrate forces, maneuver quickly and on time;
8. Exploit enemy errors and negligence;
9. Abandon (or postpone) an operation if it seems to have been (at least partially) discovered by the enemy;
10. Prioritize cunning and maneuver over firepower, while providing the means for the latter;
11. Adopt both the ambush and "coup de main" tactic⁵⁴⁷ as the preferred form of operation, and ideally combine the "coup de main" with an ambush (against units bringing reinforcements to the "coup de main" target);
12. Provide the methods and capabilities to achieve a surprise effect (in the choice of objective and/or in the choice of means—a target whose enemy is expecting a commando attack can, for example, be attacked by surprise using a mortar);
13. Develop "twofold effect missions"⁵⁴⁸ to enable new fighters to experiment with guerrilla action, without a possible failure on their part that would endanger the operation and its participants;
14. Ensure superiority of manpower and/or resources at the time and place of the operation by applying the principle of concentration of forces;
15. Withdraw immediately, rapidly, and without trace;

⁵⁴⁷ A "coup de main" is a swift, surprise attack aimed at quickly overwhelming an enemy position or achieving a strategic objective with minimal resistance.—Ed.

⁵⁴⁸ For new recruits, twofold effect missions refer to operations aimed at achieving two objectives at once: one immediate, like securing an area or capturing a target, and another long-term, like weakening the enemy's morale or supply lines. This dual approach helps ensure that each action on the ground also contributes to a bigger strategic advantage.

16. Conceal forces during the withdrawal in structures that can accommodate the wounded;
17. Cover tracks;
18. Disperse forces;
19. Have participants criticize and self-criticize each operation and pass on useful insights (mistakes to avoid, etc.) to all fighters.

17. Tactics and Techniques

Experience shows that learning *specific tactics* has often been neglected by revolutionary forces, unlike learning *specific techniques*. In the context of street fighting, for example, combatants will readily be taught how to handle and use weapons (lessons in dismantling, target shooting, etc.), but will tend to neglect the teaching of specific tactics, such as instruction in the tactical use of firearms (for example, the importance of advancing on the right-hand side of the street, when the enemy is obliged to place his defensive weapons on the left-hand side of the street—and to avoid exposure, a right-handed shooter will place himself on the left-hand side of a door or window corner).

It's impossible in one conference to detail all the particular tactical principles useful in revolutionary warfare. These techniques are listed and detailed in easily accessible military manuals.

18. Terrorism

Counterrevolutionary “anti-terrorist” rhetoric calls for a considerable amount of counter-propaganda, so much so that revolutionary forces sometimes lose sight of the fact that terrorism is a key element of revolutionary military policy, obsessed as they are by the desire not to appear to have a “terrorist profile.”

It is wishful thinking to expect the entire population to adhere to the revolutionary project. It must therefore be didactic in character; not only must it espouse the historical interests of the masses, but it must also be clearly perceived as such. However, given the damage that can be caused by traitors, infiltrators, provocateurs, whistle-blowers, etc., the revolutionary forces have to dispose of the equivalent of the “fear of the gendarme” that

benefits the regime. To this end, deliberately counterrevolutionary activities must be punished.

Terrorism, necessary as it may be, must be brought to its proper measure. When Jérôme Bonaparte, who received the Westphalian throne from his brother, was threatened by insurrection, he called on Napoleon for help. The latter wrote: "By God, brother, use your bayonets." Jérôme replied with a famous phrase: "Dear brother, you can do anything you like with bayonets, except sit on them." Indeed, terrorism [e.g., with bayonets] is never enough to achieve either counterrevolution or revolution.

It does, however, play an irreplaceable role in equalizing forces. It is one of the least heroic aspects of guerrilla warfare (it often means the execution of unarmed men), and is therefore quite often absent from texts that have (if only in part) a propaganda vocation. Yet the figures speak for themselves. In South Vietnam, village chiefs, appointed by the Saigon authorities, had a policing role (they had to report the arrival of foreigners in the village, etc.). Village chiefs who did not support the NLF were either shot or paralyzed by fear of being shot. To achieve this, a large-scale terrorist campaign was carried out: between April 1960 and April 1961, 4,000 village chiefs were shot.

Insofar as they embody popular and proletarian interests, revolutionary forces have far less need of terror than reactionary forces. And insofar as terror does not come without a political price (it is a weapon in the service of enemy propaganda), it must be measured, proportionate, and reduced to what is strictly necessary—the case of the NLF in '60-'61 is an extreme case, when it had to face the white terror of the Diem regime.

This issue has been little studied, but when this strict necessity is not met, the movement often suffers major penalties. A US counterinsurgency expert has suggested that one of the major reasons for the failure of the Red Brigades was their failure to use terrorism—to intimidate the petty executors of the counterrevolution.

19. The Art of Classic Warfare (or "Great War")

Added to all of the evidence above are all the particular principles of the art of classical warfare (war of movement, which is necessary, and to which war of position is possibly added) as revolutionary warfare develops

Clausewitz and the People's War

and assimilates the methods of classical warfare—but here we go beyond the scope of this conference.

Thank you for your attention.

Marighella and Us

Postscript to the publication “Praxis de la guérilla urbaine” (“Praxis of Urban Guerrilla War”) ⁵⁴⁹

*“When you’re only thinking about how not to be beaten,
that’s when you get beaten a lot”*

Lancelot Turpin de Crissé

1. A Manual Striking like Thunder

In the history of revolutionary military politics, Marighella’s manual is a milestone between Bolshevik insurrectionism and the Red Brigades’ strategy of armed struggle, the RAF’s conception of urban guerrilla warfare and, in general, revolutionary armed struggles in imperialist metropolises from the late ’60s to the late ’80s.

This development was initiated by Mao’s “Protracted People’s War,” a major break with Comintern insurrectionism that did not see itself as such. Mao saw it as nothing more than the application of the Leninist strategy to Chinese conditions: the essential point claimed was the unity, much advocated by Lenin, of the peasantry and the working class in the revolutionary struggle.

However, even before the victory of 1949, Maoist theses were spreading in the oppressed countries, starting with Vietnam. They gradually became an alternative model, if not universal, at least appropriate to the “tricontinental” countries.⁵⁵⁰

Mainly manifested by Giáp and his *People’s War People’s Army*, this Maoist strategy would in turn lay the groundwork for Guevarism.

The main lesson that Marighella drew from the Cuban experience was the ability of guerrilla warfare to bring about revolutionary conditions that had previously been considered prerequisites for any armed action. In Russia, China and, to a large extent, Indochina, revolutionary struggles had unfolded as the transformation of an imperialist war into a civil war, the former creating the conditions for a revolutionary crisis. For Marighella, the Cuban guerrilla movement brought to Marxism-Leninism

⁵⁴⁹ Carlos Marighella, *Praxis of Urban Guerrilla War* (Paris: Premiers matins de novembre, 2022).—Ed.

⁵⁵⁰ The term “tricontinent” refers to a geopolitical concept encompassing Asia, Africa, and South America as regions sharing a number of politico-historical realities, often linked to common experiences of decolonization and the struggle against imperialism.—Ed.

the possibility of defeating imperialism and reaction without waiting for a revolutionary crisis.

This guerrilla movement is driven by a core of determined, organized revolutionaries. It grows and develops in its urban and rural forms until it becomes a people's army capable of waging a war of movement, and in conjunction with mass movements (mainly workers' and students' movements), of overthrowing the regime.

This concept calls for a new unity between the political and the military. Military struggle does not supersede political activity, as those who too hastily described Guevarism as militarism have asserted; it becomes political activity and is thought of and practiced as political activity.

It's a misuse of the term "politics" to describe everything that isn't armed struggle—in other words, classic militant activity: leaflets, meetings, newspapers and so on. We've known since Clausewitz that every act of war is an act of politics, but with Guevara this political character no longer refers only to general aims, but also to immediate objectives.

The term "armed propaganda" is used by Marighella (but also by the Tupamaros and the ERP) in a restricted sense: for example, the distribution of leaflets by armed activists. Yet the Guevarist guerrillas and the urban guerrillas that followed, actually practiced armed propaganda in the broadest sense. An ambush has the military advantage of dissuading the enemy from patrolling guerrilla zones, recovering arms and ammunition, and training guerrillas, but it also—and sometimes above all—serves the political purpose of demonstrating the existence of a viable revolutionary alternative.

This is where Guevarism is creative in comparison to the Maoist "Protracted People's War," which, in terms of the unity of politics and the military, had gone no further than indissolubly interweaving the activities of the party and those of the red army, with the former directing the latter, and conceiving these activities in their unity. Moreover, while the Maoist school of thought was very harsh on Guevarism (or what it thought was Guevarism), within it there was a shift in the direction of Guevarist politico-military unity, as evidenced by the Peruvian conception of the "militarized communist party."

The Guevarist moment in revolutionary military thought was therefore not so much the strategy of the *foco* (theorized above all by its epigones, such as Debray), but rather this conception of politics as guerrilla warfare.

Guerrilla warfare, but rural guerrilla warfare. . .

This is when Marighella comes along, revealing the potential of urban guerrilla warfare.

Once again, this is a moment of overcoming that is both continuity and rupture.

For Marighella is certain about the main character of rural guerrilla warfare, which he sees as a mobile column rather than a *foco*—a small group of revolutionary fighters. In his view, only rural guerrilla warfare can unite the peasantry and the working class and disperse the regime's forces until they have the upper hand.

And yet the impact of Marighella's writings and organizational and military achievements, which gave him a historic role, was his defense of urban guerrilla warfare—whereas for Guevara the city was “the tomb of the guerrilla.”

Rural guerrilla warfare was never able to take root in Brazil. The ALN's main maquis in the Rio Araguaia region, established in 1971, was made up of just a few dozen people, three-quarters of whom came from the city. The counterinsurgency learned of the existence of this guerrilla even before it went into action, and was able to annihilate it with operations mobilizing up to 10,000 soldiers supported by hundreds of North American troops.

This inability to establish a rural guerrilla force is all the more striking given that the revolutionary forces prioritized it and that the urban guerrilla movement was undergoing spectacular development.

Marighella was unable to follow his plan.

When the ALN began its armed operations in 1967, they consisted of attacking banks and carrying out logistical operations to build up the means for rural guerrilla warfare. These actions were undeclared, so that the forces of repression were unaware of the existence of the revolutionary project until it was too late, until the guerrilla movement was well established.

This plan was exposed at the end of '68 when an activist confessed under torture, but that alone doesn't explain its failure, for at least three reasons:

1. First, because in war, at all times and for everyone involved, the first to die is the plan.
2. Second, this premature discovery had divergent effects on rural and urban guerrillas, with the former faltering and the latter experiencing strong growth.
3. Finally, the Brazilian experience is not isolated:

In Argentina, following the strategy defined by Mario Roberto Santucho, the ERP also used urban guerrillas to create rural guerrillas. It also only succeeded in establishing a guerrilla force of a few dozen guerrillas in the Argentinian Tucumán province, which was quickly wiped out. Here as well, the guerrilla's lack of foothold and impact contrast starkly with the ERP's huge urban guerrilla offensive in Greater Buenos Aires—arguably the largest urban guerrilla offensive ever carried out.

In Turkey, the THKP-C was based on the “Politico-Military Fighting Strategy” and “Combined Revolutionary Warfare” theorized by Mahir Çayan. Here too, the aim was to create an urban guerrilla force with the aim of forming a more decisive rural guerrilla force. The rural guerrilla movement of the THKP-C and that of the THKO in the Nurhak Mountains before it, failed to gain a foothold and was wiped out in Kızıldere.

Conversely, in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay, urban guerrilla warfare was so successful that it gave Marighella's manual international credence and a role beyond its intentions.

This manual, and the practices it crowned, opened up new perspectives for those in Europe who had broken with the old legalistic militancy. But the revolutionaries drove this break had to consider that Marighella's attachment to rural guerrilla warfare was specific to oppressed nations. Such guerrilla warfare was inconceivable in Germany, and even in Italy, despite the weight of the memory of the Partisan War.

Thus, while the full importance of Latin American urban guerrilla experiments was still largely unknown in Europe (such as the M-13 in Guatemala, or even urban guerrilla warfare in Cuba, whose role has always been downplayed), Marighella opened the way, almost in spite of himself, to revolutionary strategies based on urban guerrilla warfare.

2. Marighella Beyond Marighella

One might be surprised at the historical impact of this manual, considering its rather summary nature.

And yet, the proposal for urban guerrilla warfare was based on an imperative that needs to be persistently repeated: the role of revolutionaries is to make revolution.

This may be considered elementary, but it is, like Brecht's formula about socialism, "[a] simple thing that's hard to do."⁵⁵¹ This conception of guerrilla warfare offered European revolutionaries the historical means to reconcile themselves with this imperative.

This conception gave Europeans the means to reconcile with this imperative, because of the political mechanisms that communists have never sufficiently challenged is the process of dissociation between project and organization. Situations dictate forms of struggle and organization, the right choices prove their worth and become, in the case of ideas, models (more and more inadequate as the years go by), and in the case of organizations, structures (further and further removed from their *raison d'être*). Political organization becomes its own political rationale, no longer concerned with the type of organization required by the situation, but with how to develop its old organization in the new situation.

Marighella has been criticized for ignoring objective conditions.

But a quick examination of his texts shows a great concern for these conditions. All the effort put into setting up a rural guerrilla force stems from a precise analysis. We may disagree, but we cannot deny its existence.

Marighella did denounce, however, the habit of hiding behind the argument of "objective conditions not met" in order to shirk revolutionary duties.

Marighella has been criticized for neglecting class organization or the importance of the class party. Once again, an examination of the texts shows just how important rootedness in the working class was to him.

What Marighella denounced, on the other hand, was bureaucratic routine, the comfortable illusion that by having held a meeting, a discussion or even a political demonstration, one had "done politics." His

⁵⁵¹ Bertolt Brecht, "In Praise of Communism," in *The Mother*, 1931.

denunciation was based on over 30 years' experience in the Communist Party of Brazil, including more than 15 years on its Central Committee.

Marighella reminds us that, for revolutionaries, the criterion of truth is practice, struggle understood as the transformation of reality.

What matters is not conformity to models, but struggle.

What matters is not syllogistic imperatives like "what's good for the party is good for the revolution," it is the struggle.

What matters is not the search for moral purity or deconstruction, it is the struggle.

What matters is not the history of the struggle, it is the struggle.

It's not about meetings, readings or debates, it is struggle.

Or more precisely: the study of models and experiences, organizational choices, ideological remolding of revolutionaries themselves, readings and discussions, theoretical elaboration and so on, only make sense insofar as they serve the struggle and the transformation of reality.

The Marighellian imperative of struggle implies risk-taking.

And yes: Marighella paid for audacity.

But what is necessary is never foolhardy.

Some have tried to disqualify him, calling him at worst a provocateur, at best an adventurist—since anyone can kick a dead horse. But in so doing, they exposed themselves for what they were: political wreckers passively undergoing the events of their day, clinging to their old conceptual and organizational rafts, tossed about by the currents and tides, beaten before they have even had a chance to fight.

Hanoi Address

Speech delivered on January 24, 2011 in Hanoi, at the People's Army Military Library's conference on the influence of Clausewitz on Vietnamese military thought, at the initiative of General Hong Cu.

General, dear friends,

Anyone who takes an interest in war of liberation is quickly confronted with the extraordinary case of the Vietnamese resistance.

Its stunning victories, achieved against such an unfavorable balance of power, strike the imagination to such an extent that they remain for many in the West something beyond comprehension, almost impossible to accept.

And yet, these victories are easy to explain. Confronted with the overwhelming expeditionary forces and immense arsenals of the colonial and neo-colonial powers, the Vietnamese resistance was able to draw on its knowledge of the terrain and the support of the people, its intelligence at all levels and at all times, its courage and determination drawn from class consciousness, national consciousness and the consciousness of waging a just war.

Explaining these victories so simply does not diminish their scope or merit.

It brings them down to a human level, and only in this way can we measure the extent to which that generation of fighters/soldiers was exceptional in its intelligence and determination.

In a hotel, a young man, seeing the book I was holding in my hand, spoke proudly of General Giáp, while his comrade of about the same age, seemed uninterested.

I suppose that both cases are not uncommon—that part of the youth is aware of the heritage and attached to the values of socialism, while another part already considers the war of liberation an old moon. . .

It must seem, to the latter, that peacefully looking after one's work and children, and living in tranquility in a reunited country freed from foreign oppression, are as natural as rain and sunshine.

So of course, this lack of historical awareness is regrettable, but as you know, General, it's not gratitude or ingratitude that determines the value of a gift. And the very fact that these young people can afford the

Clausewitz and the People's War

luxury of lack of consciousness is a measure of the immense gift that your generation, the generation of freedom fighters, has given to its country and its youth.

Glossary

People and events are listed alphabetically, in the order in which they appear in the various texts of this publication and in the historical chart attached to the back cover of the book. This is sometimes arbitrary, regarding the use of the nobiliary particle or the choice of pseudonyms rather than surnames in the case of individuals, or the choice of full names rather than acronyms in the case of organizations. (All underlined words, terms, and names are listed as separate entries in the index.)

(n)PCI, [(nuovo) Partito comunista Italiano – (new) Italian Communist Party]: Political party founded clandestinely in Italy in 1999. Although the organization partly originates from the former Red Brigades and its antagonistic/illegalist tendencies, its activities are only legal and semi-legal (publications, demonstrations, trade union work, and electoral positioning).

1811 German Coast uprising (slave revolt): The revolt broke out on January 8, 1811, and was one of the first major slave uprisings in the US. Some 400–500 plantation slaves revolted near New Orleans, Louisiana. The movement sought to capture the city, but was betrayed, and the army and militia massacred the rebels. Their heads were placed on poles as a warning sign for those who wanted to follow in the rebels' footsteps.

1811 German Coast uprising: see New Orleans.

Abd al-Karīm al-Khaṭābī (“Abd el-Krim”), Emir (1882–1963): One of the leading figures in the fight against colonialism, he commanded a resistance movement against France and Spain during the Rif war. He won a major victory over Spanish forces at Annual. He presided over the independent Republic of the Rif (a region in Morocco) from 1921 to 1926. The large-scale intervention of the French army altered the situation and Abdelkrim surrendered to the French on May 26, 1926.

Abd al-Qadir ibn Muhyi al-Din (“Abdelkader”), Emir (1808–1883): Muslim scholar, who rallied the people of western Algeria and resisted the French conquest of Algeria for many years. He enacted a peace treaty that France eventually failed to respect. Abdelkader won further victories, but the French gained the upper hand by adopting a policy of scorched earth and massacres. Abd al-Qadir finally surrendered in 1847.

Abushiri Revolt: Insurrection by Arab and indigenous populations on the East African coast in 1888–1890, in present-day Tanzania, against German colonial rule. Great Britain helped Germany crush the revolt.

Afghan (or Anglo-Afghan) wars: These pitted the British Empire against the Emirate of Afghanistan. The first Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842) resulted in an Afghan victory, while the second allowed Britain to transform Afghanistan into a protectorate (1878–1880), with the third (1919) restoring Afghanistan's independence.

al-Mukhṭār, Omar (1858–1931): Leader of the Senusiyya (Senussi) resistance to Italian colonization of Libya from 1922 to 1931. He won several renowned victories but was eventually captured and hanged by the Italians.

Albania (Partisan War): In this conflict, Italian occupation forces (and local collaborators) combatted the National Liberation Army led by the Party of Labor (Communist). Guerrilla warfare began in early 1942 and gained momentum with the help of Yugoslav partisans. The NLA succeeded in liberating Albania without the intervention of Allied forces.

Alexander I (1777–1825): Czar of Russia from 1801 to 1825. He led Russia into a series of wars against Napoleon, with whom he made the brief peace of Tilsit. After the victory over Napoleon, he was one of the promoters of the Holy Alliance.

Alexander II (1818–1881): He became Czar of Russia in 1855 and carried out reforms necessitated by Russia's defeat in the Crimean War. He abolished serfdom but without granting peasants any land. He was killed on March 1, 1881 after six unsuccessful attempts, by a section of Narodnaya Volya ("People's Will") who threw a bomb under his horse-drawn carriage.

Alexander the Great (356 B.C.–323 B.C.): Crowned king as Alexander III of Macedonia, he extended his empire from Greece to India, taking over the entire Persian Empire, winning decisive victories while at a great numerical disadvantage.

Algeria (colonial war): The war began with the landing of the French army on June 14, 1830, and formally ended with the surrender of Emir Abd al-Qadir on December 23, 1847. However, this initial phase of French

colonization in Algeria continued for decades, due to the resistance of the population.

Algeria (War of Independence): The war began on November 1, 1954, with a series of armed actions by the Front de libération nationale (FLN), and ended with a ceasefire on March 19, 1962. This extremely brutal war (torture, execution of prisoners, internment of two million civilians in detention camps) cost the lives of more than 250,000 Algerians (including 140,000 armed combatants) and 35,000 French (including 25,000 soldiers). A referendum was held in which 99.72% of Algerians opted for independence, which was proclaimed on July 3, 1962.

Algiers (Battle of): In 1957, during the Algerian War, the French civilian authorities entrusted the soldiers of the 10th Parachute Division with the task of eliminating the FLN's (Front de libération nationale) clandestine networks in the city. The French military carried out this mission, using torture on a systematic basis and murdering between 1,000 and 3,000 people.

Allende Gossens, Salvador Guillermo (1908–1973): Socialist candidate in the Chilean presidential election of 1970, Allende was elected with the support of all major left-wing parties (“Popular Unity”). He sought to establish a peaceful, legalist “Chilean road to socialism,” including the adoption of new social policies, nationalization, and agrarian reform. Overthrown by General Pinochet’s CIA-backed coup d’état, Allende died defending the presidential palace with his arms drawn.

ALN (Ação Libertadora Nacional): The National Liberation Action was a Brazilian revolutionary organization founded by Carlos Marighella, and influenced by Guevarism, which led the guerrilla struggle, mainly in urban areas, against the military dictatorship from 1964 onwards. In 1969, the ALN and the MR-8 kidnapped the American ambassador in Brazil. The ALN was wiped out by repression in 1974.

American Civil War: Between 1861 and 1865, the federal government of the United States of America, comprising the northern states, fought the Confederate States of America, made up of the eleven southern states that had seceded. The result was the victory of the capitalist, industrial North over the agricultural, slave-owning South.

American Indian wars: From 1778–1890, European settlers, then the US, fought and massacred the Native American peoples. The most important were the Seminole Wars (1817–1818, 1835–1854, 1835–1858), the Dakota War of 1862, the Northern Plains Indian Wars (from 1865 to 1871), the Black Hills War (1876), and the Cheyenne War (1878). As a result, the Native American peoples were defeated and dispossessed.

Amol (uprising): On January 25, 1982, the Maoist guerrillas of the Iranian UCI(S), who had gathered their forces in the forests around Amol, staged an uprising in the town. The liberation of Amol was intended to trigger a revolution against the Islamic Republican regime, but the insurrection was isolated and the town was retaken by the regime.

Anarchist attacks in France: The Propaganda of the deed was a strategy of attacks and assassinations that reached its peak in France between 1892 and 1894. A group organized by Ravachol blew up magistrates' homes in 1892; Henry Vaillant avenged Ravachol's execution by throwing a bomb into the Chamber of Deputies in 1893; Emile Henry's bombs killed four policemen and wounded several middle-class citizens in 1894; and Caserio fatally stabbed President Carnot the same year. Repression was fierce and a series of laws (known as the lois scélérates ["villainous laws"]) prohibited anarchist propaganda in any form.

ANC (African National Congress): South African political organization founded in 1912 to defend the interests of the black majority against the white minority. It began to fight the apartheid regime peacefully, through campaigns of civil disobedience, with the help of the banned and clandestinely operating Communist Party, but was brutally repressed and declared illegal in 1960. The ANC began armed resistance in December 1961, with the founding of Umkhonto we Sizwe. The ANC was legalized on February 2, 1990 and apartheid was abolished in June 1991. The ANC subsequently became the country's leading political party.

Ancien Régime: Period in French history corresponding to the reign of the Bourbon dynasty, from Henri IV's accession to the throne in 1589 to the French Revolution in 1789.

Anghiari (Battle of): The second and best-known battle of Anghiari, Italy took place on June 29, 1440, when the Florentines defeated the Milanese. The "decisive" battle is said to have cost the lives of just sixty of the 11,000

soldiers involved. Machiavelli spoke of just two deaths, barely exaggerating the mercenary forces' lack of fighting spirit, motivated solely by their pay.

Annual (Battle of): On July 21, 1921, the Spanish colonial army clashed with Abd el-Krim's Riffian insurgents in Morocco. The Riffian victory made it an important symbol of the anti-colonial struggle.

Anschluss: Nazi Germany's annexation of Austria through a military invasion on March 12, 1938, followed by a plebiscite in which 99% of the votes were in favor of annexation.

Anti-Japanese United Front: Also known as the Second Chinese United Front. It refers to the truce between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China, from 1937–1945, in the civil war that they waged, to unite in the common struggle against the Japanese invaders.

Anti-Japanese war: see Sino-Japanese war.

Antonovschina ("Antonov's Mutiny"): see Tambov Rebellion.

Arab Revolt: Uprising led by the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali, to liberate the Arabian Peninsula occupied by the Ottoman Empire, and create a unified Arab state from Syria to Yemen. The British-backed revolt, in which T. E. Lawrence participated, took place during the First World War, between 1916 and 1918, and triumphed over the Ottomans. However, the British betrayed their promises and shared the Near and Middle East with the French.

Arafat, Yasser (1929–2004): Palestinian nationalist leader, founder of Fatah (which initiated armed resistance against Zionist colonization), and later head of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). He signed the Oslo Accords in 1993 and became the first president of the new Palestinian Authority (PA).

Ardennes Offensive: Surprise attack launched on December 16, 1944 in the Belgian Ardennes by the German army, aimed at recapturing the port of Antwerp. The offensive was halted by American forces, who drove the Germans back beyond their starting line at the end of January 1945. This was Nazi Germany's last attempt to regain the initiative in the West.

Aster, Ernst Ludwig von (1789–1854): German military engineer who contributed to the advancement of fortification science and marked a new

era in this field. In particular, he worked on modernizing the fortifications of the city of Mainz.

Asturias (Miners' strike): On October 6, 1934, during the Second Spanish Republic, the army was sent to suppress a general strike in the Asturias mining region. The strike became insurrectionary, and communist, socialist, and anarchist workers proclaimed the Asturian Workers' and Peasants' Republic, while forming a Red Army. Isolated, the uprising was harshly repressed by the colonial army brought back from Morocco.

Ataman: Elected chief with political and military functions among the Cossacks.

Attack on Alexander II, Carrero Blanco, Plehve: See Alexander II, Carrero Blanco, Plehve.

Auerstaedt (Battle of): The 3rd Corps of Napoleon's Grand Army fought off the Prussian army on October 14, 1806 at Auerstaedt (Thuringia) in the war of the Fourth Coalition. Marshal Davout crushed the Prussian army of King Frederick William III. This battle took place at the same time as the Battle of Jena.

Austerlitz (Battle of): Napoleon's Grand Army faced off against the Austrian and Russian armies on December 2, 1805, in southern Moravia. Napoleon's total and brilliant victory put an end to the war of the Third Coalition.

Austria (Revolution of 1848): The Revolution consisted of a series of uprisings in Vienna and other territories of the Empire (Bohemia, Hungary, Milan), aimed at establishing political and national liberties. A constituent assembly was set up in Vienna, but the Austrian monarchical armies took over the city and crushed these revolutions, one after the other. Episode of the "Springtime of Nations."

Austro-Prussian War: In 1866, the Austrian Empire and its allies in the German Confederation were engaged in a war with the Kingdom of Prussia, allied to the Kingdom of Italy. The Austrian defeat at Königgrätz (or Sadowa) gave Prussia the leading role in the process of German unification.

Autumn Harvest Uprising: Following the Kuomintang's betrayal of their alliance with the CPC at the time of the Shanghai Massacre, the Hunan

communists, led by Mao Zedong, organized a vast uprising in the countryside from September 9 onwards. The uprising was crushed by Kuomintang forces. Mao's forces were forced to retreat to the Jinggang mountains (Jinggangshan), where they were joined by those who had led the Nanchang Uprising.

Baader, Andreas (1943–1977): A German revolutionary imprisoned for his actions against the Vietnam War, Baader's breakout was the founding action of the Red Army Faction (RAF). After several RAF operations, he was arrested again. After several attempts to free him and his comrades, they were murdered in prison, their deaths made to look like suicides.

Bagration, Pyotr Ivanovich (1765–1812): Russian general who played an important role in the wars against Napoleon. He fought at Austerlitz, Eylau, and Friedland and was killed at the Battle of Borodino.

Bahník, Wilhelm (1896–1938): German Communist and military leader of the KPD, he was imprisoned in 1927 and later amnestied. He underwent politico-military training in Moscow. An underground KPD leader in Berlin from 1933 to 1935, Bahník left Germany for the USSR, then Spain, where he commanded the Edgar André battalion in the 11th International Brigade. To save his fellow soldiers from captivity, who had carried him for three days through the mountains of Aragon, Wilhelm Bahník committed suicide when they stopped to rest.

Baker, Newton D. (1871–1937): American politician and mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, Baker served as Secretary of War from 1916 to 1921, overseeing the US war effort during the First World War.

Bakunin, Mikhail (1814–1876): Russian anarchist philosopher and revolutionary, Bakunin was the theoretician of libertarian socialism. He defended the idea of an egalitarian, cooperative society, through the abolition of the state and private ownership of the means of production, and through political and economic self-management. Opposed to political action, he clashed with Marx in the 1st International until he was expelled.

Balabanov, Angelica (1878–1965): A Russian-born Italian socialist who took part in the Zimmerwald conference in 1915, where she supported the pacifist line. She played an important role in the international socialist movement and was one of the founders of the Communist International.

Balkan Wars: In 1912, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, and Montenegro joined forces to fight the Ottoman Empire in the First Balkan War. The Ottoman Empire was defeated, and on May 30, 1913, Albania gained independence, while Macedonia was divided between the victorious powers. Bulgaria contested this division, and launched the Second Balkan War against Serbia, Greece, Montenegro, and Romania. Ultimately, Bulgaria suffered defeat.

Bao Ðai (1913–1997): As the last emperor of Vietnam, Bao Ðai was appointed head of the puppet state of Vietnam in 1949 by the French colonial authorities. He died in exile in Paris.

Barbès, Armand (1809–1870): After taking part in the July Revolution, Barbès was imprisoned in 1834 as a member of the Société des Droits de l'Homme (Society of the Rights of Men), in 1836 as a member of the Société des familles (Society of Families), and in 1838 as a member of the Société des saisons (Society of Seasons) after an attempt to overthrow the July Monarchy. Freed by the 1848 Revolution, he was imprisoned by the provisional government until 1854. He spent the rest of his life in voluntary exile.

Barclay de Tolly, Michel (1761–1818): Russian marshal and statesman, he distinguished himself during the Russo-Turkish war of 1787–1792, the Russo-Swedish war of 1788–1790, and the suppression of the Polish insurrection of 1794. He was minister of war and supreme commander of the Russian armies from 1810 to September 1812, suffering defeat at Austerlitz and a partial victory at Eylau.

Barue uprising: In 1917, as a result of the First World War, the Portuguese colonial authorities increased recruitment among local populations in Mozambique, leading to discontent and revolt among the Shona and other peoples, led by their leader Makombe Hanga.

Basmachi Movement: Uprising of the Muslim peoples of Central Asia, particularly Turks, against the colonial domination of the Russian Empire, and later against the Soviet regime, between 1916 and the early 1920s.

Bavaria: On April 7, 1919, a communist revolution broke out in Bavaria and the Soviet Republic was proclaimed. Counter-revolutionary forces intervened and regained control of Bavaria in May 1919.

Baylen (Battle of): On July 19–22, 1808, Napoleon's army confronted the Spanish army as part of Andalusia's uprising against the French invaders. It was a total victory for the Spanish.

Bayo y Giroud, Alberto (1912–1992): A member of the Spanish Communist Party, he was a colonel in the Republican army during the civil war. Defeat forced him into exile in Mexico, where he taught guerrilla warfare to Fidel Castro and Che Guevara.

Beaufre, André (1902–1975): French general and military theoretician. Beaufre fought in the Second World War as a member of the French Resistance, after which he participated in the Indochina and Algerian wars, as well as the Suez Expedition. As NATO chief of staff, he was one of the leading theorists behind nuclear deterrence. He also wrote an influential *Introduction to Strategy* (1963).

Bebel, August (1840–1913): German social-democratic leader and theorist. He is best known for his book *Woman and Socialism*, in which he defends gender equality. He defended a centrist position in the SPD, between the revolutionary left (Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht) and bourgeois reformists (Eduard Bernstein).

Belgium (Revolution of 1830): Triggered by an insurrection in Brussels on August 25, the democratic revolt against the Dutch king led to Belgium's independence on October 4, 1830 and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy.

Belisarius, Flavius Belisarius, alias (circa 500–565): General of the Eastern Roman Empire, Belisarius fought under the reign of Justinian and won numerous victories against the Sassanids in Turkey, the Vandals in North Africa, and the Goths and Ostrogoths in Italy.

Benevento Uprising: On April 5, 1877, some 30 anarchists, including Errico Malatesta, attempted to provoke a mass revolt among the peasants of the Italian province of Benevento. Royal forces quickly crushed the attempted rebellion.

Bengochea, Angel (1926–1964): Argentinian Trotskyist leader arrested on several occasions for his political activity. He embraced the theses of the Cuban revolution and underwent military training there in 1962, where he met Guevara. Co-author of *Guerra de guerrillas*, published in 1963, he

worked on building a guerrilla movement in Argentina but died in Buenos Aires in an accidental explosion of a stockpile of explosives.

Berenhorst, Georg Heinrich von (1753–1813): Military and war theoretician. He served Prussia in the Seven Years' War, and was aide-de-camp to Frederick II. His *Reflections on the Art of War*, published from 1796 to 1799, influenced military thought of the time.

Berezina (Battle of the): Rearguard battle during the Russian Campaign between the remnants of Napoleon's retreating Grande Armée and the Russian armies. The battle took place from November 26 to 29, 1812 and saved the French from total annihilation.

Bernard, Henri, colonel (1900–1987): Belgian military officer. Bernard took part in the resistance in Brussels, then was exfiltrated to London, where he assisted the Belgian government in exile. He fought in Germany in 1945, then taught at the Belgian Royal Military School. He is the author of several works on military history and theory.

Bernhardi, Friedrich von (1849–1930): German soldier and war theoretician. In 1911, he published a polemical work entitled *Germany and the Next War*, which advocated preventive war against France. He commanded an army corps during the First World War.

Berthier, Louis-Alexandre (1753–1815): Berthier was a French officer who took part in the American War of Independence. He rallied behind the French Revolution, then supported Bonaparte, with whom he fought in the Italian and Egyptian campaigns. After becoming minister of war and marshal, he was appointed chief of staff of the Grande Armée. He sided with Louis XVIII after the fall of Napoleon.

Bismarck, Otto von (1815–1898): Minister-president of the Kingdom of Prussia from 1862 to 1890 and chancellor of the North German Confederation from 1867 to 1871. He played a decisive role in German unification under Prussian aegis, becoming the first chancellor of the new German Empire in 1871.

Black Hills War (also known as The Great Sioux War of 1876): Between 1876 and 1877, the Lakota (Sioux) and their Cheyenne allies fought against the US Army. After some initial successes, such as at Little Big-horn, the Native Americans were defeated and driven off their land.

Black Hundred: Extreme right-wing anti-Semitic, nationalist, and monarchist movement that emerged in the Russian Empire during the 1905 Revolution. A proponent of white terror, it murdered many worker and democratic activists, while also organizing pogroms. Its name was sometimes used in Russia to designate all ultra-reactionary forces.

Black Liberation Army (BLA): Afro-American Marxist revolutionary guerrilla organization that grew out of the Black Panthers. Eight of its members were shot dead by the police (and those arrested were tortured). BLA activists killed a dozen police officers on various occasions (bombings, hold-ups, resistance to arrests). The BLA suffered two waves of repression, in 1973 and 1981–1983, the latter being fatal.

Black Panther Party: Maoist-inspired revolutionary Afro-American liberation movement founded in the US on October 15, 1966. Promoting self-organization and self-defense, it developed programs such as breakfast for poor schoolchildren. It grew rapidly, with women accounting for 60% of its several thousand members. Targeted by an intensive FBI secret war, the movement eventually splintered. Several of its leaders were murdered by the police. The Black Liberation Army emerged from it.

Black Repartition: Clandestine Russian revolutionary organization belonging to Narodnism, formed in 1879 out of the Land and Liberty organization. It focused on propaganda work in the countryside (its name is the peasants' expression for an equal division of land) and was liquidated by repression around 1880–1881. In 1883, several of its members, including Georgi Plekhanov, formed the Emancipation of Labour group, which pioneered Marxism in Russia.

Blair Mountain (Battle of): Between late August and early September 1921, in Virginia (US), a march of some 10,000 miners encountered 3,000 police officers and private policemen recruited by the colliery operators. The battle left around a hundred miners and thirty strikebreakers dead. A plane was even used to bomb the strikers. The battle was part of the employers' resistance to any attempt at unionization.

Blanqui, Auguste (1805–1881): French socialist revolutionary and theorist of armed insurrection, who made several attempts to overthrow the government. Member of several secret societies, such as the Société des

Saisons (Society of Seasons), created in preparation for insurrection. He spent 33 years in prison and 10 years under house arrest.

Blanquism: Strategic doctrine forged by Auguste Blanqui to ensure the success of a proletarian revolution after the failures of 1830 and 1848. It involved underground preparation of the insurrection by a clandestine organization. The latter prepared an insurrectionary staff, a plan of the different sites to be attacked (armories, town halls, etc.) and to be defended (barricades), and, above all, it chose the moment for insurrection when the popular masses seemed subjectively ready to rise up. The term “Blanquist” was used polemically to designate any concept of revolution deemed to be putschist.

Blitzkrieg (“lightning war”): Offensive military operational method aimed at rapidly achieving a decisive victory with the deep penetration of enemy lines by armored and motorized forces, concentrated and supported by the air force. Its first application was in 1939 during the Polish campaign.

Bloody Week: see Paris Commune.

Blücher, Gebhard Leberecht von (1742–1819): Prussian field marshal who began his career during the Seven Years' War and who distinguished himself during the Napoleonic Wars, notably at the retreat from Jena and Auerstaedt and the Battle of Waterloo.

Blücher, Vassili (1889–1938): An officer in the First World War, Blücher joined the Bolshevik Party and took part in the civil war at the head of the 51st division of the Red Army. He served as a military advisor in China from 1924 to 1927 and became USSR Marshal in 1935 and commander of Soviet forces in the Far East. He was arrested and shot during the purges.

Boer War: This conflict saw the British fight the two Boer republics (created by the descendants of the first settlers, mainly Dutch, who arrived in South Africa in the 17th and 18th centuries): the Orange Free State and the South African Republic of Transvaal. The first war lasted from December 16, 1880 to March 23, 1881, the second from October 11, 1899 to May 31, 1902. The victory was a difficult one for the British, who incorporated these territories into their empire.

BÖG (Birleşik Özgürlük Güçleri – The United Freedom Forces): The BÖG is the politico-military alliance of the Marksist Leninist Silahlı Propaganda Birliği – Marxist-Leninist Armed Propaganda Unit (MLSPB), the anarchist group Social Insurrection, and the Revolutionary Communist Party (DKP). They were founded in December 2014 in Rojava.

Bogdanov, Alexander (1873–1928): Bolshevik activist who took part in the 1905 revolution. His philosophical theses were sharply criticized by Lenin in 1911. Bogdanov was a member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party leadership. In 1918, he founded the Soviet cultural movement “Proletkult.”

Bolshevik (“Majority”): Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) current formed in November 1903, supporting the idea of a party of revolutionaries, whereas the Mensheviks (“Minority”) advocated a party open to the broad masses. Disagreements multiplied, and in January 1912, the Bolshevik Party constituted itself as the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolshevik).

Bonaparte, Jérôme (1784–1860): As Napoleon’s younger brother, he was placed on the Westphalian throne by the latter in 1807. He enjoyed military success during the Napoleonic Wars, but was forced to abdicate in 1813 after the defeat of the Grande Armée in Russia.

Bonaparte, Napoleon: see Napoleon I.

Bordiga, Amadeo (1889–1970): Founder of the Italian Communist Party, Bordiga was its leader until 1923, when he was removed for opposing the Comintern line. He was expelled from the Italian Communist Party in 1930 for opposing the anti-fascist front. He stopped his political activity for several years. In 1952, Bordiga founded the International Communist Party.

Bordigism: Doctrine forged by Amadeo Bordiga, which excludes as “bourgeois” anything not directly related to workers’ struggles, the communist party, and the dictatorship of the proletariat (such as anti-fascism or national liberation). The Bordigists, who considered the USSR to be a state capitalist system, organized themselves into an International Communist Party before splitting into various tendencies.

Borgia, Cesare (1475–1507): Italian Renaissance politician and military leader. Son of Pope Alexander VI, he was renowned as a cruel and unscrupulous manipulator. Machiavelli quotes him in *The Prince*. He was a brilliant military commander during the Italian Wars and was in charge of the Papal States' military forces.

Borodin, Mikhail Markovich (1884–1951): Bolshevik Party executive who played a key role in Soviet policy in China. A Comintern political advisor to the Sun Yat-sen government in Guangzhou [Canton], Borodin was recalled to the USSR after the Shanghai Massacre.

Borodino (Battle of): Also known in France as the Battle of the Moskova River, between Napoleon's Grande Armée and the Russian army on September 7, 1812, some 125 kilometers (75 miles) from Moscow. It was the biggest and deadliest battle of the Russian Campaign (250,000 soldiers, 70,000 dead). Although it opened the road to Moscow for Napoleon, Kutuzov weakened the French army and preserved the Russian forces.

Bouthoul, Gaston (1896–1980): Bouthoul was a French sociologist who developed polemology, a discipline that studies conflicts between human societies. His approach considered war a complex social phenomenon, the result of multiple factors, and sought to identify ways of preventing or limiting conflict.

Boxer Rebellion: The “League of Harmony and Justice,” organized by the secret Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists, rose up in China between 1899–1901. Opposed to reform, Western imperialism and the feudal power of the Qing dynasty, the Boxers laid siege to foreign legations in Beijing, but were crushed by imperialist expeditionary forces.

Boyen, Hermann von (1771–1848): Prussian general, wounded at Auerstaedt, who played a key role in reforming the Prussian army and state after the Peace of Tilsit, working alongside Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. Minister of war after the victory over Napoleon.

Braun, Otto (1900–1974): KPD leader at the time of the Bavarian Soviet Republic in 1921, he was one of the KPD's main military leaders. Imprisoned from 1926 to 1928, Braun escaped to Moscow, where he attended the Frunze Military Academy. He held positions of responsibility in the Soviet Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) and was sent as a military advisor to the Chinese Communist Party. He was the only foreigner to complete the

Long March. A leading member of the Free Germany Committee, he held various positions in the GDR (German Democratic Republic) and wrote a well-known study on the influence of Clausewitz on Lenin.

Brecht, Bertholt (1898–1956): German writer and playwright, his epic theater is characterized by a distancing of the audience from the dramatic action in order to stimulate critical reflection. As a member of the KPD, Brecht had to leave Germany during the Nazi period and lived in exile in Europe and the US, before accepting cultural responsibilities in the GDR (German Democratic Republic).

Brest-Litovsk (Treaty of): signed on March 3, 1918, between the governments of the Central Powers, led by the German Empire, and Soviet Russia, which had to cede vast territories, ending the fighting on the Eastern Front of the First World War.

Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand von (1735–1806): German duke and general, who led the Austro-Prussian forces in the first coalition against revolutionary France. He was defeated in 1792 at the battle of Valmy.

Bubnov, Andrei Sergeyevich (1883–1938): Bolshevik revolutionary arrested fifteen times by the Czarist police, he was a member of the Military Revolutionary Committee in 1917, then head of the Red Army's political department, and finally People's Commissar for Education. Bubnov was arrested and executed during the purges.

Budapest (Uprising): On October 23, 1956, Budapest and other towns in Hungary rose up in support of the reformist Prime Minister Imre Nagy, a communist party member who came to power during the period of de-Stalinization. The Budapest uprising was crushed between November 4 and 11 by the Soviet army, and Imre Nagy was executed.

Budyonny, Semyon (1885–1973): A non-commissioned officer in the First World War, Budyonny was one of the founders of the Red Army and later served as marshal of the Soviet Union. He played an important role in the Russian Civil War as commander of the 1st Cavalry Army. He also took part in the Polish-Soviet War and the Second World War.

Bukharin, Nikolai Ivanovich (1888–1938): Revolutionary at the age of 16 and a member of the Bolshevik Party at 18, Bukharin was arrested,

imprisoned, and exiled several times, becoming a party leader and statesman who helped define the economic policy of the USSR. He opposed Lenin and Trotsky by advocating an alliance with the property-owning peasantry (the “kulaks”). He was arrested, tried, and executed during the purges.

Bulgaria (Uprising): see September Uprising.

Bulgarian Uprising (1923): Launched by the Bulgarian Communist Party on September 23, 1923, following the fascist coup d'état of June 9. Led by the Comintern, but supported by agrarians and anarchists, it was a failure.

Bülow, Dietrich Heinrich von (1757–1807): Prussian soldier and war philosopher. Enlisted in the Prussian army at the age of fifteen, he traveled and wrote a dozen works, including *The Spirit of the Modern System of War*, published in 1799 and criticized by Clausewitz. His famous *Der Feldzug 1805* (“The Campaign of 1805”) criticized the government's operations and led to his imprisonment.

Bureau, Jean and Gaspard: French brothers, born in 1711 and 1714 in Lyon respectively. They are considered the founders of French artillery, having developed several innovations in weaponry, notably the production of lighter, more maneuverable cannons. They died in 1786 and 1785.

Burma (Campaign): Phase of the Second World War, which took place from January 1942 to July 1945 on the territory of Myanmar (Burma), then a British colony. Allied forces opposed those of Japan and Thailand. After an offensive that drove the Japanese to the borders of India, where they were held in check in March 1944, the Allies regained the initiative.

Cabral, Amílcar (1924–1973): African political leader and anti-imperialist theoretician, founder of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde. He initiated and led a victorious war for independence against Portuguese colonialism.

Caemmerer, Rudolf von (1869–1945): German officer and military thinker, he took part in the Prussian-Austrian War in 1866 and the Franco-German War in 1870–1871. His major work, *The Development of Strategic Science During the 19th Century*, was widely acclaimed. He was also a disciple of Clausewitz and became the latter's biographer.

Caesar, Julius (100 BC–44 BC): Roman general and politician, famous for his military conquests, most famously in Gaul and Britain. His accounts of his campaigns are classics of military literature. Caesar was murdered by republicans who suspected he was trying to restore the monarchy for his own benefit.

Can Vong Movement: a Vietnamese resistance movement to the French occupation of Tonkin. It lasted from 1885–1895 and was launched by the young emperor Hàm Nghi (Can Vong means “assist the king”), but continued long after he was exiled by the French.

Canton [Guangzhou] (Commune): Following the Kuomintang’s withdrawal from the alliance with the Communists at the time of the Shanghai Massacre, the CPC organized an uprising in Guangzhou [Canton] on December 10, 1927. The uprising succeeded and the “Canton Commune” was established. But the uprising (like the one in Nanchang) was isolated, and Kuomintang forces retook the city after four days, massacring thousands of workers and Communists.

Carbonarism: Secret society active in Italy, France, Portugal, and Spain in the early and mid-19th century. It contributed in particular to the process of Italian unification. Its name derives from the initiation rites of charcoal-producing foresters. The carbonarist secret societies were behind the first great wave of struggles against the ruling order established in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna, and inspired the uprisings in Naples (1820) and Piedmont (1821). In 1818, the movement spread to France, where it organized several plots against the reactionary Restoration regime. The Young Italy movement of Mazzini grew out of carbonarist circles.

Carnot, Lazare (1753–1823): French scientist and politician. A member of the Comité de salut public in 1793–1794, his role in the success of the armies of the French Revolution earned him the nickname “Organizer of Victory.” He held a number of political positions under Bonaparte but was forced into exile during the Restoration.

Carrero Blanco, Luis (1903–1973): Monarchist officer who took part in the Rif War and the Spanish Civil War. A key figure in Franco’s regime, Carrero Blanco was an admiral-general and Franco’s designated successor. He was killed on December 20, 1973, by an ETA commando who blew up

his armored car in the heart of Madrid, accomplished by digging a tunnel under a street and filling it with explosives.

Carrizo, Juan Manuel (1940–1976): Argentinian revolutionary and founding member and leader of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores – Workers' Revolutionary Party (PRT) and Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP), he received military training in Cuba in 1962. He was arrested but released when the ERP attacked his prison. He became ERP chief of staff and led several major guerrilla operations. He was arrested on May 20, 1976 in Buenos Aires and was among the 30,000 people who disappeared during the repression.

Caserio, Sante Geronimo (1873–1894): Bakery shop worker, condemned for his anarchist activism in Italy, Caserio was forced into exile. In 1894, he stabbed French president Sadi Carnot to death in Lyon. He was sentenced to death and guillotined.

Caste War of Yucatán: In July 1847, Mayan populations in the south-east of the Yucatán peninsula (Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize) rose up against the descendants of Spanish colonists, mestizos, and Native Americans who had adopted the European way of life, in other words, groups that held economic and political power. After a favorable period for the insurgents, the rebellion was finally crushed in 1901. Although the course of events favored the Mayan rebels until the mid-1880s, it then shifted in favor of the Mexican government, which eventually put down the rebellion.

Castro, Fidel (1926–2016): Cuban revolutionary and statesman. He was one of the main leaders of the Cuban revolution that overthrew the dictatorial regime of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. He was initially a patriotic democrat and anti-imperialist before becoming a Marxist-Leninist, serving as first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba from the time of its re-foundation in 1965.

Caucasus Wars: Series of long, hard-fought military campaigns waged by the Russian Empire from 1817 to 1864, culminating in the annexation of Ciscaucasia. The main leader of the resistance was Imam Shamil. The result was the near genocide of the Chechens and a mass exodus of Muslim peoples to the Ottoman Empire.

Çayan, Mahir (1946–1972): Turkish revolutionary activist and Marxist-Leninist influenced by Guevarism, he was one of the founders of the

People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (THKP-C). He was shot dead by the Turkish army while entrenched with other guerrillas in the village of Kızıldere.

Ceballos, Miguel Ángel, known as “Niky” (1939–1976): Argentinian revolutionary and PRT-ERP cadre. He directed the PRT-ERP's first military school in Icho Cruz, where military cadres were trained in urban guerrilla warfare, studying tactics, weaponry, and explosives. He was arrested and murdered by the military on October 11, 1976 in a failed escape attempt with five other PRT-ERP militants.

Chamfort, Sébastien-Roch Nicolas de (1741–1794): French writer, moralist, and playwright. Known for his satirical wit and humor, he wrote the *Maximes et Pensées*. Active in the intellectual and political circles of the Ancien Régime, he played a role during the French Revolution before being arrested and guillotined under the Jacobin “Terror.”

Chapayev, Vasily Ivanovich (1887–1919): Decorated non-commissioned officer during the First World War, Chapayev rallied the Bolsheviks and was elected regimental commander by a vote among the soldiers. He later commanded a division during the Civil War, before losing his life in the conflict. He is the central character of Furmanov's novel of the same name, which was later made into a film in 1934, making him a symbol of revolutionary heroism.

Charles VII, (1403–1461): King of France (Valois dynasty) from 1422 to 1461. Contested by the Burgundians and the English, Charles put an end to the civil war between Armagnacs and Burgundians, reformed the royal army and focused on the war against the English, bringing the Hundred Years' War to a victorious close.

Cheka (“All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage”): Decentralized political police force created in Soviet Russia on December 20, 1917. It was replaced by the centralized GPU when the USSR was created in 1922.

Chiang Kai-shek: (1887–1975): Chinese military and statesman. Leader of the right wing of the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party), with links to bankers and large landowners, he became the nationalists' leader on the death of Sun Yat-sen. Head of state from 1927 to 1949, Chiang retreated to Taiwan in 1949 after the communist victory in the civil war.

Chile (resistance to the fascist coup): Despite the massive repression (18,000 political activists locked up at tortured concentration camps by the end of 1973), resistance continued in the form of economic sabotage and guerrilla actions, mainly by Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR-Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria) militants. On August 30, 1983, MIR members killed the military governor of Santiago. Parallel to these urban military operations, the MIR organized a guerrilla war in the Cordillera de Neltume in southern Chile. It was not until 1983 that the Communist Party of Chile created its own clandestine armed organization, the FPMR (Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez).

Chimurenga: The first Chimurenga was of the long resistance movement waged by the Northern Ndembele and Shona peoples against British colonization of what is now Zimbabwe in the 1890s. It was finally crushed in 1896. The struggle against the white segregationist regime in Rhodesia in the 1980s was known as the “second Chimurenga.”

Chindits: Nickname given to General Wingate's 3,000 British commandos who, during the Burma campaign, infiltrated deep into the jungle behind Japanese lines to cut the north-south railroad line.

Chinese Civil War: Between 1927 and 1949, this war was fought between the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Communist Party of China (CPC). Triggered by the KMT's betrayal of its alliance with the CPC and perpetrating the Shanghai massacre, the fighting was interrupted by the establishment of the anti-Japanese united front during the Second Sino-Japanese War, after which the civil war broke out again. It ended in 1949, with the proclamation of the People's Republic of China by the CPC, as the KMT forces fled to Taiwan.

Chinh, Trùng (1907–1988): Vietnamese revolutionary, general secretary of the Indochinese Communist Party, Chinh played an active role in the armed resistance against French occupation and American imperialism in Vietnam.

Cluseret, Gustave Paul (1823–1900): A French soldier, Cluseret took part in several military conflicts in Europe and America, before joining the Paris Commune in 1871. During the Commune, he was appointed general and commanded the armed forces. He wrote “The Advice of a

General of the Commune,” which Lenin translated and it was published in *Vperyod*, No. 11, March 23 (10), 1905.

Coalition: Alliance of various European powers brought together to oppose Revolutionary France and subsequently Napoleon’s realm. In all, there were six of them: see First Coalition, Second Coalition, etc.

Cogny, Paul Ély (1915–2012): French soldier who took part in the Second World War and the First Indochina War. He commanded French forces in Tonkin during the battle of Dien Bien Phu. He ended his career commanding French forces in Central Africa.

Comintern: The Communist International, or Third International, was founded on March 2, 1919 in Moscow as a result of the break with the Second International, following the latter’s betrayal in the First World War. Inspired by Leninism and the October Revolution, the Comintern was dissolved in 1943, when the USSR found itself allied with the great Western powers in the Second World War.

Communist League (Bund der Kommunisten): Originally influenced by utopian socialism and founded as the “League of the Just” in 1836 by German workers in Paris, it became the Communist League in 1847 following the accession and decisive influence of Marx and Engels. In February 1848, the League published the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. The Communist League was dissolved in 1852.

Communist Party of Brazil (CPB): founded on March 25, 1922, and banned several times, the party grew rapidly until the Intentona comunista, the Brazilian communist uprising of 1935. However, the CPB suffered severe repression. It played a key role in the reformist government of 1961–1964, overthrown by the military coup of 1964, and was again persecuted. Not to be confused with the Brazilian Communist Party (1961), its first pro-Cuban, then pro-Chinese split.

Communist Party of China (CPC): The CPC was founded on July 23, 1921 in Shanghai. In its early years, it developed rapidly, allying itself with the Kuomintang (KMT) against the warlords ruling over the provinces of China. In 1927, the KMT turned against the CPC during the Shanghai Massacre, triggering the Chinese Civil War. Its supporters, who had survived the massacres in the cities, joined the rural guerrillas. In 1931, the CPC succeeded in establishing a Soviet republic in the liberated territories

of Jiangxi, but the KMT army drove it out. During the Long March, Mao Zedong took over the leadership of the CPC. The Second Sino-Japanese war re-established a fragile alliance between the CPC and the KMT, the anti-Japanese united front, but civil war resumed when Japan was defeated and the CPC gained the upper hand, founding the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Communist Party of India (Maoist) [CPI(Maoist)]: The CPI(Maoist) was founded on September 21, 2004 by the merger of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's War and the Maoist Communist Centre of India. It is the main heir to the Indian Maoist movement and Naxalism. Though operating clandestinely, it is waging a protracted people's war in nine Indian states through its People's Liberation Guerrilla Army and peasant militias.

Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [CPN(Maoist)]: Founded in 1994, led by Prachanda, it launched a Maoist-style people's war in Nepal against the reactionary and corrupt monarchical regime on February 13, 1996. On November 21, 2006, the CPN(Maoist) and the government signed a peace agreement providing for the democratization of institutions and the integration of the Maoists. In 2007, the monarchy was abolished. In 2008, the CPN(Maoist) won the elections and Prachanda became prime minister.

Communist Party of Peru (PCP): Historically, there have been several groups claiming to be the heirs of the CPP, founded in 1928 by José Carlos Mariátegui. This includes the PCP, founded in the 1970s by President Gonzalo Abimael Guzmán, who launched a Maoist-style people's war in 1980 by founding his People's Guerrilla Army. Referred to by its enemies as the "Shining Path," the PCP controlled large parts of the country. The arrest of its leadership, including President Gonzalo, in September 1982, led to a split. The Peace Letters attributed to Gonzalo in 1993 led part of the PCP to cease armed struggle. The "Proseguir" current continued the military campaign, leading to the creation of the Militarized Communist Party of Peru in 2018.

Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP): The Communist Party of the Philippines, whose ideology is Maoist, was founded in 1968. Operat-

ing underground and illegally, it leads a broad National Democratic Front and its armed wing is the New People's Army.

Condé—known as the “Grand Condé” (1621–1686): Louis II de Bourbon-Condé was a French prince and man of war. Commander of the armies of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, he is famous for his military exploits during the “Fronde” (a series of civil wars opposing partisans and enemies of the absolutist monarchy) and France’s wars against Spain and Holland.

Condé—known as the “Prince de Condé” (1736–1818): Louis V de Bourbon-Condé was a French prince who was one of the leaders of the counterrevolutionary émigrés in Coblenz. His forces accompanied those of the Duke of Brunswick in the attempt to re-establish the Ancien Régime in France in 1792.

Congo (Guevara’s expedition): In 1965, Che Guevara and a hundred or so Afro-descendant Cuban fighters traveled clandestinely to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (at that time called Zaire) to train guerrillas opposed to the neo-colonial regime of Mobutu. The experiment was interrupted after a few months due to the incompetence and internal rivalries of the Congolese rebels.

Conspiracy of the Equals: Attempted revolutionary insurrection against the Directoire regime by Gracchus Babeuf and his comrades (“les Égaux,” or “the Equals”). They advocated continuing the French Revolution by collectivizing land and the means of production. The uprising at the Grenelle military camp on the night of September 9–10, 1796 by a few hundred Babouvists was a failure, and the revolutionaries were arrested, sentenced to death, or deported.

Contras: Armed groups formed, financed, and armed by the United States to exhaust Nicaragua after the Sandinista revolution of 1979. Their actions resulted in 30,000 deaths and depleted an economy already suffering from the US blockade and harbor siege.

Coulomb, Charles-Augustin (1736–1806): French physicist known for his work in electrostatics and magnetism, as well as for the law bearing his name, which describes the interaction between electric charges.

CPB: Depending on the text, this indicates either the Communist Party of Belgium or the Communist Party of Brazil.

CPC: see Communist Party of China.

CPI(Maoist): see Communist Party of India (Maoist).

CPP: See Communist Party of the Philippines.

CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union): Following the October Revolution, the Bolshevik Party took the name Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (March 1918), then Communist Party of the USSR (Bolsheviks) (1925), and Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1952).

CPSU(b): see CPSU.

Crimean War: From 1853 to 1856, this war was fought between the Russian Empire and a coalition comprising the Ottoman Empire, the French Second Empire, the British Empire, and the Kingdom of Sardinia. The conflict took place mainly in the Crimean peninsula, in the vicinity of the Russian naval base at Sevastopol. The war ended in defeat for Russia.

Cromwell, Oliver (1599–1658): British politician, he played a key role in the English Civil War, leading the Parliamentary forces to victory over the Royalists. Cromwell was Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Ireland and Scotland after the defeat and deposition of Charles I.

Cuban Missile crisis: Growing US hostility to the Cuban revolution brought Cuba closer to the USSR. After a failed landing by counterrevolutionaries in Cuba, the US declared an embargo on the island nation. In November 1961, the USA deployed 55 nuclear missiles in Turkey and Italy, capable of reaching the USSR. In May 1962, the USSR decided to send 50,000 men and 38 nuclear missiles to Cuba, capable of reaching the USA. The American fleet was deployed to block the Soviet ships, and the two powers came close to war, before an agreement was reached (no missiles in Cuba, Turkey, or Italy; no Soviet troops and no American landing in Cuba).

Cuban Revolution: After the failure of the attack on the Moncada barracks in July 1953, Cuban revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro began preparations for an invasion from exile: the Granma expedition. The revolutionaries, including Ernesto “Che” Guevara, launched a guerrilla war in the Sierra Maestra. The final offensive was launched in November 1958, culminating in the capture of Santa Clara on December 31, 1958 and the revolutionaries' entry into Havana on January 8, 1959.

Cultural Revolution (“Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution”): Revolutionary process that swept through the People’s Republic of China and the Communist Party of China from 1966, with intense, sometimes deadly struggles between the conservative factions united around Liu Shaoqi (denounced as wanting to restore capitalism) and the revolutionary factions united around Mao Zedong. The Cultural Revolution mobilized Chinese youth in a movement critical of the old hierarchies, which had an international impact. The right wing, represented by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, was defeated, but after Mao’s death in 1976, it returned in force and eliminated the left wing (the Shanghai group, stigmatized as the “Gang of Four”), effectively setting the country on the road to capitalism.

Curcio, Renato (1941–): After having joined the Red Brigades (RB) as one of its founders, he led the collective of RB prisoners detained in Palmi, developing its own theoretical output as prisoners. He went on to become one of the leading figures in the Red Brigades’ liquidationist current.

d’Alembert, Jean Le Rond (1717–1783): French mathematician and philosopher, known for his work on mechanics and mathematical analysis, as well as for his major contribution to the *Encyclopédie*. He was one of the leading figures of the Enlightenment.

D’Aubigné, Agrippa (1552–1630): French poet and soldier, known for his satirical writings and his role in the Wars of Religion. He is often associated with Calvinism and Protestant resistance to the French crown.

Darkness at Noon: Arthur Koestler’s novel, first published in the UK in 1940. A classic of anti-Stalinist literature, its protagonist is a party official who falls victim to the purges.

Davout, Louis Nicolas (1770–1823): Born into the lower nobility, Davout was an officer under the Ancien Régime, a general during the Revolution and later Marshal of the Empire, before being made Duke of Auerstaedt and Prince of Eckmühl by Napoleon. Davout, who was one of Napoleon’s best tacticians, was never defeated.

Davydov, Denis Vasilyevich (1784–1839): Russian poet and general. He fought at Eylau, then convinced Bagration to let him lead the partisan war in the rear of the Grande Armée during the Russian campaign, combining his hussars with peasant troops. After the Napoleonic Wars, he fought

against the Persians and Polish insurgents. He published an *Essay Towards a Theory of Guerilla Warfare* (1821).

Day River (Battle): Attempt by Viet Minh forces to seize the capital of North Vietnam in 1951, during the First Indochina War. The lack of cover allowed French forces to take advantage of their superior airpower and firepower to defeat the offensive.

de Bourbon-Condé, Louis II, known as the “Grand Condé”: see Condé.

de Bourbon-Condé, Louis V, known as the “Prince of Condé”: see Condé.

de Castries, Christian Marie Ferdinand de La Croix (1902–1991): French soldier who served in the Second World War and the First Indochina War. He commanded French forces at Dien Bien Phu, where he was captured by the Vietnamese.

de Gaulle, Charles (1890–1970): French soldier and statesman, de Gaulle refused to surrender France after his outstanding performance against the Germans in May–June 1940. He continued the war in England as leader of the Free French forces. He was head of the provisional government at Liberation, then founder and first president of the French Fifth Republic in 1958.

de Ligne, Charles-Joseph, Prince (1735–1814): Belgian writer, diplomat, and officer who served in the Austrian army during the Seven Years' War and the Napoleonic Wars. He ended his career as Marshal, and wrote several acclaimed works, including his famous *Military Prejudices [and Fantasies]*, by an Austrian Officer (1783).

de Maistre, Joseph (1753–1821): Writer, philosopher and politician from Savoie, known for his conservative ideas and his criticism of the Enlightenment, rationalism, and the French Revolution. According to him, absolute monarchy corresponds to the “natural order.”

de Saxe, Maurice (1696–1750): German-born Marshal of France, who won several important victories, in particular in the War of the Austrian Succession. He wrote the influential *My Reveries* in 1757.

de Staël-Holstein, Anne-Louise-Germaine Necker, Baroness—also known as Madame de Staël (1766–1817): French and Genevan writer, essayist, and intellectual who introduced German Romanticism to France.

Death squad: armed group, generally composed of or led by members of the police force, sometimes associated with the mob, which organizes kidnappings and extra-judicial executions of political or economic opponents (trade unionists).

Debord, Guy (1931–1994): French essayist, filmmaker, and theoretician, founder of the Lettrist International from 1952 to 1957, then of the Situationist International from 1957 to 1972. Author of *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967).

Debray, Régis (1940–1974): French writer, philosopher, and journalist, imprisoned in Bolivia in 1967 for collaborating with Che Guevara. He developed a theorization of Focoism in *Revolution in the Revolution?* (1967) and wrote his assessment of Guevarism in *A Critique of Arms* (1974). He later became a social-democratic politician.

Delbrück, Hans (1848–1929): German historian who specialized in military history. He is considered the founder of modern military history, having compared historical texts with geographical, demographic, and economic data. He explored the distinction between the strategy of annihilation and the strategy of attrition.

Demetrios I (337 BC–283 BC): King of Macedonia from 294 to 288, he led a series of campaigns aimed at restoring Macedonian hegemony over Greece. His talents in siege warfare earned him the nickname of “Poliorcetes,” the “Besieger.”

Denikin, Anton Ivanovitch (1872–1947): Russian general who took part in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 and in the First World War. He became the main leader of the White Armies during the Russian Civil War after the death of General Kornilov. His armies were active in southern Russia, but considering his cause lost, Denikin went into exile in France and then the United States.

Dersim (Revolt): The Dersim Revolt and “Dersim Massacre” took place between 1936 and 1938 in the mountainous Dersim region of Turkey, which was then mainly populated by Alevi Kurds. Sparked by the Turks’ desire to Turkify and disarm the Kurds, the uprising was put down with the help of the air force and poison gas used by the Turkish army, which committed a series of large-scale massacres.

Deutsch, Julius (1884–1968): Austrian politician, leader of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, SDAPÖ deputy from 1920 to 1933. Founder and leader of the SDAPÖ's paramilitary force, the Schutzbund. Forced into exile, Deutsch fought as a general for the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War.

Dev Sol: Revolutionary Left (Devrimci Sol) was a revolutionary organization founded by Dursun Karatas in 1978 from the Revolutionary Path (Devrimci Yol) organization founded a year earlier. Heir to the THKP-C, it waged intense urban guerrilla warfare, but was almost totally wiped out by the 1980 coup d'état (almost 3,000 arrests). Dev Sol was reconstituted and transformed into DHKP-C in 1994.

Dev Yol: see Dev Sol

DFLP (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine): The DFLP is a Palestinian politico-military organization founded in 1969 as a split from the PFLP. Originally Maoist, it ceased in the late 1990s to oppose the peace process, which required recognition of Israel, without renouncing armed resistance.

DHKP-C: The Revolutionary People's Liberation Front-Party (Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi) is a revolutionary organization formed in 1994 out of the Dev Sol organization. Its Armed Propaganda Units (Silahlı Propaganda Birlikleri) occasionally carry out armed operations against the Turkish state. From October 20, 2000 to January 22, 2007, DHKP-C prisoners launched a major hunger strike against solitary confinement, which cost the lives of 134 political prisoners, including more than 100 DHKP-C prisoners.

Dhofar War: In 1964, the province of Dhofar, a destitute region of the Sultanate of Oman, launched a rebellion. Leadership of the struggle fell to the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF), which became the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf. As the liberation forces advanced, foreign intervention by British commandos and air force, and Jordanian and Iranian troops, which greatly outnumbered the Sultan's, became a decisive factor in the conflict by 1975.

Diaz, Porfirio: see Porfirio Diaz.

Diderot, Denis (1713–1784): French philosopher and writer, one of the leading figures of the Enlightenment. He founded bourgeois drama in the theatrical domain, revolutionized novel writing through his *book Jacques the Fatalist and his Master*, invented modern critical commentary through his Salons and, above all, edited the *Encyclopédie*, or *Systematic Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts and Crafts*.

Diem, Ngo Dinh (1901–1963): Vietnamese head of state who, as leader of South Vietnam, pursued an ultra-reactionary policy favoring the Catholic Church and large landowners, provoking widespread opposition from the communists to the Buddhist clergy. Diem was overthrown in a coup d'état in 1963.

Dien Bien Phu (Battle): From March 13 to May 7, 1954, the battle opposed the French colonial army (including paratroopers) to the Viet Minh forces commanded by Giáp, in northern Vietnam. The battle ended in total victory for the Viet Minh, and was the last major confrontation of the First Indochina War.

DLF (Dhofar Liberation Front): The DLP was founded in 1965 and became the Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf in 1968. It was a socialist national liberation and anti-imperialist organization aiming to establish a people's republic in Oman. Its war of liberation was victorious until massive foreign intervention drove its forces back to the Yemeni border.

Dollfuss, Engelbert (1892–1934): An Austrian Catholic politician, Dollfuss was Chancellor of Austria from 1932 until his death in 1934. During his term, he took authoritarian measures such as dissolving parliament, suppressing civil liberties, and crushing the labor movement. But his opposition to German annexationism led to his assassination by Austrian Nazis.

Dombrowski, Jaroslav (1836–1871): Dombrowski was an officer in the Russian army and took part in the Polish uprising of 1863 against the czarist regime as part of the progressive faction that wanted to abolish serfdom. Sentenced to deportation, he escaped to France. Appointed general by the Paris Commune in 1871, he organized its defense and died on the barricades.

Druze revolt: The revolt broke out in Syria against French domination between 1925–1927. It began in Jabal al-Druze and spread to Damas-

cus, the Qalamoun mountains, the city and region of Hama, the Golan Heights, and southeastern Lebanon. Its repression left 10,000 dead (most of them civilians). The revolt cost the lives of 4,000 French army soldiers (most of them Africans).

Dühring, Karl Eugen (1833–1920): German philosopher and economist, Dühring's idealistic socialist theories were based on man's supposed disposition to feel empathy. An anti-Semite and a critic of Marxism, Dühring's thought is best known through Engels's refutation of it in his *Anti-Dühring*.

Duma: First parliamentary body of the Russian Empire, created on April 27, 1906 following the Russian Revolution of 1905. Its already limited powers were reduced in 1907 as the counterrevolution progressed, and its voting system was changed to favor reactionary parties.

Dumenko, Boris Mokeevich (1890–1920): He was one of the Red Army's victorious commanders during the Russian Civil War, during which he was seriously wounded. Dumenko was arrested and shot in 1920 for insubordination, anti-Semitism, and anti-Sovietism.

Dunkirk (Battle): Episode of the Second World War, lasting from May 20 to June 4, 1940, characterized by the successful evacuation across the English Channel, of the British Expeditionary Force and 120,000 French and Belgian troops encircled by Hitler's Blitzkrieg forces.

Durutti Dumange, José Buenaventura (1896–1936): Spanish anarchist revolutionary. Durutti was a leading figure in the National Confederation of Labor (CNT) and the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) and was forced into exile several times while being imprisoned on other occasions. He died defending Madrid during the Spanish Civil War, at the head of the column he had formed to fight the fascists in Aragon.

Dybenko, Pavel Efimovich (1889–1938): Ukrainian dockworker, Dybenko joined the Baltic Fleet in 1911 and rallied the Bolsheviks in 1912. He held senior military positions during the civil war, commanding the Soviet naval forces. He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Easter Offensive: Campaign led by the North Vietnamese People's Army (NVA) against the South Vietnamese and American armed forces between March 30 and October 22, 1972, during the Vietnam War. It ended with

mixed results—the North Vietnamese advance was halted although the South Vietnamese forces were severely tested.

Easter Rising: On Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, a few hundred Irish republican militiamen stormed Dublin's central post office, as well as other strategic buildings such as the railway station and courthouse. The Irish Republic was proclaimed, but the insurrection did not spread, and England sent 50,000 troops to Ireland to crush the insurrection. The brutality of the repression led to a groundswell of sympathy for the independence cause.

Eifler, Alexander (1883–1945): Austrian officer who was chief of staff of the Schutzbund, the social-democratic paramilitary organization. He died in the Dachau concentration camp.

Eisenhower, Dwight (1890–1969): Commander of the US forces in Europe in 1942, Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) in 1943. He served as the 34th President of the United States from 1953–1961.

Ejercito Popular Revolucionario (EPR): The Popular Revolutionary Army is a revolutionary organization practicing armed struggle in Mexico. The EPR was founded by the forces of 13 former revolutionary organizations, including Revolutionary Clandestine Workers' Union Party (PRO-CUP) and Party of the Poor (PDLP). Although it operates mainly in the state of Guerrero, it carried out actions in other southern Mexican states, including Oaxaca, Chiapas, Guanajuato, Tlaxcala, and Veracruz between 1996 and 2007. More than twenty of its members were killed by death squads.

Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP): see PRT.

El Alamein (Second Battle of El Alamein): In October 1942, Italian and German forces (Afrikakorps) were engaged against British troops in the Egyptian desert. The Allied victory was the decisive turning point in the Second World War in North Africa.

El Salvador (civil war): In 1972, a left-wing coalition won the elections, provoking a coup d'état. Several opposition forces (communists, socialists, Christians) decided to join armed resistance. Their various forces united to form the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). From

1980 to 1992, the civil war claimed 100,000 lives, 85% of them caused by the army and death squads, and mainly civilians suspected of sympathy with the guerrillas. A peace agreement put an end to the conflict in 1992.

ELF (Eritrean Liberation Front): The ELF was founded in July 1960 in reaction to Ethiopia's annexation of Eritrea. It launched a war of independence in 1961. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) emerged from ELF, only to be sidelined by it.

ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional—Bolivia): The National Liberation Army was founded in Bolivia in November 1966 by a group of revolutionaries trained in Cuba and led by Che Guevara. Deprived of the expected support of Bolivia's Communist Party, and unable to gain a foothold among the local peasantry, the guerrilla movement was wiped out by the army in October 1967.

ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional—Colombia): The National Liberation Army was founded in 1964 in the province of Santander. The ELN was the main guerrilla movement in Colombia in the 1960s and is still active today.

ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional—Peru): The National Liberation Army was founded in Peru in 1962. It launched a guerrilla war in 1963 based on the Guevarist model, but was wiped out by the Peruvian army in December 1965.

Engels, Friedrich (1820–1895): German revolutionary, philosopher, and communist theoretician. Initially a left-wing Hegelian, Engels joined the Communist League with Marx, both taking part in the 1848 revolution. A co-founder of scientific socialism, he helped found the First and Second Internationals.

Enríquez, Miguel (1944–1974): A Chilean revolutionary, Enríquez was one of the founders of the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR). He led the MIR's armed struggle from 1967 to 1970 and the armed resistance to Pinochet's coup d'état until his death in a shootout with the dictatorship's security forces.

EPLF (Eritrean People's Liberation Front): The EPLF was founded in February 1971 from the Marxist wing of the ELF. Within a few years, the EPLF became Eritrea's main liberation force, inflicting several defeats on

the Ethiopian army, until it militarily liberated the entire country (taking the capital, Asmara, in 1991) and gaining independence in 1993.

Eritrea (War of National Liberation): While the UN had presided over a federation between the two former Italian colonies of Eritrea and Ethiopia, in 1960 the latter simply annexed the former. This provoked a thirty-year war of national liberation initiated by the Eritrean Liberation Front (FLE) and won by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF).

ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Basque Homeland and Liberty): Basque independence organization, originally a Marxist-Leninist movement, formed as part of the resistance against Franco's regime on July 31, 1959. In 1973, one of its commandos eliminated Franco's designated successor, Admiral Carrero Blanco. ETA abandoned armed struggle in 2011 and dissolved itself on May 2, 2018.

Expedition of the Thousand: In 1860, a volunteer corps led by Garibaldi landed in Sicily to conquer the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, ruled by the Bourbon dynasty. The expedition, though risky, was a success and a decisive episode in the Risorgimento.

Eylau (Battle): On February 8, 1807, Napoleon's Grand Army fought a Prussian-backed Russian army at Eylau (now Bagrationovsk) in East Prussia (now in the Russian Kaliningrad exclave), as part of the Fourth Coalition. Napoleon, while suffering heavy losses, maintained control of the area.

EZLN (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional): The Zapatista Army of National Liberation, founded in 1983, is a Mexican revolutionary organization controlling part of the state of Chiapas. It promotes the rights of indigenous peoples and encourages forms of self-organization and direct democracy. After its uprising in 1994, it limited its military activity to the self-defense of besieged and harassed Zapatista autonomous municipalities.

FALN (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional): The Armed Forces for National Liberation was a guerrilla organization active in Venezuela from 1963–1979. Initially close to the Venezuelan Communist Party (until its legalization in 1969), it was formed on February 2, 1963, following the merger of the country's main guerrilla movements.

Farabundo Martí, Augustín (1893–1932): Salvadoran communist, leader of the International Red Help and then of the All-America Anti-Imperialist League. Sent to Nicaragua, he became a colonel in the Sandinista guerrilla movement fighting against the American occupiers. Returning clandestinely to El Salvador, he played a leading role in the insurrection of 1932 and was shot after a trial during which he impressed the public with his courage.

FARC (Fuerzas armadas revolucionarias de Colombia—Ejército del Pueblo): The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People's Army, originated from peasant self-defense groups set up by the communist party to resist the violence of the army and the death squads of the conservative party during "La Violencia" and the Marquetalia Republic. After decades of guerrilla warfare, a first peace agreement was signed in 1984, but 5,000 FARC members involved in Colombian political life were assassinated, prompting the FARC to return to armed struggle. A second peace process, begun in 1999, failed in 2002, and a new agreement was signed in 2016, denounced by some FARC members (referred to as "dissidents") who continue to wage armed struggle.

FARC dissidence: see FARC.

Fatah: Fatah was founded in 1959 by Yasser Arafat as a politico-military organization for Palestinian national liberation. It initiated armed resistance. Fatah is the most important component of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and, as such, was behind the recognition of Israel in 1993 and the Oslo Accords, under which it renounced armed struggle. After monopolizing power in the Palestinian Authority born of these agreements, Fatah was confronted with the rise of the Islamist Hamas.

February Revolution (France): see Revolution of 1848.

February Revolution (Russia, 1917): The exhaustion and impoverishment of the Russian people following the First World War provoked spontaneous strikes in the factories of the capital, Petrograd (St. Petersburg), in early February. On International Working Women's Day (March 8), women in Petrograd demonstrated to demand bread and set off a general strike by touring the factories, which turned into insurrectionary demonstrations. Part of the army joined the insurgents, leading to the abdication

of Czar Nicholas II on March 2, 1917. But the Provisional Government (led by Kerensky) continued the war, becoming unpopular in its turn and provoking the October Revolution.

February Uprising: Also known as the Austrian Civil War, the uprising of February 12–16, 1934 pitted Social Democratic and Communist forces against the conservative-fascist army and militia of Chancellor Dollfuss. The main catalyst was the government's attempt to disarm the Schutz-bund, the socialist militia. In the end, the workers' forces were crushed.

Feuquières, Antoine de Pas de (1648–1711): French military officer and theoretician. He took part in Louis XIV's wars and was made lieutenant general of the king's armies, the highest rank in the military hierarchy of the Ancien Régime. His work *The Art of War* (1711) had a major influence on French military thought in the 18th century.

Fichte, Johann Gottlieb (1762–1814): Fichte was a German philosopher, first a supporter of the French Revolution, then an opponent of Napoleonic France, against which he called for German resistance. He was one of the leading exponents of German Romanticism.

Fifth Coalition: In 1809, this coalition brought together the Austrian Empire and the United Kingdom against the French Napoleonic Empire (allied with Bavaria). Austria capitulated following the French victory at Wagram.

Finland (Civil War): Following the Bolshevik revolution, Finland proclaimed its independence, which was recognized by the Soviet authorities on January 4, 1918. An extremely harsh civil war then began between the Reds and the Whites. The latter benefited from German intervention and won the war on April 30, 1918.

Finnish War (also called “Winter War”): Fought between 1939–1940, this was a conflict between Finland and the Soviet Union. Despite being outnumbered, Finnish forces used guerrilla tactics and resilience to mount a strong defense. The war ended with the Moscow Peace Treaty, in which Finland ceded some territory but maintained its sovereignty.

First Coalition: From 1792–1797, this coalition united Prussia, Austria, the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of Sardinia (Sardinia, Piedmont, Savoy), Spain, the Kingdom of Sicily (Sicily and Naples), the United Prov-

inces (modern-day Netherlands), Portugal, and the Holy Roman Empire (a grouping of many German states existing at the time) against revolutionary France. France immediately gained the upper hand thanks to their victory at the Battle of Valmy and the Battle of Jemappes. Despite the War in the Vendée (against anti-republican forces), France maintained the ascendancy, thanks in particular to General Bonaparte's victories in Italy.

First English Civil War: Also known as the "Great Rebellion," it pitted supporters of Parliament against the Royalists from 1642–1651. It resulted in the execution of King Charles I, the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of the Commonwealth of England led by Oliver Cromwell.

First French Empire: France's imperial regime from May 18, 1804, when Napoleon was proclaimed Emperor of the French, until his first abdication on April 4, 1814, and his subsequent resumption of power following his return to Paris on March 20, 1815 for a period known as the Hundred Days, which was followed by the Second Restoration.

First Indochina War (1946–1954): Between 1946 and 1954, the resistance forces (mainly the Viet Minh) opposed the colonial army in French Indochina (now Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia). It culminated in the Vietnamese victory at Dien Bien Phu and put an end to French colonization of Indochina.

First International (International Workingmen's Association): The First International was founded in London on September 28, 1864. Despite fierce repression, it developed sections in Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Austria, and the US. From 1869 onwards, it was divided between supporters of Marx and Bakunin. It suffered the aftermath of the defeat of the Paris Commune and disappeared in 1876.

First Intifada: Known as the "Stone Intifada," this grassroots Palestinian opposition movement against Israeli occupation began on December 9, 1987 and ended in 1993.

FLN (Algeria) Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front): The FLN was created in October 1954 to obtain independence for Algeria from France. During the war of liberation, it developed the National Liberation Army (ALN) and, in 1958, founded a provisional government, the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (GPRA).

It was then that France negotiated with the GPRA the agreements leading to independence in 1962.

FNL (Vietnam) Front National de Libération du Sud Viêt Nam (National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam): The communist-led FNL brought together opponents of the South Vietnamese puppet regime between 1955 and 1975, and fought for reunification during the Vietnam War.

Foch, Ferdinand (1851–1929): Marshal of France from 1918 until his death in 1929. A proponent of the “*attaque à outrance*” (“Attack to excess”) in 1914, he commanded all Allied forces on the Western Front in 1918, leading the decisive counteroffensive against German forces that ended the First World War.

Focoism: A revolutionary strategy based on the creation of rural guerilla units (*focos*), gradually extending their influence until they eventually establish liberated zones. In terms of rural guerrilla strategy, Focoism contrasts with the model of mobile guerrilla detachments surveying zones of influence. Theorized by Régis Debray, it is wrongly associated with Guevarism.

Fourth Coalition: In 1806–1807, this coalition brought together the United Kingdom, Russia, Sweden, and Prussia against Napoleonic France. Prussia was crushed first at the Battle of Auerstaedt, then at the Battle of Jena. Napoleon then defeated the Russians at the Battle of Eylau, followed by the Battle of Friedland, and imposed the Treaty of Tilsit on Prussia.

France (Campaign): This campaign ended the war waged by the Sixth Coalition against the French Empire, and ran from late December 1813 to April 1814. Napoleon tried to stop the invasion of France and retain his throne; he won several victories, but was finally defeated and forced to abdicate.

Franco-Prussian War: From July 19, 1870 to January 28, 1871, this war pitted the French Second Empire against a coalition of German states led by Prussia. Declared rather adventurously by Napoleon III, the war turned into a disaster for France, leading to the fall of the Second Empire and the proclamation of the Third Republic. The provisional republican government continued the war, but was unable to reverse its course. In its wake,

the German states united to form the German Empire, which annexed the French provinces of Alsace and Lorraine.

Franco, Francisco (1892–1975): Spanish general and statesman. He took part in the Rif War and led the troops that quelled the Asturias uprising in 1934. He was the leader of the putschist generals during the Spanish Civil War and, until his death, head of the resulting dictatorial state.

Frederick II, also known as Frederick the Great (1712–1786): King of Prussia from 1740 to 1786. He organized and led the Prussian army with great success, often against superior forces, giving rise to the Prusso-German military tradition (meticulous preparation in peacetime, strict discipline, great mobility on the battlefield). His military and diplomatic skills enabled him to significantly expand his state at the expense of Austria and Poland.

Frederick William IV (1795–1861): King of Prussia from 1840 to 1861, he suppressed the 1848 revolution and refused to become emperor of a unified Germany in 1849, because he did not want to receive the crown from a parliament (the Frankfurt Parliament). He proved weak against Austria in its rivalry with Prussia ("Punctation of Olmütz"). He was a pupil of Clausewitz when he was crown prince.

Frederick-Augustus II (1797–1854): King of Saxony from 1836 to his death. During the revolution of 1848, he was expelled from the throne by revolutionaries, then reinstated by Prussian and Saxon troops.

French Revolution (1789): The Revolution began with the opening of the Estates General (pre-modern form of assembly, bringing together representatives of the different feudal "estates": clergy, nobility, and commoners) on May 5, 1789, and ended with Napoleon Bonaparte's coup d'état on November 9, 1799. The absolute monarchy gave way first to a bourgeois constitutional monarchy (Constituante), then to a bourgeois Republic (Legislative Assembly, then the Girondin-dominated National Convention), then to a Republic defending people's interests (Jacobin-dominated National Convention), then to a restoration of bourgeois rule (Thermidor Convention, followed by the Directoire).

Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO): The Mozambique Liberation Front was founded in 1962 as a movement against Portuguese colonialism. Originally a Marxist-Leninist organization, it waged a guer-

rilla war against the colonial army until the country gained independence in September 1974. It has become Mozambique's main political party.

Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN): See El Salvador—civil war.

Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez (FPMR): After General Pinochet's coup d'état in 1973, the Communist Party of Chile began to criticize itself for its lack of military policy. It decided to found an armed resistance organization. Its members were trained in Cuba and Eastern Europe. It was not until 1983 that the FPMR was created. The FPMR carried out 1,138 explosions, 276 sabotages, and 199 armed attacks. On September 7, 1986, it narrowly missed an ambush on Pinochet. In 1987, the FPMR split from the party (which downplayed the role of armed resistance) and became the FPMR/Autónomo.

Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente (FRETILIN): The FRETILIN was created in 1974 as an armed resistance force against Portuguese colonial rule. After the departure of the Portuguese and the conquest of East Timor by Indonesia, FRETILIN led the resistance against a very brutal Indonesian occupation. The self-determination referendum organized by the United Nations in August 1999 led to East Timor's full independence in 2002.

Freund, Julien (1921–1993): French philosopher, political scientist and sociologist, Freund's studies focused on the concept of the state and the political community, and he established a type of military analysis (pol-emology) based on anthropological principles.

Friedland (Battle): On June 14, 1807, Napoleon's Grande Armée clashed with the Russian army on the territory of Friedland in East Prussia (today Pravdinsk, in the Russian Kaliningrad exclave). The French victory ended the war of the Fourth Coalition and led to the Treaty of Tilsit.

Frunze, Mikhail Vasilyevich (1885–1925): Frunze was a Russian revolutionary who became a Bolshevik in 1903. He organized the Moscow Uprising of 1905 and studied military affairs in prison. Leader of an illegal organization of soldiers in the former army, creator of the Minsk Red Guard, he brilliantly commanded one, then four armies on the Eastern Front, winning victories against Kolchak and then Wrangel. In 1924, Frunze was

appointed vice-chairman of the Military Revolutionary Council, and in January 1925, people's commissar for Military and Naval Affairs.

Fu, Daqing (1912–1944): Member of the Communist Party of China. Fu studied at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in Moscow and worked for the Sun Yat-sen government in Guangzhou (Canton) as Mikhail Borodin's translator. Active at the Huangpu Military Academy, he took part in the Northern Expedition. Interpreting for Soviet military advisors during the Sino-Japanese War, Fu was commissioned to translate Clausewitz's *On War* from Russian into Chinese. In 1941, he was sent on a secret mission to Beijing by the CPC Central Committee. He was arrested by the Japanese military police and executed.

Fuentes, Norberto (1943–): Cuban writer and journalist, former close associate of Fidel Castro turned dissident. He lives in exile in the United States.

Fuller, J. F. C. (1878–1966): British officer, military historian, and theoretician, Fuller gained worldwide renown for his work on mechanized warfare and military doctrine, and was one of the main proponents of the “blitzkrieg” concept. He wrote over 45 books on military and historical subjects.

Furmanov, Dmitriy Andreyevich (1891–1926): Soviet writer and poet, he was a political commissar in the Red Army during the civil war. This experience served as the basis for his famous novel *Chapayev*.

Gai, Gaia Dmitrievich, born Hayk Bzhishkian (1887–1937): An Iranian-Armenian revolutionary. An officer in the Russian army during the First World War, he joined the Red Army and took part in the civil war at the head of the Caucasian cavalry division, and in the Soviet-Polish war at the head of the 3rd Cavalry Corps. He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Galileo, born Galileo Galilei (1564–1642): Italian scientist, one of the founders of the modern scientific method, known for his work in astronomy (including the observation of Jupiter's satellites), as well as for his contributions to physics (discovery of the law of falling bodies). His discoveries conflicted with religious beliefs and led to his prosecution by the Inquisition.

Gansu (Victorious Battle): Episode of the Chinese Civil War. In August 1946, the Red Army crushed Kuomintang forces in Gansu province. It was the first major confrontation in the renewed civil war following Japan's surrender.

Garibaldi, Giuseppe (1807–1882): Italian general, progressive politician and patriot. He was a leading figure in the Risorgimento. Garibaldi led and fought in several military campaigns, including the Expedition of the Thousand, which led to the creation of a unified Italy.

GDR (German Democratic Republic): The GDR was created on October 7, 1949 by the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) on the territory that corresponded to the Soviet occupation zone in Germany. Its foundation followed the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany in the west. The GDR ceased to exist on October 3, 1990.

German Confederation: formed in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna, it replaced the Confederation of the Rhine created by Napoleon. This confederation was largely based on the borders of the Holy Roman Empire and included several Slavic population centers. Its history is marked by the rivalry between Prussia and Austria.

German Peasant War: Extensive social and religious conflict (set during the Reformation) that took place in the Holy Roman Empire between 1524 and 1526, particularly in Swabia, Baden, the Palatinate, Hesse, Thuringia (modern-day Germany), Tyrol, Salzburg, Carinthia (modern-day Austria), Alsace, Lorraine, Franche-Comté (modern-day France), the cantons of Basel, Bern, Lucerne and Graubünden, (modern-day Switzerland) and Trentino-Alto Adige (modern-day Italy).

Germany (Revolution 1918–1919): In October 1918, a general strike and mutinies in the German Navy led to the formation of soldiers' councils, followed by workers' councils. The imperial regime gave way to a parliamentary one, and an armistice was signed, ending the First World War. Revolutionary forces seized power in Berlin (the Spartacist Uprising) and Bavaria (the Bavarian Council Republic), but were crushed and the Weimar Republic was founded on August 11, 1919. Other revolutionary uprisings failed in the following years (Ruhr Uprising, March Action).

Germany (Revolution of 1848): Democratic and national insurrections broke out between March 1848 and the end of Summer 1849 in the var-

ious states of the German Confederation and in regions under the domination of the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia. Liberal governments were established and a German national parliament was formed in the free city of Frankfurt. After many months of war, the monarchist armies finally crushed the revolution.

Giáp, Võ Nguyên (1911–2013): Vietnamese revolutionary, general and politician. Commander-in-chief of the Vietnamese People's Army during the Indochina War and the Vietnam War. He led Vietnamese troops in the decisive battle of Dien Bien Phu. On his release, he resumed his revolutionary activities, and in 1944 was one of the founding members of the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN). He became foreign minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, then prime minister.

Gilbert, Georges (1858–1901): French military officer and writer. His works include *Essai de critique militaire* (*Essay of Military Criticism*, 1890) and a history of the Boer War.

Glavnoye razvedyvatel'noye upravleniye (Main Intelligence Directorate, GRU): the GRU was the Soviet army's military intelligence service.

Gneisenau, August Neidhardt von (1760–1831): Prussian general who took part in the wars against the French Revolution and Empire and played an important role in the reforms of the Prussian army and state following Prussia's defeats by Napoleon.

Gómez, General: see Zaisser, Wilhelm.

Gonzalo, President: see Guzmán Reynoso, Abimaël.

Good Friday Agreement: The agreement was signed on April 10, 1998 by the main political forces in Northern Ireland. It involved the election of a Northern Ireland Assembly, the disarmament of the IRA and Protestant paramilitary forces, the creation of a North South Ministerial Council, and more. This agreement was approved by a majority of the Irish people in a referendum.

Göring, Herman (1893–1946): Göring was one of the main leaders of the Nazi party, holding several high-ranking posts under the regime: minister of the interior, head of Germany's rearmament program, commander-in-chief of the Luftwaffe, etc. He committed suicide at Nuremberg while on trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Gorky, Maxim, born Alexei Maximovich Peshkov (1868–1936): Russian writer and playwright, world-famous for his social realist works depicting life among the working classes in Russia. As an opponent of czarism, he spent many years in exile. Gorky took a critical stance towards the Bolshevik government before joining the regime and returning to the USSR.

Gosudarstvennoye politicheskoye upravleniye (GPU, State Political Directorate): Political State Police of the USSR between 1922 and 1934. It replaced the Cheka and became the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD).

Gramsci, Antonio (1891–1937): Founding member of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and its representative at the Comintern, Gramsci led the PCI from 1924 until his arrest. He is famous for his studies (mostly written during his 11 years in prison under the fascist regime) on culture, hegemony, and the theory of cultural revolution.

Grande Armée: Napoleon's imperial army from 1804–1814. Formed for the invasion of Great Britain, it was directed against Germany in the War of the Third Coalition, and won its first major victory at the Battle of Ulm. It distinguished itself in the Napoleonic Wars, but was annihilated during the Russian Campaign. A “new Grande Armée” was reconstituted in 1813, but was unable to prevent the Empire's defeat at the Battle of Waterloo.

Granma (Expedition): The Granma is the name of the ship that carried 82 revolutionaries, commanded by Fidel Castro and including Ernesto “Che” Guevara, from Mexico to southeast Cuba. The landing coincided with a failed insurrection, and Che himself came under fire from the army. The surviving revolutionaries launched a guerrilla war in the Sierra Maestra.

Grant, Ulysses S. (1822–1885): American officer and statesman. His successes at the start of the American Civil War earned him command-in-chief of the Union armies. After the war, he became the 18th President of the United States (1869–1877).

Great Rebellion: see First English Civil War.

Greece (Civil War): From 1946–1949, this war pitted the Greek monarchist army and the British army, who wanted to restore the old reactionary regime, against the forces of anti-fascist resistance led by the Communist Party of Greece. Lack of support from the USSR (due to the Yalta agreement) and strong British intervention (using former collaborators released for the occasion) led to the defeat of the anti-fascists.

Greece (Partisan War): Between 1941 and 1944, the Partisan War set the occupying German, Italian and Bulgarian forces (and Greek collaborators) against the Greek People's Liberation Army (ELAS) founded by the Communist Party. A monarchist resistance organization, the EDES, played a marginal role. The ELAS maquis numbered 30,000 fighters, held vast mountainous areas, liberated towns from 1943 onwards, and the whole country in 1944.

Greece (War of Independence): The war began on March 25, 1821 with a Greek revolt against the domination of the Ottoman Empire. For two years, the Greeks won several victories, but the Ottomans subsequently inflicted defeats and committed massacres. The Greek insurgents then benefited from the intervention of Russia and France and Greek independence was recognized in 1830.

Gribeauval, Jean-Baptiste Vaquette de (1715–1789): Engineer and general, Gribeauval reformed the French artillery in 1765, improving its mobility, accuracy, and range. This artillery was one of Napoleon's main assets.

Grigorenko, Petro (1907–1987): Soviet general and military theoretician, Grigorenko took part in the Second World War and, from 1945–1961, was a researcher and teacher at the Frunze Military Academy. Author of 83 books, mainly on military history, he joined the dissident movement and died in exile in the US.

Grolman, Carl von (1777–1843): Prussian general who took part in numerous battles against Napoleonic France (during which he was wounded in action). Along with other great reformers such as Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Boyen, he contributed to the modernization of the Prussian army.

Grouchy, Emmanuel (1766–1847): French revolutionary general and marshal of the empire. An officer of the Ancien Régime, Grouchy rallied

to the Revolution. He fought bravely and brilliantly at Jena, Eylau, Friedland, and Borodino, where he was wounded, but his passivity contributed to the defeat at Waterloo. After exile in the US, he returned to France.

Grupos de Resistencia Antifascista Primero de Octubre (GRAPO): The First of October Anti-Fascist Resistance Groups were a Spanish armed revolutionary organization created following the constituent congress of the PCE(r)—the Communist Party of Spain (Reconstituted)—in June 1975. The GRAPOs began armed resistance under Franco's regime, and continued afterwards until successive police operations dismantled them. They carried out hundreds of actions between 1975 and 2003, including the kidnapping of the president of the Council of State and the president of the Supreme Court of Military Justice.

Guadeloupe (Revolt): On March 20, 1967, a racist attack in the French colony sparked a wave of riots and strikes in Basse-Terre and Pointe-à-Pitre. The peak of the repression took place in Pointe-à-Pitre on May 26, 27, and 28, with French gendarmes firing on demonstrators (from 8–87 dead, depending on the report).

Guderian, Heinz (1888–1954): German general and military theoretician. His book *Achtung – Panzer!* influenced the development of the doctrine of armored warfare, which he implemented as commander of Hitler's armored forces during the Second World War.

Guevara, Ernesto, known as Che (1928–1967): A revolutionary, Guevara took part in the Cuban revolution alongside Fidel Castro, held a position in the Cuban government, and then took part in guerrilla warfare in the Congo and in the Bolivian ALN guerrilla war, where he was killed by the army. He is the author of several books, including *Guerrilla Warfare* (1960–1961).

Guevarism: Theory promoting the instigation of several simultaneous anti-imperialist revolutionary movements across the entire Tri-continent, modelled after Vietnam and Cuba, with the emphasis on the strategy of rural guerrilla warfare.

Guibert, Jacques-Antoine-Hippolyte de (1743–1790): French military officer and writer, his major work, *Essai général de tactique*, published in 1772, influenced the military thought of his time and is considered one of the first modern treatises on military tactics.

Guillén, Abraham (1913–1993): A Spanish revolutionary, Guillén took part in the Spanish Civil War as a member of the Republican Army's 14th (Anarchist) Division. Captured twice by the Franquists, he escaped on both occasions and reached Argentina in 1948, where he took part in the Peronist resistance. Imprisoned, then released, he went to Cuba in 1961. He was an instructor and military advisor for various guerrilla organizations and is best known for his essay *Strategy of the Urban Guerrilla* (1966). He eventually renounced armed struggle and supported several libertarian social experiments.

Gusev, Nikolai Ivanovich (1899–1976): Bolshevik leader, Gusev was a high-ranking political commissar during the civil war. He wrote a *History of the Civil War* and later held senior military positions in the USSR.

Guzmán Reynoso, Abimaël (1934–2021): Peruvian revolutionary leader. He underwent politico-military training in China and, under his nom de guerre “President Gonzalo,” led the Communist Party of Peru (known as the “Shining Path”), waging a Maoist-style people's war that almost triumphed. Captured along with the PCP central committee in 1992, Gonzalo died in prison.

Haiti (Slave Rebellion): On August 14, 1791, the first successful slave revolt in the modern world broke out in Haiti. After thirteen years of armed conflict resulting in tens of thousands of deaths and the mass emigration of virtually the entire white population of the colony, in 1804 the Haitians became the first free black people in the New World.

Haitian Revolution: see Haiti.

Hamburg Uprising: The KPD planned to launch a communist revolution in Germany in October 1923, modelled on the October Revolution. At the last minute, the plan was abandoned, but the Hamburg section did not receive the new order and, on October 23, 1923, stormed 24 police stations and other targets. It was crushed due to its isolation.

HBDH (Halkların Birleşik Devrim Hareketi – The Peoples' United Revolutionary Movement): HBDH is a political-military alliance of ten Kurdish and Turkish revolutionary organizations, formed on March 12, 2016 with the aim of overthrowing the Turkish government of President Erdoğan. It brought together the PKK, MLSPB, MLKP, MKP, but also the Communist Labor Party of Turkey/Leninist (TKEP/L), Devrimci

Karargâh (DK), the Revolutionary Communard Party (DKP), and the Revolutionary Communist League of Turkey (TİKB). The TKP/ML was a member but subsequently left the alliance.

He Long (1898–1969): leader of a peasant revolt in 1912, he became an important member of the Communist Party of China. Organizer of the Chinese Red Army, he completed the Long March. After the founding of the People's Republic, he held high military office and the rank of marshal.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1770–1831): German philosopher whose work, which belongs to the domain of idealist philosophy, formed a system uniting all knowledge based on dialectical logic. The system was presented as a “phenomenology of spirit,” then as an “Encyclopaedia of philosophical sciences,” encompassing metaphysics and ontology, philosophy of art and religion, philosophy of nature, philosophy of history, ethics and politics, as well as philosophy of right.

Henry, Émile (1872–1894): Son of a [Paris] Communard, Henry planted a bomb at the headquarters of a mining company, which the police removed before it could detonate—however, it exploded at the police station, killing five policemen and one civilian. Arrested during an attack on a bourgeois café, he was condemned and guillotined.

Hezbollah (“Party of God”): Lebanese Islamist politico-military movement created in 1982 following Israel’s invasion of Lebanon. Initially rooted among southern Shiites, Hezbollah adheres to the theological-political theses of Khomeini. In the summer of 2006, its techno-guerrilla forces—forces that confront armored divisions by exploiting the advantage of the defensive as well as new weapons and technology—held the Israeli army in check for 33 days.

Hitler, Adolf (1889–1945): Leader of the Nazi Party in Germany, he became Chancellor of the Reich in 1933 and led Germany on the path to the suppression of workers’ organizations, to racial genocide, and to unleashing the Second World War. He committed suicide to avoid falling into the hands of the Soviet army, which was capturing Berlin.

Ho Chi Minh, born Nguyễn Sinh Cung (1890–1969): Vietnamese communist, leader in the struggle for national liberation against the colo-

nial and imperialist powers of Japan, France, and the US. He was the first president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

Hobbes, Thomas (1588–1679): English political philosopher, his political theory was influenced by the English Civil War. His major work, *Leviathan*, developed the idea that the state was necessary to avoid the chaos and violence innate in human nature.

Hoelz, Max (1889–1933): German revolutionary and member of the KPD, he organized armed operations from 1919 to 1921, participating in the March Action. Arrested, the KPD organized his escape and he resumed armed action. Recaptured and imprisoned, Hoelz was granted amnesty in 1928 and went into exile in the USSR.

Hofer, Andreas (1767–1810): A Tyroleean patriot loyal to the Austrian crown, Hofer instigated and led an insurrection against the armies of Napoleon and his Bavarian allies. Hofer scored several successes, capturing and retaking Innsbruck, but was defeated when the full might of France turned against him after Austria's surrender. He was betrayed, captured, and shot.

Holy Alliance: The alliance was formed on September 26, 1815 at the Congress of Vienna by the Russian Empire, the Austrian Empire, and the Kingdom of Prussia, three European monarchies victorious over Napoleon's Empire, with the aim of maintaining the European balance determined at said peace congress, and protecting each other from possible future revolutions. It was de facto dissolved in 1825, upon the death of Tsar Alexander I, who had initiated it.

Hong Cu, Pham, born Lê Đô Nguyễn, general (1926–2021): Communist and anti-colonialist activist, imprisoned in 1944, he escaped and took up political and military duties within the Việt Minh. He fought at Dien Bien Phu and later became head of the propaganda department, then vice-commander of the People's Army's political apparatus.

Horner, Arthur (1894–1968): British trade-union leader, co-founder of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and leader of the Welsh miners in the 1926 general strike. He was imprisoned several times for his political activism.

Hukbalahap (People's Anti-Japanese Army): In March 1942, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) created the Hukbalahap. Soon, 15,000 "Huks" were waging guerrilla war against the Japanese. Nonetheless, they were not recognized by the new government installed in 1945 by the United States, and their leaders were imprisoned. In 1948, the Hukbalahap launched a peasant insurrection against the government and the militias of the large landowners. Repression, aided by the United States, was ferocious and weakened the insurrection from 1954 until it was defeated around 1958.

Hundred Days: Period in French history between Napoleon's return (to Paris) from exile (on the isle of Elba) on March 1, 1815, and his second abdication on July 7, 1815 after the Battle of Waterloo.

Hundred Years' War: A series of conflicts, interspersed with truces, pitted, from 1337 to 1453, the Plantagenet dynasty against the Capetian and Valois dynasties, and through them, the kingdoms of England and France. At first, the English prevailed, before the French gained the upper hand from 1364 onwards. England regained the upper hand thanks to its alliance with Burgundy, but the separate peace between the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France enabled the latter to end the war to his advantage.

Hungary (Revolution of 1848): Democratic and national revolution that evolved into a war of independence against the domination of the Austrian monarchy. On April 14, 1849, independence and a republic were proclaimed. Lajos Kossuth was invested with full powers. The revolutionary army won some initial victories, but in 1849 the insurgents were crushed by the Austrian and Russian armies. This was one of the main theaters of the "Springtime of Nations."

Hungary (Revolution of 1919): A communist revolution broke out in Hungary on March 21, 1919, and a Soviet Republic was proclaimed. However, it lasted only 133 days; the French, Romanian, Serbian, and Nationalist armies intervened and occupied Budapest on August 6, 1919.

Hussein bin Ali: (1853–1931): Sharif (descendant of Mohammed) of Mecca and head of the Hashemite family, he was proclaimed King of the Hijaz in 1916 after leading, with British support, an uprising against the Turks during the First World War.

‘Urabi Revolt: In 1879, Colonel Ahmed ‘Urabi led a movement to overthrow the corrupt regime of the Khedive (Ottoman viceroy of Egypt) Mohamed Tewfik Pasha, who served British and French interests in Egypt. The political struggle was coupled with a popular uprising in Alexandria when the British army intervened in support of the Khedive. The movement failed and Egypt came under the direct control of the British Empire.

IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization): The IMRO was a political, military and revolutionary organization active in the European territories of the Ottoman Empire from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th. In 1903, it led a vast and unsuccessful movement of revolts. After the First World War, the organization split up and went on to oppose the Yugoslav monarchy.

India (Maoist People's War): see Communist Party of India (Maoist).

Indian Rebellion of 1857, also called Sepoy Mutiny: On May 10, 1857, the mutiny of the sepoys (Indian soldiers working for the British) in the town of Meerut turned into a popular uprising in northern and central India against the British Empire. British troops regained lost ground in 1858 with the help of the princely states of northern and central India and with the reinforcement of regiments from Crimea, Persia, and China. The British imperial forces carried out a bloody crackdown targeting entire populations.

Indigenism: Latin American political (and artistic) movement based on the recognition of Native Americans and indigenous peoples not only as defenders of their interests and culture, but also as the social basis of any historical process of liberation.

Indonesian mass killings of 1965–1966: In 1965, General Suharto decided to eliminate the powerful Communist Party of Indonesia. With the help of the CIA and under the pretext of (invented) complicity in an attempted coup d'état, he unleashed a wave of massacres against members and supporters of the Communist Party. Between 500,000 and 3 million people were murdered, and over a million detained without trial for years, many of them being subjected to torture. Their families and descendants were deprived of political rights, as well as access to universities and public administration.

Informal Anarchist Federation: Network of insurrectionist anarchist armed cells, active mainly in Italy, but also in Chile, Greece, and Indonesia. The FAI (Informal Anarchist Federation; Italian: Federazione Anarchica Informale) carried out dozens of bomb attacks between 2003 and 2015 against state buildings, state media, law enforcement agencies, fascist parties, and more. The FAI also claimed responsibility for the attack on Italy's nuclear chief executive, who was shot in the leg on May 11, 2012.

INLA (Irish National Liberation Army): The INLA is a Marxist armed organization stemming from the Official IRA. It became the military wing of the Irish Socialist Republican Party. Numbering between 400 and 500 fighters, the INLA carried out intensive urban guerrilla warfare, but was almost entirely dismantled in the 1980s. On August 22, 1998, following the Good Friday Agreement, it announced a ceasefire.

Intentona comunista: In Brazil, in the early 1930s, a powerful anti-fascist and anti-imperialist movement brought together military personnel opposed to the fascist rule of Getúlio Vargas. This opposition led to a communist mutiny in November 1935 in several garrisons in Natal, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro. The uprising was harshly repressed.

International Brigades: armed force organized by the Comintern, which fought alongside the Republicans against the putschists during the Spanish Civil War from 1936–1939. They were made up of 32,000–35,000 anti-fascist volunteers from 53 different countries.

International Lenin School: From 1926 to 1938, the International Lenin School in Moscow trained around 3,500 Comintern cadres and activists, of whom more than 10% were KPD members.

International Workers' Association: see First International.

International: see First International (1864–1876), Second International (1889–1914) and Comintern (Third International, 1919–1943).

Intifada: see First and Second Intifadas.

IRA (Irish Republican Army): The IRA was founded in 1919 and fought against British forces in 1919–1921 during the War of Independence. After the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 granted independence to the South, leaving the North to the British, one part of the IRA became the regular army of the Republic of Ireland, while the other continued to fight against the

British. In 1969, the IRA split into the Official IRA (which ceased armed struggle in 1972 and from which the INLA emerged) and the Provisional IRA, which intensified the armed struggle against the British occupation until the 1997 peace agreements ("Good Friday Agreement"). The Real IRA and IRA Continuity refused to accept the 1997 agreements and continued to fight on a sporadic basis.

IRA Continuity: see IRA.

Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas (IFPG, Iran): see OIPFG.

Ireland (War of Independence): In 1918, elections gave a landslide majority to the independentists, who proclaimed independence in 1919. They formed the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and fought against British forces from January 1919 to July 1921. A ceasefire led to the treaty of December 1921, which divided the island between the Irish Free State and the six northern counties remaining within the United Kingdom. A civil war broke out in the Free State between supporters and opponents of the treaty.

Isserson, Georgii (1898–1976): A non-commissioned officer in Russia in the First World War, Isserson joined the Red Army. In 1929, he began teaching at the Frunze Military Academy. His contribution to the development of the theory of operational art was decisive: his work *The Evolution of Operational Art*, (1932) became an influential reference in the field of Soviet military strategy. Imprisoned from 1941 to 1955, he was rehabilitated and resumed his publications in military journals.

Italy (Revolution of 1848): In a country still divided into small monarchical states, people's revolts, both democratic and national, broke out in Sicily, Milan, Naples, Tuscany, the Papal States, and elsewhere. Various rulers granted the establishment of a constitutional political order. Although peace was restored almost everywhere (with French and Austrian intervention), these revolutions marked the beginning of the unification of Italy. Episode of the "Springtime of Nations."

Iturbide y Arámbaru, Agustín de (1783–1824): At the start of the wars of independence in Spanish America, Iturbide commanded the royalist army in Mexico. He rallied the independence movement in 1821 and was crowned emperor of Mexico in 1822, although he was forced to abdicate

the following year. He tried to regain power but was arrested and shot by the Republicans.

Izmaïlov, Nikolai Fyodorovich (1891–1971): A leading figure in the Soviet navy, Izmaïlov played an important role in the October Revolution and became the first commissioner of the Red Baltic Fleet. During the civil war, he took part in operations against the White armies of Kolchak, Denikin, and Wrangel. He was imprisoned from 1940–1948, and rehabilitated in 1955.

Japanese Red Army: generic name used to designate the Red Army Faction and the group that emerged from it: the Unified Red Army.

Jaurès, Jean (1859–1914): French reformist socialist leader, known for his commitment to the striking Carmaux miners and to the cause of Captain Dreyfus. Co-founder of the French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO), his commitment to peace led to his assassination on the eve of the First World War.

Jemappes (Battle): On November 6, 1792, an army of Revolutionary France clashed with the Austrian army of the Holy Roman Empire in Belgium. The 40,000 French volunteers won a decisive victory.

Jena (Battle): This battle opposed Napoleon's Grande Armée to the Prussian army on October 14, 1806 at Jena (Thuringia), as part of the War of the Fourth Coalition. Napoleon crushed General Hohenlohe. The battle of Jena took place at the same time as the Battle of Auerstaedt.

Jiang, Baili (1887–1931): Chinese general and military theoretician, who headed the Huangpu Military Academy. A close associate of Chiang Kai-shek, Jiang had a major influence on Chinese military thought. He was assassinated by political rivals.

Jiangxi (Soviet): This vast region was controlled by the Communist Party of China from 1931–1934. The Chinese Soviet Republic was founded here under the leadership of Mao Zedong. Mao and the Red Army had arrived in the region after the failure of the Autumn Harvest Uprising. In 1934, under pressure from the Kuomintang armies, the Communists were forced to retreat, leaving Jiangxi to embark on the Long March.

Joan of Arc (1412–1431): Claiming to be guided by God, she led King Charles VII's troops to victory in several battles during the Hundred Years'

War. Her image contributed to the formation of French national identity and sentiment.

Jomini, Antoine de (1779–1896): Swiss military thinker, his *Summary of the Art of War*, published in 1838, had a major influence on the military thought of his time. He served in Napoleon's army but, feeling that he was not sufficiently recognized, he joined the Russian army in 1813, where he attained the rank of general-in-chief in 1826.

Jourdan, Jean-Baptiste (1762–1833): French soldier who took part in the American War of Independence, the French Revolution (victorious at Fleurus) and Napoleon's wars, which made him marshal but confined him to minor roles. He rallied to the Restoration regime after Napoleon's fall.

Juárez García, Benito (1806–1872): Mexican politician, liberal reformer and president of Mexico in 1858, Juárez resisted the conquest of Mexico by Napoleon III's armies. He was reelected to the presidency of the Republic after his victory, before being overthrown by general Porfirio Díaz.

July Revolution (France): On July 27–29, 1830 (the Trois Glorieuses, or Three Glorious [Days] in English), the people of Paris rose up against the monarchy, which had restored the Ancien Régime after the fall of Napoleon. King Charles X was forced to flee the capital. The La Fayette Conspiracy had played a major role in preparing and triggering the uprising. The liberal bourgeoisie, having considered a republican regime, opted for a constitutional monarchy and brought a new king, Louis-Philippe, to the throne.

June Days Uprising: When the bourgeois republican government that emerged from the 1848 Revolution took anti-proletarian measures such as closing the national workshops, Parisian workers rose up in revolt from June 22–26, 1848. This rise of the working class on the political scene was brutally repressed.

Justinian I or Justinian the Great (c. 482–565): Eastern Roman emperor from 527 until his death. Considered the greatest Byzantine emperor, Justinian brought the Empire to its greatest geographical extent, creating new laws and prestigious monuments such as the Hagia Sophia.

Kabyle revolt: In April 1871, taking advantage of the weakness of the French government following the Franco-Prussian War, between 80,000

and 100,000 Kabyles rose up against French colonial rule in Algeria. The uprising set Kabylia, the Aurès, and Hodna regions ablaze. Violently repressed, the uprising ended in failure, followed by increased land dispossession of the indigenous population.

Kamenev, Lev Borisovich, born Lev B. Rosenfeld (1881–1936): Russian revolutionary, Lenin’s collaborator in exile, Kamenev was one of the main Bolshevik leaders of the October Revolution. Chairman of the Moscow Supreme Soviet and shortly afterwards vice-chairman of Lenin’s government (and chairman during Lenin’s period of illness). Together with Zinoviev, he opposed Stalin in 1925 and was outvoted. He was arrested and executed during the purges. (Not to be confused with Sergei Kamenev—when passages in this edition mention Kamenev without a first name, they refer to S. Kamenev.)

Kamenev, Sergey Sergeyevich (1881–1936): Colonel in the czarist army in 1917, he rallied to the Bolsheviks and was appointed head of the Red Army by Lenin from 1919–1924. After the civil war, he commanded the Red Army during the Polish-Soviet War, and subsequently held several high-ranking positions. He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Kant, Immanuel (1724–1804): One of the founding figures of German idealism and one of the most influential thinkers in the history of philosophy. Kant developed a theory of knowledge, ethics, and aesthetics, dealing with subjects such as metaphysics, politics, and religion.

Kaocen revolt: The rebellion took place near the Aïr Massif, in the north of modern-day Niger, in 1916–1917, and was provoked by increased colonial oppression and requisitions due to the First World War. The rebellion benefited from the support of the powerful Senusiyya (Senussi) brotherhood fighting against Italian colonial rule in Libya. Most of the major towns in the Agadez region fell under rebel control until the French counteroffensive pushed the rebels back into Fezzan.

Kautsky, Karl (1854–1938): German socialist theorist and leader of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the Second International. His major work, *The Road to Power*, explored the prospects for socialist revolution in Europe, but his general line was legalistic and, in 1914, he justified Germany’s participation in the First World War, thus becoming, in Lenin’s eyes, the “renegade Kautsky.”

Kaypakkaya, İbrahim (1949–1973): Turkish revolutionary, one of the founders of the TKP/ML, the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist, and its armed wing, Liberation Army of the Workers and Peasants of Turkey (TIKKO – Türkiye İşci ve Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu). He launched a people's war, involving guerrilla actions. Kaypakkaya and his comrades were surrounded, shot down, or captured in January 1973. He was brutally tortured without revealing anything about the structures of the TKP/ML, and was murdered in custody on the night of May 17–18, 1973.

Kazantsev, Alexander Petrovich (1906–2002): Soviet journalist and writer. He was the author of adventure and science-fiction novels. A Communist and chess master (author of several studies on the subject), Kazantsev was one of the leaders of the “Proletkult” movement.

Keitel, Wilhelm (1882–1946): German officer wounded in the First World War, who took part in the German Freikorps' fight against the Reds in the Russian Civil War. He became one of the leading generals of the Wehrmacht during the Second World War, holding the position of chief of the high command of Hitler's armed forces from 1938 until the end of the war. He was convicted and hanged at Nuremberg for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Kerensky, Alexander Fyodorovich (1881–1970): Russian politician, Kerensky briefly served as prime minister of the Provisional Government after the February Revolution of 1917. He fled Petrograd during the October Revolution, took part in the counterrevolution, and ended his life in exile in the US.

Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeyevich (1894–1971): Leader of the Communist Party in Ukraine, Khrushchev became first secretary of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) from 1953 to 1964. A leading figure in the process of “de-Stalinization” (20th Congress of the CPSU), he pursued an international policy of peaceful coexistence based on maintaining a global balance of power through atomic deterrence.

Kienthal (Conference): International meeting of socialist activists, held in the Swiss village of Kienthal from April 24–30, 1916, during the First World War. It took place in the wake of the Zimmerwald Conference.

Participants denounced the war and called for immediate peace, without compensation or territorial annexations. A minority led by Lenin advocated transforming the “imperialist war” into a “revolutionary war” and founding a new International.

Kiesewetter, Johann Gottfried (1766–1818): German philosopher and disciple of Kant’s philosophy. He was appointed professor of philosophy in Berlin in 1793, and from 1798 taught logic, philosophy, and mathematics.

Kippenberger, Hans (1898–1937): German communist, leader of the KPD’s military apparatus, he was one of the organizers of the Hamburg Uprising of 1923. Having switched to the Trotskyist opposition, Kippenberger was arrested in Moscow and shot in 1937.

Kızıldere: On March 27, 1972, THKO and THKP-C kidnapped three engineers from a NATO base. On March 30, 1972, in the small town of Kızıldere, in the Tokat region of Turkey, four members of the THKO and nine members of the THKP-C, including Mahir Çayan, were surrounded by 2,000 soldiers who opened fire, killing all the revolutionaries (except one) as well as all the hostages.

Kléber, general: see Stern, Manfred.

KMT: see Kuomintang.

Kobane (Battle): From September 13, 2014 to January 26, 2015, the battle pitted the Kurdish forces of Rojava (YPG and YPJ), supported by international coalition airstrikes, against the jihadist forces of the Islamic State, aided by Turkey at the time. The jihadists managed to take half the town, but were later driven out.

Kolberg (Siege): During the Seven Years’ War, the Prussian town of Kolberg, located in Pomerania, had famously suffered and resisted a major siege. However, the siege mentioned in the present compilation, concerns the one lasting from March to July 2, 1807, during the War of the Fourth Coalition. The Prussian fortress held out against Napoleon’s forces until peace was achieved and the Treaty of Tilsit signed.

Kolchak, Alexander Vasilyevich, admiral (1874–1920): Russian naval officer during the Russo-Japanese War and Arctic explorer, Kolchak became commander of the White Armies in Siberia after the October Revolution,

and was elected supreme governor of Russia by the counterrevolutionary forces. He was captured and executed by the Bolsheviks.

Kongo-Wara Rebellion: Large-scale anti-colonial revolt that took place from 1928–1933 in French Equatorial Africa and French Cameroon. It was provoked by the widespread exploitation of the local population to build the Congo-Ocean Railway and to extract latex. The revolt was put down, but impressed by the scale of the revolt, the colonial administration eased the pressure on the population.

Königgrätz (Battle), or Sadowa (Battle): Pitted the Austrian army against the Prussian army commanded by Helmuth von Moltke, near the present-day Czech town of Hradec Králové, on July 3, 1866. Von Moltke's crushing victory put an end to the Austro-Prussian War and placed Prussia at the head of the German unification process.

Korea (anti-Japanese resistance): Anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare began in 1932. Organized by the Communist Party of Korea, they first operated as part of the Chinese Red Army, then autonomously on both sides of the border between Korea and Manchuria (China), achieving successes such as at the battle of Pochonbo. By 1940, they had been almost totally eradicated.

Korean War: From June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953, this war was waged between the Republic of Korea (South Korea), supported by the Western powers, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), supported by the People's Republic of China and the USSR. Extensive offensives and counteroffensives led each side to occupy almost the entire peninsula at different times, but in the end they returned to the original line of demarcation.

Körner, Theodor (1873–1957): Chief of staff of one of Austria's armies during the First World War, Körner joined the social-democratic movement after the war, becoming a member of parliament and commander of the Schutzbund, the socialist paramilitary organization. He advocated armed resistance against the fascists, and was imprisoned on this occasion. He was arrested again by the Nazis in 1944. mayor of Vienna from 1945, Körner became the first president of Austria to be elected by universal suffrage in 1951.

Kossuth, Lajos (1802–1894): Hungarian revolutionary, Kossuth had been imprisoned for years for press censorship violations by the Austrian authorities. He became the main leader of the 1848–1849 uprising against the Austrian crown. After the revolutionaries' defeat, he went into exile in England, the US and finally Italy.

Kovpak, Sydir Artemovych (1907–1975): Kovpak had been a decorated veteran of the First World War before he joined the Bolsheviks in 1917. During the civil war, he served first in a group of guerrillas, then in Chapayev's division. During Hitler's invasion, he organized partisans in the Soumy region. Between 1942 and 1944, his forces waged a devastating guerrilla war in the German army's rear in the Ukraine.

KPD (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands): Communist Party of Germany, founded in late December 1918 by the Spartacist League. Headed during the interwar period by Ernst Thälmann, it was the most powerful Communist party in Western Europe. Banned and persecuted by the Nazis, the party split at the start of the Cold War. In the East, it became the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), absorbing the local Social Democrats. In the West, the KPD was banned in 1956.

Krasin, Leonid Borisovich (1870–1926): Russian revolutionary and engineer, Krasin played an important role in the 1905 revolution in St. Petersburg, leading the Bolshevik's combat organization. After the October Revolution, he became People's Commissar for Foreign Trade.

Kronstadt Rebellion: On March 1, 1921, the sailors of the Kronstadt garrison rose up against the measures of war communism taken by the Soviet authorities led by the Bolshevik Party. They demanded elections, freedom of the press, the abolition of wartime requisitions and the restoration of the free market. The revolt was crushed by the Red Army on March 18.

Krupskaya, Nadezhda (1869–1939): Krupskaya was a Russian revolutionary, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Lenin's wife. She exerted a strong influence on the Soviet education system as Deputy Commissar for Education from 1929 to 1939.

Kuhne—born Kuhn von Kuhnfeld, Frantz (1859–1942): Austrian general who took part in the Austro-Hungarian Empire's campaigns against the forces of Italian unification, and who fought in the Balkans

as well as in the First World War. He wrote the famous *Der Gebirgskrieg* (*Mountain Warfare*, 1870).

Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party, KMT): founded in 1912 by Sun Yat-sen following the Wuchang Uprising which put an end to imperial rule. At its beginnings, the Party stood for democracy, nationalism, anti-imperialism and social welfare for the people. The KMT won its first elections, but was subsequently banned and persecuted. In a China torn apart by warlords, the KMT received decisive help from the Comintern from 1922 onwards, enabling it to set up a government in Guangzhou (Canton) and train its own army. The KMT became allied with the Communist Party of China (CPC) before Sun Yat-sen died in 1925. Chiang Kai-shek, who succeeded him, successfully led the KMT army in the Northern Expedition against the warlords, but, being close to the upper middle class and landowners, turned against the communists. The KMT seized power and established a dictatorial regime. However, the Second Sino-Japanese war put the KMT government in difficulty, and forced it to form an anti-Japanese united front with the CPC. Civil war resumed with the defeat of Japan, and the overwhelmed KMT forces retreated to Taiwan.

Kursk (Battle): During the Second World War, from July 5 to August 23, 1943, the forces of Nazi Germany clashed with those of the USSR in the southwest of Russia. The battle of Kursk was the largest tank battle in history, and the last major attempt by Hitler's forces to regain the initiative on the eastern front after their defeat at Stalingrad. It proved to be a great Soviet victory.

Kutuzov, Mikhail Illarionovich (1745–1813): Russian field marshal, Kutuzov won many victories in the wars against the Ottoman Empire. Defeated at Austerlitz, he led the Russian armies to victory over Napoleon's forces in Russia in 1812, using a strategy of attrition and avoiding a premature confrontation.

La Fayette Conspiracy: This revolutionary secret society, also known as the “Association de Janvier” or “Association des Patriotes,” which organized students and workers in France, was created in January 1830. Highly organized, it played a decisive role in the preparation and unleashing of the July Revolution.

La Fayette, Gilbert du Motier de (1757–1834): French officer who commanded the French contingent that came to help the Americans against British forces during the War of Independence. He is credited with victory at the Battle of Yorktown. A figure of the first period of the French Revolution, La Fayette commanded the National Guard, but switched to the counterrevolutionary side in 1792. He played a political role again during the July Monarchy.

La Marne (Battle): During the First World War, from September 5 to September 12, 1914, this battle opposed the German and French armies, aided by the British Expeditionary Corps. The Franco-British troops stopped and then pushed back the Germans, thwarting Schlieffen's plan for a rapid invasion of France.

La Matanza: In 1932, the poor peasantry of El Salvador rose up against the military dictatorship and the large landowners. Communists, including Farabundo Martí, who had experience of the Sandinista guerrilla war, played a leading role. Over a three-week period, the army and paramilitaries massacred more than 30,000 people, i.e., around 4% of the country's population. Farabundo Martí was among those killed.

La Violencia (The Violence): Period in Colombian history beginning in 1948 with the assassination of a liberal politician who was expected to win the presidential election, and leading to an open or latent, but always deadly, civil war between liberals and conservatives until the early 1960s. The conservatives imposed their rule, sometimes in fascist and genocidal forms, which led to the formation of self-defense movements, from which guerrillas such as FARC emerged. La Violencia led to the deaths of between 200,000 and 300,000 Colombians, and the forced migration of over two million others, particularly to urban centers.

Lace wars: 18th century designation for wars fought by small professional armies, commanded by princes engaging in “polite” maneuvers and sieges instead of outright battles. This term is mainly used to contrast with “total wars,” the kind of mass-based wars that emerged from the French Revolution.

Land and Liberty: Russian revolutionary underground organization belonging to the Narodnik movement, founded in 1860. In 1879, the movement split into an armed organization, People's Will, and an organi-

zation more focused on propaganda work in the countryside, Black Repar-
tition.

Lao, Zi—also known as Lao Tzu (6th century BC): Philosopher, author of the famous *Daodejing* (*Tao Te Ching* [Wade-Giles]: The Book of the Way and of Virtue), which offers advice to rulers, and provides principles of individual self-improvement as well as naturalistic and cosmological explanations, emphasizing virtue, emptiness, passivity and harmony. It is the founding book of Daoism.

Lawrence, Thomas Edward, also known as “Lawrence of Arabia” (1888–1935): a British military officer with an orientalist outlook, Lawrence was assigned to the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. He achieved great success there, and wrote a number of famous works, including *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

Lebanon (Invasion): This was the second invasion of Lebanon by the Israeli army, with the aim of wiping out the PLO forces in the south of the country. Launched on June 6, 1982, it led to the siege of Beirut and the massacre of Palestinian civilians by fascist militias allied to Israel. In mid-August 1982, an agreement was reached to evacuate the PLO and Syrian forces from Beirut. Israel maintains its occupation of southern Lebanon.

Left Opposition: Bolshevik Party tendency active between 1923–1927, made up of Trotskyites and some former members of the Workers’ Opposi-
sition. In December 1927, Trotskyism was declared incompatible with party membership, and members of the Left Opposition were excluded.

Lehén, Tuure (1893–1976): Finnish army officer and leader of the Finn-
ish Communist Party. A specialist in military matters, Lehén trained many Comintern cadres. Chief of staff of the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War, he became a general in the Soviet Army after the Sec-
ond World War.

Leipzig (Battle): On October 16 and 19, 1813, this battle pitted Napo-
leon’s Grande Armée, reconstituted after the Russian Campaign, against the forces of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Sweden, who had joined up under the umbrella of the Sixth Coalition. Called the “Battle of the Nations,” it was one of the most important battles of the Napoleonic Wars, and its scale remained unrivalled until the First World War.

Lemière de Corvey, Jean-Frédéric-Auguste (1766–1852): French composer, officer, writer and playwright. A volunteer soldier in the wars of the Revolution, and an officer under the Empire, Lemière de Corvey wrote numerous operas and a number of military works, including the famous *Des partisans et des corps irréguliers* (*On partisanship and irregular corps*), the founding work of guerrilla theories.

Lenin, Vladimir Ilyich, born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870–1924): Russian revolutionary and leader of the Bolshevik Party. After many years of struggle, deportation, and exile, Lenin played the leading role in the 1917 Revolution, overthrowing the provisional government and becoming the first head of government of the first socialist state. Lenin wrote numerous contributions to Marxist theory, giving birth to Marxism-Leninism.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519): Italian artist, engineer and scientist, one of the leading figures of the Renaissance. His creativity and ingenuity left an important legacy in the fields of art, science, and technology.

Lettow-Vorbeck, Paul von (1870–1964): German general who led colonial expeditions in China (against the Boxers) and Namibia (Hottentot Uprising and Herero Wars). He led an undefeated resistance, under unequal conditions, against British, Belgian, and Portuguese forces in German East Africa during the First World War.

Levée en masse (“Mass Levy”): On March 2, 1793, the French revolutionary authorities decided to mobilize 300,000 men to defend France against the armies of the Aristocracy. Each “département” (province) was asked to provide volunteers, supplemented by the conscripted troops. This mass mobilization considerably strengthened the army, but gave rise to popular discontent, particularly in the Vendée region.

Ligne, Prince de: see de Ligne.

Ligny (Battle): This battle was fought between the French army and Marshal Blücher’s Prussian army in Belgium on June 16, 1815. Napoleon’s victory (his last) was not decisive: the Prussian army was not destroyed, and could intervene decisively two days later at the Battle of Waterloo.

Lin, Biao (1907–1971): Military officer and leader of the Communist Party of China. Trained at the Huangpu Military Academy, Lin Biao took part in the Northern Expedition in 1926–1927. He joined Mao Zedong

and became one of the main communist military leaders, playing a major role in the Long March, the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War. In *Long Live the Victory of People's War!* he compares the Tricontinent to the world's "countryside," as opposed to the Western countries, which he considered to be its "cities," and which ought to be encircled according to Maoist strategy.

Lincoln, Abraham (1809–1865): 16th President of the US from 1861 until his assassination in 1865. He led the Union during the American Civil War and abolished slavery in the US.

Líster Forján, Enrique (1907–1994): Spanish Communist, Líster received his political and military training at the Lenin School in Moscow, and was one of the main organizers and commanders of the Republican armed forces during the Civil War. A member of the PCE leadership in exile in the USSR, he was sent to France at the end of the Second World War to organize communist guerrillas in Spain. He returned to Spain after the end of the Franco regime.

Little Bighorn (Battle): A US Army cavalry regiment fought a coalition of Cheyenne and Sioux troops on June 25–26, 1876, during the Black Hills War in present-day Montana. The outcome was an outright victory for the Native Americans.

Liu, Shaoqi (1898–1969): Liu was one of the main leaders of the Communist Party of China and the People's Republic of China. He opposed Mao Zedong following the failures of the "Great Leap Forward," and became thereafter the main target of the Cultural Revolution. Consequently, he was arrested and died after having been left in prison without medical care.

Lloyd George, David (1863–1945): British politician and leader of the Liberal Party, Lloyd George was prime minister of the United Kingdom from 1916 to 1922. He led the country through the First World War and was a key player in the negotiations for the Treaty of Versailles.

Long March: Episode of the Chinese Civil War. After several setbacks, Kuomintang (KMT) forces finally gained the upper hand over those belonging to the Soviet republic established in 1931 by the Communist Party of China (CPC) in the liberated territories of Jiangxi. The CPC then decided on a strategic retreat that broke the KMT's encirclement on October 15, 1934, and was completed on October 19, 1935. The

communist forces covered some 12,000 kilometers (7500 miles), losing between 90,000 and 100,000 men, but saving themselves from annihilation. It was during the Long March that Mao Zedong took over the leadership of the CPC.

Longwy (Siege): The Siege took place from July to September 1815, following Napoleon's decisive defeat at the Battle of Waterloo. The garrison held out against the troops of the Prince of Hesse-Homburg, with the help of local "francs-tireurs" (literally, "free shooters") who harassed the besiegers. After three months of resistance, the devastated town surrendered for lack of ammunition.

Louis XIII "the Just" (1601–1643): Member of the House of Bourbon, King of France from 1610 to 1643. Louis XIII asserted the unity of the kingdom and royal power against the Protestants, the *grandees* and Spain, relying on his prime minister, Cardinal de Richelieu.

Louis XIV, known as "Louis the Great" or the "Sun King" (1638–1715): Member of the House of Bourbon, King of France from 1643–1715. Under his reign, France became Europe's greatest political, military, and cultural power, but was brought to ruin by a constant state of war.

Louis XV (1710–1774): Member of the House of Bourbon, King of France from 1715 to 1774. Nicknamed "the Beloved" at the beginning of his reign, he became unpopular when the kingdom's situation weakened, notably during the Seven Years' War, which increased the nation's tax burden.

Louis XVI (1754–1793): Member of the House of Bourbon. During his reign, France experienced financial and political crises, leading to the French Revolution. Louis XVI was deposed, tried and guillotined.

Lozovsky, Alexander, born Dridzo, Salomon (1878–1952): Bolshevik activist from his early teens, Losovsky was arrested for the first time in 1903. He led the 1905 insurrection in Kazan. Once again arrested, he escaped and spent the next ten years in exile in France, where he became a leading trade unionist. An activist belonging to the Zimmerwald Conference's left wing, he returned to Russia in June 1917, where he became a Soviet trade union leader. He was the founder and main leader of the Profintern, the Red International of Labor Unions, and was executed in Moscow.

Ludendorff, Erich (1865–1937): Ludendorff, who defeated the Russians at Tannenberg in 1914, became one of Germany's main military commanders during the First World War, and was a proponent of "Unrestricted warfare," leading to his theorization of "Total war." A reactionary and militaristic politician, Ludendorff was close to the Nazis before distancing himself from them.

Lukács, General: see Zalka, Maté.

Lukács, György (1885–1971): Hungarian philosopher and literary critic. Lukács took part in Hungary's Soviet revolution in 1919. He returned to Hungary from exile in 1945. Lukács was one of the most important Marxist thinkers of the 20th century, particularly for his contribution to the theory of reification and class consciousness.

Lunacharsky, Anatoly (1875–1933): Russian revolutionary and writer, prominent member of the Bolshevik Party. Lunacharsky held high positions in the USSR in the fields of culture (where he both protected the nation's cultural heritage while encouraging at the same time the avant-garde) and education (he was Commissar for Education from October 1917 to 1929).

Luo, Ruiqing (1911–1978): A member of the Communist Party of China since 1927, Luo Ruiqing took part in the Nanchang uprising, and subsequently held a number of leading positions in the Red Army, overseeing the training of cadres. After 1948, he was appointed minister of Public Security and member of the Central Military Commission. He took part in the Korean War. Luo was appointed chief of the General Staff, but lost this position in 1965 following a disagreement with Mao and Lin Biao. Severely criticized during the Cultural Revolution, he attempted to commit suicide. In 1975, he was rehabilitated by Mao at a meeting of the Central Military Commission, and returned to a position of high responsibility.

Luther, Martin (1483–1546): Monk and theologian, his criticism of the Catholic Church, particularly the sale of indulgences, led to the publication of his famous Ninety-five Theses in 1517, which triggered the Protestant Reformation. His translation of the Bible helped spread Protestantism in Germany.

Lützen (Battle): This battle saw Napoleon's Grande Armée, reconstituted after the Russian campaign, face off against the Russian and Prussian armies of the Sixth Coalition on May 2, 1813. Napoleon remained in control, but the battle was not decisive.

Luxemburg, Rosa (1871–1919): Polish revolutionary and Marxist theoretician, historic figure on the German socialist left, Luxemburg opposed the war in 1914 and was therefore imprisoned. She co-founded the German Communist Party (KPD) in 1918, and was assassinated by the military during the Spartacist Uprising. She became a key figure of the communist left.

MacArthur, Douglas (1880–1964): American general. MacArthur was decorated several times during the First World War, served as Chief of Staff in the 1930s, and was stationed in the Philippines during the Japanese invasion of 1941. He commanded American forces in the Pacific during the Second World War and the Korean War.

Macedonian Revolt, also called the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising: Macedonian uprising against Ottoman rule in 1903. 15,000 Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) fighters took up arms against 40,000 Ottoman soldiers. The revolt lasted from the beginning of August to the end of October 1903, covering a vast territory from the Black Sea to Kosovo. It was cruelly repressed. Its survivors waged a guerilla war against the Ottomans for many years.

Machiavelli, Niccolò di Bernardo dei (1469–1527): Italian political thinker, philosopher, and writer. He participated in the political life of his native city of Florence. Machiavelli took on military responsibilities and studied war and politics on a rational basis, independent of moral or religious considerations. He is the author of *The Prince* and *The Art of War*, two classics of political and military literature.

Madero González, Francisco Ignacio (1873–1913): Mexican politician and democratic reformer, Madero González was one of the main leaders of the revolution that put an end to the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz in 1910. Later elected to the presidency, he was assassinated in a coup d'état by reactionary military officers.

Maginot Line: Named after French Minister André Maginot, this was a powerful line of fortifications built by the French military, mainly along

the border with Germany, but also with Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and Italy, from 1928–1940. It was “turned” in May 1940 by the German Blitzkrieg forces, which had crossed the Ardennes.

Mahdist War: Uprising of Sudanese Muslim populations led by a messianic religious leader (the Mahdi) against British and Egyptian forces. Fighting lasted from 1881–1889 in Sudan, southern Egypt, and the border regions of Eritrea and Ethiopia. Despite initial successes, including the capture of Khartoum on January 26, 1885, the Mahdists were defeated.

Makhno, Nestor (1888–1934): Ukrainian revolutionary and anarchist military leader. He commanded the Revolutionary Insurgent Army of Ukraine (Makhnovtsi) during the Russian Civil War. Makhno died in exile.

Makhnovshchina: Anarchist-inspired peasant uprising in southern Ukraine between 1917 and 1921, during the Russian Civil War. It was named after its leader, Nestor Makhno. The Makhnovchchina was initially allied with the Soviet government, with whom it fought the Whites, but later came into conflict with it. It was outlawed in 1920 and gradually crushed by the Red Army.

Malagasy Uprising: The return of Malagasy (native to Madagascar) soldiers who had enlisted in the Second World War, along with widespread discrimination and miserable living conditions, provoked an uprising in March 1947. Tens of thousands of people were killed, tortured, forcibly regrouped, and villages were burned.

Malatesta, Errico (1853–1932): An anarchist revolutionary, he theorized libertarian communism and advocated “propaganda of the deed” within the First International (AIT), of which he was secretary of the Italian section. In 1877, he attempted to raise the poor peasantry of Benevento, but failed. He was detained and exiled several times.

Malayan Communist Party (CPM): Founded in 1930 in the struggle against British colonialism, the CPM has a strong base among Malays of Chinese origin, and is close to the Communist Party of China. From 1941–1945, it organized armed resistance against the Japanese occupiers in Malaysia. In 1948, the CPM launched an armed struggle by founding its military wing, the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA). The British army eventually defeated the insurrection in 1960.

Malayan Emergency (Maoist People's War): In 1948, the Communist Party of Malaya founded the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) and launched a Maoist-style people's war against British colonial rule. The British army was eventually defeated in 1960, despite the development of counter-insurgency methods ("strategic hamlets") which were later generalized. The MNLA remained active until 1989.

Malaysia (anti-Japanese resistance): Malaysia, a part of the British Empire, was invaded by Imperial Japanese troops on December 8, 1941 and fully occupied on February 15, 1943. The brutality of the military administration and the atrocities committed, particularly against the large Chinese community, provoked strong popular resistance. The Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army, founded by the Communist Party of Malaya with British help, developed guerrilla and sabotage activities.

Malevich, Kazimir Severinovich (1878–1935): Painter and art theoretician, Malevich was a leading figure of the Russian avant-garde. Along with other members of his artistic movement ("Suprematism," which turned away from natural forms to achieve the "supremacy" of pure feeling), he took part in Soviet cultural life and worked to bring the revolution to the cultural front.

Malta (Siege): Malta had been taken in June 1798 by Bonaparte during his Egyptian campaign. In 1800, the British blockaded the island and seized it in 1802.

Mamontov, Constantin (1888–1919): Russian general, he was a commander in the Russo-Japanese War, in the First World War and in the ranks of the White armies during the Russian Civil War. He commanded a Cossack cavalry corps before dying of typhus.

Managua (Riots): Final episode of the Sandinista Revolution. In July 1979, the Nicaraguan capital rose up in response to a call from the Sandinista Front, bringing down the dictatorship.

Manchuria (Communist victory): Episode of the Chinese Civil War. From September 12 to November 12, 1948, a major battle opposed the Communist and Nationalist armies. The campaign ended with the capture of Shenyang and Changchun by the Red Army, which took definitive control of Manchuria.

Mandela, Nelson (1918–2013): joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1943 to fight against racial segregation and white minority domination. In 1961, he founded the ANC's armed wing, uMkhonto weSizwe. Arrested in 1962, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. After 27 years in prison, he led the negotiations that put an end to apartheid, was elected president of the Republic and pursued a policy of national reconciliation between whites and blacks.

Mao-spontex: A French political movement born of May '68, influenced by Maoism and the Cultural Revolution. It based its politics on the creativity and revolutionary spontaneity of the masses, the struggle against hierarchies and the practice of direct action and collective illegality.

Mao, Zedong (1893–1976): Chinese communist leader, theoretician and statesman. He became the main leader of the Communist Party of China during the Long March and proclaimed the People's Republic of China in 1949. One of Mao's main contributions to Marxism-Leninism was to establish the principles of protracted people's war. He also wrote philosophical texts such as *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*.

March Action: insurrectionary general strike in Germany in March 1921, during the Weimar Republic, led by the KPD. The strike ended in failure.

March First Movement: On March 1, 1919, hundreds of thousands of people marched peacefully in Seoul, demanding Korean independence. Demonstrations spread throughout the country, and offices of the Japanese colonial administration were attacked. Repression was extremely violent throughout 1919, with torture and massacres (7,000 dead, 45,000 wounded, 49,000 prisoners). The movement forced the Japanese to replace their military administration of Korea with a civilian administration.

Marengo (Battle): On June 14, 1800, a French force commanded by General Bonaparte fought an Austrian army in Piedmont, Italy. The French victory put an end to the War of the Second Coalition.

Marighella, Carlos (1911–1969): Brazilian revolutionary, leader of the Brazilian Communist Party, which he left to found an armed resistance organization against the military dictatorship: the National Liberation Action (ALN – Ação Libertadora Nacional). Marighella wrote a famous

Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla in 1969. He was murdered by the dictatorship's security forces.

Marquetalia Republic: Autonomous zone created in 1958 in Colombia, in the context of La Violencia. It aimed at protecting peasants from military brutality and death squads working for the conservative party, and who were countered by peasants' self-defense groups. The Colombian army attacked and eliminated the stronghold on June 22, 1964, but most of the defenders escaped the encirclement and, triggering guerrilla warfare, formed the initial nucleus of FARC.

Marquetalia: see Republic of Marquetalia.

Martov, Julius, born Yuliy Osipovich Tsederbaum (1873–1923): Historic leader of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party and later of its Menshevik current. A pacifist during the First World War (unlike the official Menshevik line), he was opposed to the October Revolution but, once again in contrast to the other Mensheviks, he did not join the counterrevolution. Martov died in exile.

Marx, Karl (1818–1883): German philosopher, economist and communist theorist. Initially a left-wing Hegelian, Marx became a member of the Communist League alongside Engels. He took part in the 1848 revolution and helped found the First International. He was one of the founders of scientific socialism, and the author of *Capital*, a seminal work on political economy.

Mau Mau rebellion: anti-colonial insurrectionary movement of the Kikuyu people in Kenya. Launched in 1950, it led the British to declare a state of emergency in 1952. By the end of 1956, more than 100,000 rebels and civilians had been killed, and over 300,000 other Kikuyus were locked up in camps.

Mayakovsky, Vladimir Vladimirovich (1893–1930): Poet, playwright, artist, and actor, Mayakovsky was a leading figure of the Russian artistic avant-garde. An enthusiastic supporter of the October Revolution, he founded the Komfut (Communist-Futurist) collective to bring the revolution to the cultural front.

Mazumdar, Charu (1918–1972): Indian communist, he led a pro-Chinese current during the split in the Communist Party of India. In 1967,

he played a leading role in the Naxalbari uprising and with the Maoist guerrillas that followed. He was arrested on July 16, 1972, and died a few days later in his cell. The political tendency he founded gave birth to the Communist Party of India (Maoist).

Mazzini, Giuseppe (1805–1872): Italian revolutionary and patriot, he participated in and supported all insurrectionary movements aimed at establishing a democratic and united Italian republic. After the founding of the Kingdom of Italy, he was voted in as a deputy while still in exile. He opposed both the monarchy and the socialist movement.

Mehring, Franz (1846–1919): Publicist and politician, first a democrat, then a socialist, he joined the SPD in 1891. Mehring was a Marxist theoretician and leader of the German labor movement, and wrote several works on German history and the history of the socialist movement. Opposed to the war, he distanced himself from the SPD and was one of the founders of the KPD.

Menshevik (“Minority”): A current within the Russian Social Democratic Labour Movement formed in November 1903 and led by Georgi Plekhanov, advocating a party open to the broad masses, where the Bolsheviks advocated a party of revolutionaries. Disagreements multiplied, and the Menshevik faction, hostile to the October Revolution, was excluded from the soviets in 1918, then banned after the Kronstadt revolt. The Mensheviks then joined the side of the Whites in the civil war.

Mexican Revolution: The Mexican Revolution began with an insurrection launched by the bourgeois reformer Madero on November 20, 1910, against the dictatorship of General Porfirio Díaz, who had been in power since 1876. The uprising progressed; Madero came to power in 1911, but was assassinated in February 1913 following a military coup. The new government was defeated by the forces of liberal politician Carranza, and by popular leaders Pancho Villa (in the state of Chihuahua) and Emiliano Zapata (in Morelos).

Miaja Menant, José, general (1878–1958): A Spanish soldier, Miaja played a decisive role in the victorious defense of Madrid in November and December 1936, during the Spanish Civil War. For several months, he was minister of defense, and fought until the end of the war, after which he was forced into exile in Mexico.

Milan (Revolution of 1848): On March 18, 1848, the city rose up against the domination of the Austrian Empire. After five days of fighting (the “Five Days of Milan”), a provisional bourgeois government was established. It appealed to King Charles Albert of Sardinia, who declared war on Austria, but the latter was victorious and retook the city. Episode of the “Springtime of Nations.”

Militarized Communist Party of Peru (Militarized PCP): The “Proseguir” faction within the Communist Party of Peru (PCP), which pursued a strategy of people’s war despite Gonzalo’s supposed Peace Letters, founded the Militarized PCP in 2018, to wage guerrilla warfare in the vast forested regions of the Amazonian Andes mountainside.

Ming dynasty (1368–1644): Chinese dynasty that succeeded the Mon-gol Yuan dynasty. The Ming waged many wars against other states and dynasties. Its reign marked a period of great demographic, economic and cultural development for China, particularly under the Yongle and Wanli emperors.

MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Chile – Revolutionary Left Movement): The MIR was a revolutionary communist organization inspired by Guevarism, founded on October 12, 1965. Its activities were essentially legal and paralegal, but the MIR did carry out a few armed propaganda actions and, in 1970, supported Salvador Allende’s candidacy. Severely affected by the repression following the coup d’état of September 11, 1973, the MIR managed to lead the resistance against the dictatorship. The MIR split several times, both in Chile and in exile.

MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria—Peru – Peruvian Revolutionary Left Movement): The MIR was a revolutionary communist organization founded in 1962 and inspired by Guevarism. In 1964, failed attempts at government reform and violent clashes between peasants and landowners led the MIR to launch a guerrilla war the following year. The three MIR guerrilla outposts were wiped out within a few months by the Peruvian army.

Mirabeau, Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, comte de (1749–1791): French politician and author of *Essai sur le despotisme* (*Essay on Despotism*), he was a major figure in the French Revolution, helping to draft the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Nicknamed “The People’s Ora-

tor,” after his death his corpse was transferred to the Pantheon (the mausoleum of French Republican heroes), but was removed after his secret, paid relationship with the king was discovered, to whom he advised acceptance of a constitutional regime.

Mironov, Filipp Kuzmich (1891–1937): A Cossack officer who had fought in the Russo-Japanese War and the First World War, he rallied the Bolsheviks during the October Revolution and became commander of the 2nd Cavalry Army. He came into conflict with the Army leadership and was arrested and shot.

MKP: The Maoist Communist Party (Maoist Komünist Partisi) was founded in 1994 as a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist split from the TKP/ML. Its armed wing is the HKO, the People's Liberation Army. The MKP is a member of the HBDH.

MLKP: The Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (Marksist-Leninist Komünist Partisi) was created in September 1994 following a process of unification—begun in 1989—of several Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations. It has a strong presence in Rojava and is a member of the HBDH.

MLSPB (Marksist Leninist Silahlı Propaganda Birliği – Marxist-Leninist Armed Propaganda Unit): The MLSPB is a Turkish revolutionary organization founded in 1975. This organization, which prioritized urban guerrilla warfare, was almost totally wiped out by the 1980 coup d'état. Today it is a member of the BÖG and HBDH.

Modesto Guilloto León, Juan (1906–1969): Military man and member of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE), he underwent political-military training in the Soviet Union. He took on important military functions during the Spanish Civil War. He distinguished himself as a commander in several battles, and ended the war as head of the Central Region Army Group. Upon defeat, Modesto left for the USSR, where he was recognized as a commander. He was a general in the Bulgarian army that fought the Nazis following the 1944 uprising, and died in exile in Prague.

MOLIPO (Movimento de Libertação Popular – Popular Liberation Movement): MOLIPO was a Brazilian revolutionary organization founded in 1970 by ALN members undergoing training in Cuba, who disagreed with their organization's line. The group led an armed struggle

in Brazil, but was decimated by repression in 1971–1972 and finally liquidated in 1973.

Molotov, born Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich Skryabin (1890–1986): Molotov was a Bolshevik revolutionary, member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party since 1906, and one of the founders of the *Pravda* newspaper. He held many important positions in the Soviet government, including foreign minister and prime minister. He fell out of favor under Khrushchev.

Moltke (the Elder), Helmuth Karl Bernhard von (1800–1891): Prussian field marshal and great strategist, he led the Prussian army to victory in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871. He wrote a history of the Franco-Prussian War and numerous works on strategy, which had a lasting influence on military thought.

Moltke (the Younger), Helmuth Johannes Ludwig von (1848–1916): German general, nephew of Moltke the Elder, he prepared the German war plans for the First World War as chief of the German General Staff from 1906 to 1914. He directed their implementation until the German defeat at the Battle of the Marne.

Moncada (Attack on the Moncada barracks): The assault was carried out on July 26, 1953 in Santiago de Cuba, by a group of revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro, with the aim of provoking a general insurrection. The attack failed, and the assailants were either killed or captured. This represents the first stage of the Cuban revolution.

Monge, Gaspard (1746–1818): French mathematician and geometer, his contributions were decisive in the fields of descriptive geometry, spherical trigonometry, and cartography. A staunch Republican and ardent supporter of the Revolution, Monge worked on military and educational projects. He was a founding member of the École Polytechnique.

Mongolia (Civil War): Following the Wuchan uprising of 1911, Mongolia declared its independence, but Chinese troops took advantage of the Russian revolution to enter Mongolia. The independence and communist movements unified and liberated Mongolia from the Chinese and White Russian armies.

Monteneros: Argentine political and military organization that practiced armed struggle between 1970 and 1979. Influenced by Christian socialism and Castroism, the Monteneros originally belonged to the left wing of the Peronist Resistance. They distanced themselves from Peron, who returned to power and pursued a right-wing agenda. Consequently, they went back underground and took up arms again. The Monteneros then led the resistance against General Videla's military dictatorship, and were almost all massacred between 1976–1979.

Moro, Aldo (1916–1978): Italian Christian Democratic politician, Aldo Moro was a member of parliament in 1946, a minister in 1955 and leader of the Christian Democracy Party from 1959 to 1963. He was twice president of the Italian Council of Ministers and twice head of Italian diplomacy. A proponent of an alliance between Christian Democracy and the Italian Communist Party (PCI) designed to stabilize the country by creating a pact between the two largest parliamentary forces, he was kidnapped and executed in 1978 by the Red Brigades.

Movimento Revolucionário 8 de Outubro: see MR-8.

MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola – People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola): The MPLA was born in 1956 from the merger of the Communist Party of Angola and the Party of the United Struggle for Africans in Angola, to fight the Portuguese colonial regime. It was the main force in the war of independence that ended in 1975, and the MPLA went on to lead the People's Republic of Angola. With the help of Cuba and the USSR, it emerged victorious from a long civil war against the guerrillas of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA – União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola) and the National Liberation Front of Angola, supported by Zaire (current day Democratic Republic of the Congo), the US and South Africa.

MR-13 (Movimiento Revolucionario 13 Noviembre – Revolutionary Movement 13th November): On November 13, 1960, officers sympathetic to the Cuban revolution attempted a coup in Guatemala against the regime that had emerged from a CIA backed putsch. The coup failed, and MR-13 became a guerrilla organization, one of the founding forces of the Rebel Armed Forces (FAR).

MR-8 (Movimento Revolucionário 8 de Outubro – 8th October Revolutionary Movement): MR-8 (named after Che Guevara's death on October 8, 1967) was a Brazilian revolutionary organization that broke away from the Brazilian Communist Party. It began armed resistance against the dictatorship in 1966. In 1969, MR-8 and ALN kidnapped the American ambassador. MR-8 was wiped out by repression in 1972.

MRTA (Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru – Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement): Peruvian revolutionary communist political-military organization, inspired by the Cuban revolution, founded on March 1, 1982. Its guerrilla war began on January 22, 1984. On December 17, 1996, MRTA guerrillas seized the Japanese ambassador's residence during a reception attended by hundreds of members of the Peruvian upper class. In response, the government refused to exchange prisoners. The assault by the armed forces, after 4 months of siege, resulted in the massacre of all commando members, including those who had surrendered. The MRTA was dismantled shortly afterwards.

Munich hostage crisis: On September 5 and 6, 1972, during the 1972 Olympic Games, a Palestinian commando took Israeli athletes hostage and demanded the release of 236 Palestinian activists held in Israel and two RAF activists detained in Germany. The German police launched an ill-conceived and badly executed assault: one policeman, five Palestinians and eleven Israelis were killed.

Murat, Joachim (1767–1815): A non-commissioned officer under the Ancien Régime and supporter of the French Revolution, Murat played an important role in Napoleon's campaigns as marshal and cavalry commander. He married Napoleon's sister, who made him King of Naples. He was executed in Italy during the Restoration.

Muridist revolt: The Muridist Muslim peoples of the Caucasus, starting with the Chechens, had resisted Russian colonization from 1817–1864. The Russian victory and annexation of Ciscaucasia did not put an end to guerrilla warfare and major revolts (in 1865–1866 and 1877). During the Russian Civil War, a new Muridist insurrection took place, which was crushed by the Soviet authorities.

Nanchang Uprising: Following the Kuomintang's betrayal of its alliance with the communists and subsequent Shanghai Massacre, the commu-

nists staged an uprising in Nanchang on July 31. The uprising succeeded but remained isolated. Threatened with encirclement, the communist forces—20,000 men commanded by Zhou Enlai and Zhu De—left the city on August 5 and, after a 600 kilometers (370 miles) trek, met up in April 1928 with Mao Zedong's forces, who had fled following the failure of the Autumn Harvest Uprising.

Nanyue, “Southern Yue,” or Nam Viet: Kingdom located in the present-day Chinese provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, and Yunnan, as well as in part of northern Vietnam. It resisted the Chinese Qin and Han dynasties, as well as later Mongol and Yuan invasions. Their territory was finally annexed by the Han dynasty in 111 BC.

Napier, William Francis Patrick (1785–1860): British general and historian, he took part in Wellington's campaigns against Napoleon in the Spanish War of Independence. His *History of the War in the Peninsula* is a classic.

Napoleon I (1769–1821): French soldier and statesman. He distinguished himself at Toulon and then in Italy as a general in the armies of the Revolution. He came to power in 1799 through a coup d'état, and was crowned emperor in 1804. As general-in-chief and head of state, he fought off various coalitions of European monarchies. He won many brilliant victories (Ulm, Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland), but was defeated in the Russian campaign, then in Germany, and finally in France. He abdicated (First Restoration), returned from exile and regained the throne (Hundred Days), only to be definitively defeated at Waterloo in 1815.

Napoleon III (1808–1873): Charles-Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, nephew of Napoleon I, was President of the Second French Republic from 1848–1852, before proclaiming himself Emperor of the French (Second Empire) under the name of Napoleon III. He relied on a commercial bourgeoisie and pursued an expansionist policy (in Italy and Mexico). His empire collapsed during the Franco-Prussian War.

Narodniks (“Those from among the people”): Russian revolutionary movement founded in 1874, whose doctrine was inspired by 19th century Russian conditions and which advocated for a federation of autonomous village communities. After suppressed attempts to propagate their doctrine peacefully, in 1876 they transformed into a clandestine organization called

Land and Liberty, which in turn split in 1879 into two organizations: **People's Will** and **Black Repartition**.

Nat Turner's Rebellion: Slave revolt in Southampton County, Virginia, US on August 21, 1831. Led by slave and African-American Baptist preacher Nathaniel "Nat" Turner, the revolt lasted two days before being put down by the local militia. Nat Turner was hanged on November 11 with eighteen of his companions, and his body was mutilated afterwards.

Navarre, Henri Eugène (1898–1983): French general who fought in the **First and Second World Wars** and was commander of the French Far East Expeditionary Corps during the **First Indochina War**.

Naxalbari Uprising: Peasant uprising in the village of Naxalbari, which triggered a widespread revolt in West Bengal (India). The communists, who had been firmly established in the region since 1965–1966, had organized peasant committees. On March 3, 1967, peasants began seizing land from large landowners. The uprising spread despite murderous police repression, until the government brought in paramilitary forces, which crushed the insurrection in July. The insurrection contributed to the formation of a Maoist current within the Indian communist movement, whose descendant is the **CPI(Maoist)** and whose activists are still sometimes referred to as "Naxalites."

Nazi: The National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi Party, was founded in 1920 under the **Weimar Republic**. Nationalist, racist, and war-mongering, it came to power on January 30, 1933, when its leader, **Adolf Hitler**, was appointed chancellor of the Reich. He instituted a policy of political and racial persecution at home, and a militaristic and imperialist policy abroad, which led to the **Second World War** and the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Neapolitan Revolution of 1820: Following the restoration of the **Bourbon-Two Sicilies** dynasty and the founding of the **Kingdom of the Two Sicilies**, supporters of a constitutional government and Italian unification organized themselves under the banner of **Carbonarism**. On the night of July 1–2, 1820, a group of Carbonarist soldiers sparked an uprising that was followed by popular uprisings in other parts of the kingdom. King Ferdinand I of the Two Sicilies was forced to grant a constitution on July 7, 1820.

NEP (New Economic Policy): Economic policy implemented by the Bolsheviks from 1921, at the end of the Russian Civil War, aimed at moving away from War Communism and making way for a temporary market economy. Massive speculation by wealthy peasants during the grain crisis of 1928 triggered the end of the NEP and the beginning of the policy of collectivization and industrialization.

Nepal (Maoist People's War): On February 13, 1996, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) launched an insurrection against the country's monarchical regime. The revolt, which started in three districts, spread to 68 of the country's 75 districts, taking effective control of several of them. A peace agreement was signed on November 21, 2006, providing for democratic and social reforms, the integration of guerrillas into the regular armed forces, and a transitional government including Maoists.

Neuberg: Collective pseudonym used by the authors of *Armed Insurrection*, the Comintern's insurrection manual (1932). Authors include Hans Kippenberger, Erich Wollenberg, Ho Chi Minh, Vasily Blyukher, and Mikhail Tukhachevsky.

New paradigm: The political turn taken by the PKK in 2005 under the impetus of its leader Abdullah Öcalan. By that time, the PKK had already turned its back on Marxism-Leninism. It then renounced the nation-state (and thus a unified, independent Kurdistan), and its guiding framework became human rights, justice, democracy, ecology, and feminism within a system of democratic confederalism akin to libertarian municipalism. This policy is being implemented by the PYD in Rojava.

Ney, Michel (1769–1815): A soldier under the Ancien Régime, Ney joined the French Revolution and pursued a spectacular career path in the revolutionary armies (commanding the Army of the Rhine) and Napoleonic armies (his role at the battle of Borodino earned him the title of “Prince de la Moskova”). Marshal of France during the Restoration, he briefly served Louis XVIII, who assigned him to face Napoleon. However, Ney rallied behind the latter, for which he was shot after the Battle of Waterloo.

Nghê-Tĩnh Soviets: a series of uprisings, strikes and demonstrations by poor peasants in Vietnam, starting in March 1930, against French colonial rule, the mandarinat and landowners. Nghê-Tĩnh is the compound name given to the two central provinces, Nghê-An and Hà Tĩnh, where

the revolt mainly took place. The insurgents were organized into peasant committees, to which the communists active in the movement gave the name “soviet.” The revolt ended in the second half of 1931 due to famine and brutal repression by colonial forces.

Nicaraguan Revolution: On January 10, 1978, a liberal opponent to the Nicaraguan government was assassinated, provoking riots and turning part of the national bourgeoisie against the dictatorship. In September 1978, a popular uprising called for by the Sandinista National Liberation Front took place, but the dictatorship’s forces regained control of the cities. The opposition strengthened and held the countryside, while the cities rose up a second time, this time victoriously, even in the capital Managua. In July 1979, dictator Anastasio Somoza left the country for Paraguay with most of his personal fortune.

Northern Expedition: Military campaign conducted between 1926 and 1928 by Kuomintang forces allied with the communists, supported by the USSR and commanded by Chiang Kai-shek. Its aim was to eliminate the warlords and unify China, a campaign that was a complete success.

Noske, Gustav (1868–1946): German social-democrat politician, leader of the SPD and minister of defense from 1919 to 1920, Noske played a central role in the crushing of the Spartacist Revolution. In 1932, he nominated Field Marshal Hindenburg as Reich President, but was forced to retire from politics when the Nazis came to power.

NPA (New People’s Army): he (NPA) is the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and has been waging people’s war in the Philippines since 1969.

O’Higgin’s Riquelme, Bernardo (1778–1842): Officer commanding the Chilean insurgents during the wars of independence in Spanish America, he suffered several defeats before crushing the royalist army in 1817. He then became Chile’s first independent head of state.

Ochoa Sánchez, Arnaldo (1930–1989): A veteran of the Cuban revolution, Ochoa took on important responsibilities in the army and fought at the Bay of Pigs. With the rank of general, he commanded Cuban forces in Africa (Ethiopia, Congo, Angola). He organized drug trafficking to the US to finance his troops after the end of Soviet aid, for which he was convicted and shot in 1989.

October Revolution (Russia, 1917): Succeeding the Russian Revolution of February 1917, it took place on the night of October 25, 1917 (November 7, 1917 according to the Gregorian calendar). The continuation of the disastrous war (World War I on the Eastern Front) by the Provisional Government, the economic crisis and the absence of fundamental reforms (agrarian reform) made Kerensky's rule unpopular. The Bolshevik Party (the only party opposed to the war) put forward its program and won over the working class and part of the Petrograd garrison. On October 25, 1917, the Bolsheviks staged an armed uprising, and the next day the provisional government was swept aside. Power returned to the All-Russian Congress of Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants Deputies' Soviets, which approved the uprising, which transferred authority to the soviets, and which announced agrarian reform, peace, the right of nationalities, and workers' control of production.

OIPFG (Iranian name – Iranian Organization of Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas): OIPFG was an Iranian revolutionary organization founded in 1964 and inspired by Maoism and Guevarism. It led an armed struggle against the dictatorial regime of the Shah of Iran. In 1980, following the problems posed by the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the organization split. The majority current gradually evolved towards social democracy, while the minority current waged urban and rural guerrilla warfare under the name of Iranian People's Fedai Guerrillas (IFPG) against the Islamist regime, but was wiped out by repression in 1987. Both now exist only in exile.

Olmütz (Treaty): Agreement concluded on November 29, 1850 between Prussia, Austria, and Russia, which put an end to Austro-Prussian tensions in the years between 1848–1850. Prussia agreed to return to the German Confederation under the authority of Austria, and the treaty became known as the “humiliation” or “retreat” of Olmütz.

Operation Sonnenwende: Large-scale Nazi secret police operation against the Communist Party of Belgium on Sunday, June 22, 1941, the day of the attack on the USSR. Hundreds of activists were arrested and imprisoned.

PAIGC (Partido Africano da Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde – African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde): The PAIGC is a revolutionary political party founded in 1956 by independence activists centered around Amílcar Cabral, with the aim of achieving indepen-

dence for Cape Verde and Portuguese Guinea. In 1963, it launched a war against Portuguese colonial domination that led to independence in 1974.

Paris (1831 Insurrection): A royalist religious ceremony provoked riots in Paris on February 14–15, 1831. The movement spread to several provincial towns. The government fell, but the monarchy born of the July Revolution survived.

Paris Commune: This was a mass proletarian uprising that lasted 72 days, from March 18, 1871 to May 28, 1871. Its direct-democratic government took important social measures. The Commune was crushed by bourgeois forces based in Versailles (the “Versaillais” or Versailles reactionaries in English). Its repression from May 21–28, 1871, marked by massacres and deportations, is known as Bloody Week.

Paris Insurrection of 1832, also called June Rebellion: Attempted republican revolution aimed at overthrowing the monarchy born of the July Revolution. Launched on June 5, it rallied some of the National Guard, but was soon crushed.

Parsons, Talcott (1902–1979): American sociologist who developed a theory of social action based on the notion of the “social system.” According to Parsons, society functions as a system of norms and values that regulates the behavior of individuals. He also studied the function of the state, and is considered one of the founders of American functionalist sociology.

Pasang, born Nanda Kishor Pun (1968-): Leading member of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), Pasang served as commander-in-chief of the People’s Liberation Army during the Nepalese People’s War. He became vice-president after the peace agreements.

PÇDK (Partî Çareserî Dîmokratî Kurdistan – Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party): The PÇDK was founded in Southern Kurdistan (Iraq). Its ideological and political basis corresponds to that of the PKK. In 2002, it became part of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) along with the PKK (Northern Kurdistan), the PYD (Western Kurdistan) and the PJAK (Eastern Kurdistan).

PCP: See Communist Party of Peru.

PDLP (Partido de los Pobres – Party of the Poor): The PDLP was a Mexican political and social organization, active in the state of Guerrero

(southern Mexico), which developed a guerrilla struggle, and included the 1967 kidnapping of the state senator who was running for governor of Guerrero at the time. This guerrilla group suffered major setbacks in 1987. In 1980, the PROCUP joined the PDLP. These and other forces eventually formed the EPR.

Peace agreements in Colombia: see FARC.

Peace Letters: In September 1982, letters written by President Gonzalo calling for an end to the armed struggle were made public. The content and the conditions (Gonzalo was held in solitary confinement) led many to believe that they were forgeries. However, part of the PCP renounced the armed struggle, while another part pursued the fight ("Proseguir" current), from which the Militarized Communist Party of Peru emerged in 2018. Gonzalo has never denied writing these letters.

Peaceful coexistence: First formulated in 1952 by Stalin, it became the basis of the USSR's unorthodox policy under Khrushchev. Based on the idea that the USSR was powerful enough to deter any military attack, it transferred the rivalry between the two global ruling powers to the economic sphere.

People's Will: clandestine Russian revolutionary organization belonging to the Narodnik movement, which in 1879 grew out of the Land and Liberty organization. Focusing on armed action, it made the elimination of the Czar its primary objective. On March 1, 1881, after six unsuccessful attempts, a People's Will group succeeded in killing Alexander II by throwing bombs into his carriage. The organization was later decimated by repression. Its legacy was taken up by the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

Pericles (495 BC—429 BC): Athenian politician and general, his rule marked the golden age of Athens. Pericles developed an imperialist policy and commanded Athenian forces during the first two years of the Peloponnesian War.

Perón, Juan Domingo (1895–1974): Argentine military and statesman. The first Argentine president to be elected by universal suffrage, Perón was re-elected twice. He was at the origin of Peronism, a populist and nationalist movement.

Peronist Resistance: Multi-faceted resistance movement, including armed resistance, following the coup d'état of September 16, 1955 against the government of Juan Perón. Politically very heterogeneous, it was made up of organizations that were sometimes enemies, ranging from extreme right-wing ultra-nationalists to Christian socialists and trade unionists. It lasted from 1955–1973, when constitutional order was restored and a Peronist was elected president. Its main organization was the Montenaros.

Pershing, John J. (1860–1948): American general who began his career in the American Indian Wars and pursued his activities in the Spanish-American War. He commanded the American Expeditionary Forces in France during the First World War.

Peru (Maoist People's War): see Communist Party of Peru.

PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine): The PFLP is a Palestinian Marxist political-military organization founded in 1967 under the leadership of Georges Habash. In the 1970s, its external command carried out several armed operations in Europe with internationalist revolutionaries from various countries. The organization has abandoned this practice but still leads armed resistance in Palestine.

PFLP-GC (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command): The PFLP-GC was born of a split in the PFLP on April 24, 1968. Highly hostile to Fatah, its fighters have carried out several major military actions in Lebanon, during Israeli invasions, and in Palestine. The PFLP-GC has links with the Syrian regime.

Pham Van Dong (1918–2000): Dong was a leader of the Vietnamese Communist Party (CPV). He studied at the Huangpu military academy in China and was detained in a French prison for seven years.

Philippines (Maoist People's War): On December 26, 1968, under the dictatorship of President Marcos, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was founded on the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought, breaking with the original Communist Party of the Philippines. Its armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), launched a Maoist-style people's war that continues to this day.

Piedmont (1821 uprising): On March 10, 1821, supporters of a constitutional regime organized in the Carbonarist movement, including many

members of the military, launched an insurrection in Turin. The insurgents proclaimed a constitution reducing the power of the sovereign. Rather than accept it, the king abdicated in favor of his brother, who pretended to grant the rights demanded by the insurrectionaries, only to revoke them later.

Pinochet, Augusto (1915–2006): Commander-in-chief of the Chilean armed forces, he led the 1973 coup d'état which overthrew the elected socialist president, Salvador Allende, with the help of the CIA. His regime was marked by the arrest and torture of tens of thousands of real or suspected opponents, as well as thousands of extra-judicial executions. On September 7, 1986, he narrowly escaped death in an ambush by the FPMR. Pinochet was overthrown in 1990.

Pisa (Siege): Siege led by the Florentine army against the city of Pisa, which had regained its independence in 1494. The besiegers had to renounce the siege on July 10, 1500, but the 15-year war ended in victory for Florence on June 8, 1509.

PJAK (Partiya Jiyana Azad a Kurdistanê – Kurdistan Free Life Party): The PJAK was founded in Eastern Kurdistan (Iran) in 2002. Its ideological and political basis is that of the PKK. It is part of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) along with the PKK (North Kurdistan), the PYD (South Kurdistan), and the PCDK (South Kurdistan).

PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan – Kurdistan Workers' Party): The PKK was formed in 1978. It launched armed resistance in 1984. It abandoned all reference to Marxism-Leninism in 1995, then adopted its “new paradigm” in 2005. Active mainly in Turkey but well established in Iraqi Kurdistan, it has directly inspired the creation of organizations in other parts of Kurdistan, such as the PYD in Syria, the PCDK in Iraq, and the PJAK in Iran. Its founder and leader, Abdullah Öcalan, has been detained in Turkey since 1999.

Plehve, Vyacheslav Konstantinovich von (1846–1904): High-ranking judicial officer, then head of the czarist police force in the Russian empire, he was appointed minister of the interior after his predecessor, Sipyagin, was executed by revolutionary socialists. He pursued a harsh policy of repression, and on July 15, 1904, after three unsuccessful attempts, he was

killed by the Socialist Revolutionary Party's Combat Organization, which detonated a bomb in his carriage.

Plekhanov, Georgi (1856–1918): Russian philosopher and political leader. He began his political struggle in the Narodnik movement before becoming a Marxist. He is considered the introducer of Marxism in Russia and is best known for his work *Essays in Historical Materialism*. The main leader of the Menshevik movement, Plekhanov was one of the leaders of the Second International who betrayed their internationalist commitments and supported the war in 1914. A supporter of the February Revolution, he was a bitter opponent of the October Revolution.

PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization): The PLO is a political-military organization founded on May 28, 1964 in Jerusalem. The PLO is made up of several organizations, including Fatah, the PFLP, and the DFLP. Under Fatah's leadership, in 1988 the PLO recognized Israel's right to live "in peace and security" and declared its "total renunciation" of terrorism, and has since been recognized as a political partner by Western powers.

Pochonbo (battle): This was a major event in the anti-Japanese resistance in Korea: communist guerrillas occupied the Pochonbo town all day on June 4, 1937 before retreating to Manchuria in China, pursued by Japanese policemen who were defeated in an ambush.

Podvoisky, Nikolai Ilyich (1896–1948): Bolshevik leader, Podvoisky was a local figure in the 1905 Revolution in Yaroslavl, and played a key role in the October Revolution, organizing the Red Guards and serving as the first People's Commissar for Defense. He co-founded the Red Army and became a leading figure in Soviet sports.

Poland (1830 uprising): Also known as the "November Uprising," this was an uprising against Russian oppression (Czar Nicholas I was also King of Poland). It began on November 29, 1830 and ended with the fall of Warsaw in September 1831 after an eight-month war. The autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland was reduced, and thousands of Poles were forced into exile.

Poland (1848 uprising): Unlike the insurrection of 1830, which took place in the part of Poland dominated by Russia, the insurrection of 1848 took place in the part annexed by Prussia. The insurrection was crushed,

and the Act of Capitulation was signed on May 9, 1848. Episode of the “Springtime of Nations.”

Poland (1863 uprising): Also known as the “January Uprising,” this was the last of the great Polish uprisings against the Russian Empire. After several years of patriotic demonstrations and demands for agrarian and social reform, it was triggered in January 1863 by the forced conscription of Poles into the Russian army. It was defeated in 1864, followed by ruthless repression and the almost complete abolition of autonomy.

Polisario Front (Frente Popular de Liberación de Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro – Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro): The Polisario Front was created in 1973 to fight against the Spanish colonial occupation of Western Sahara. When Spain withdrew, the Western Sahara was divided between Morocco and Mauritania, and the Polisario, supported by Algeria, began an armed struggle against the new occupiers. Faced with difficulties, Mauritania withdrew and Morocco extended its zone of occupation. A ceasefire was negotiated in 1991, but fighting resumed in 2021.

Polisario: See Polisario Front.

Polish Campaign: Invasion of Poland by Hitler's forces on September 1, 1939, triggering the Second World War. Using the Blitzkrieg method, the German army surrounded and annihilated the Polish armies, reaching Warsaw in seven days.

Polish-Soviet War: From April 1920 to March 1921, this war saw Soviet Russia and Ukraine fighting the new Polish Republic. These new states had no defined borders (which had led to clashes in 1919), and in addition to territorial issues, there were also political ones. It began with the Polish army's offensive into the Ukraine and the capture of Kiev. A vast counter-offensive led the Red Army all the way to the banks of the Vistula River, where it was defeated at the Battle of Warsaw and forced to retreat. The Peace of Riga was signed in April 1921.

Polybius (200 BC–118 BC): A Greek politician and cavalry commander, Polybius is best known for his work as a historian. His *Histories* recount events in the western Mediterranean and surrounding regions between 264–146 BC, including the Punic Wars.

Ponomarenko, Panteleimon Kondratyevich (1902–1984): Secretary of the Belarusian Communist Party (CPB) in 1938, during the Second World War he was the partisans' chief of staff to the Supreme Command.

Porfirio Diaz, born José de la Cruz Porfirio Díaz Mori (1830–1915): Mexican general, Porfirio Diaz was victorious over the armies sent by Napoleon III to conquer Mexico. In 1876, he overthrew the elected president Juarez and established a long dictatorship over Mexico. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 forced him into exile.

Prachanda, Pushpa Kama (1954–): Nepalese communist leader and statesman. He played a major role in Nepal's People's War as president of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and commander in chief of its army. After the peace treaty, he led the Nepalese government as prime minister.

Prague (Coup): Refers to the seizure of power by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) in February 1948 with the support of the USSR. Pressure from the communists, who exploited the power vacuum created by the resignation of non-communist ministers, led the president of the Czechoslovak Republic to cede power to the KSČ.

Pravda (Truth): Bolshevik newspaper founded on April 22, 1912, first legally, then clandestinely, under Lenin's leadership, its distribution network became the backbone of the Russian party. At the time of the Soviet Union, it was an official publication of the CPSU.

Prenzlau (Battle): The battle of Prenzlau pitted Napoleon's Grande Armée, commanded by Marshal Murat, against the Prussian army at Prenzlau (formerly also Prenzlów) on October 28, 1806, as part of the Fourth Coalition. The outcome was a French victory.

Princes' Army: Strictly speaking, this was the counterrevolutionary army of French nobles who had emigrated during the Revolution and wanted to restore the monarchy. In the broadest sense, the armies of the First Coalition attempted to crush the French Revolution.

Procopius of Caesarea (c. 500–c. 565): Byzantine historian, he accompanied Belissarius on his campaigns before writing *History of the Wars*, then his *Secret History*, which described the reign of Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora, featuring a number of scandalous anecdotes.

PROCUP (Partido Revolucionario Obrero Clandestino Unión del Pueblo – Revolutionary Clandestine Workers' Union Party of the People): PROCUP was a guerrilla organization born in the early 1970s in Mexico out of the former armed group Unión del Pueblo. In 1980, PROCUP joined the PDLP. These and other forces eventually formed the EPR.

Profintern (Red International of Labor Unions): The Profintern was an international trade union organization close to the Comintern, active between 1921–1937.

Propaganda of the deed: Revolutionary strategic doctrine developed in the anarchist movement at the end of the 19th century, combining written and verbal propaganda with revolutionary actions to assert the “spirit of revolt.” These actions were varied: bombings (20,000 anarchist bombings between 1902 and 1917), individual takeovers, sabotage, boycotts, local insurrections as in Benevento, etc.

Provisional Government: Set up in Russia after the February Revolution of 1917 and the abdication of the Czar. Headed by Kerensky, it prolonged Russia's involvement in the First World War and was overthrown by the October Revolution.

PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores – Workers' Revolutionary Party): The PRT was a powerful Marxist political party, influenced by indigenism, Trotskyism, and Guevarism, active in Argentina in the 1960s and 1970s. Founded in 1965 by Mario Roberto Santucho, the PRT had an armed wing, the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), which waged an extensive guerrilla war. The PRT and ERP were almost totally wiped out by military repression.

Prusso-Danish War: this was the second war between the German Confederation and Denmark for control of the duchies of Holstein and Schleswig (this dispute had led to a first war in 1848). The Prussians were victorious, reaffirming their position as a military power.

Pun, Nanda Kishor: see Pasang.

Purges: The purges were part of a wave of political repression in the USSR that began in 1934 and peaked in 1936–1938. First targeting party officials, it then spread to all sectors of society. The Red Army was hit from May 1937–September 1938.

Pushkin, Alexander Sergeyevich (1799–1837): Russian writer, poet and playwright. His verse poetry and novels had a decisive influence on Russian literature, which he liberated from foreign standards. Pushkin was harassed by censors and condemned to a period of exile, as his works were deemed seditious.

Puységur, Jacques-François de Chastenet, marquis de (1656–1743): A staff officer specializing in logistics, Puységur distinguished himself during the wars of Louis XIV. After becoming Marshal of France, he was a member of Louis XV's Council of War. His *Art of War* was published by his son in 1749.

PYD (Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat – Democratic Union Party): The PYD was founded in Western Kurdistan (Syria) in 2003. With the liberation of Rojava in 2012, it became the region's leading political force. Its ideological and political basis is that of the PKK. It is part of the KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union) along with the PKK (North Kurdistan), the PCDK (South Kurdistan) and the PJAK (East Kurdistan), which is active in Iran.

Qin dynasty (221 BC–206 BC): This was China's first imperial dynasty, established after the Warring States period. It was founded by Qin Shi Huang, who unified the warring states and established a centralized system. The Qin also led military campaigns to extend their dominance. Their reign left a lasting legacy in Chinese history and culture, notably with the construction of the Great Wall.

Qing dynasty (1644–1911): Founded by the conquest of China by the Manchus, the Qing dynasty expanded China's territory to its maximum, although it also experienced popular revolts and resistance to its expansionist policy.

Quatre-Bras (Battle): On June 16, 1815, in Belgium, this battle pitted part of Napoleon's army, commanded by Marshal Ney, against part of the English army, commanded by the Duke of Wellington. Like the battle of Ligny, which took place 15 kilometers (9 miles) away on the same day, this was an indecisive battle occurring two days before the final battle of Waterloo.

Radek, Karl, born Karol Sobelsohn (1885–1939): Leader of the revolutionary movement in Poland and later of the Bolshevik Party, Radek was a close collaborator of Lenin, who delegated him to instruct the Spartacists

and then the KPD. A leader of the Comintern, he was arrested during the purges and died in prison.

RAF (Rote Armee Fraktion): Revolutionary anti-imperialist organization practicing armed struggle in Germany during the Vietnam War. Its first action was the liberation of Andreas Baader from prison on May 14, 1970. The RAF originally had links with the Palestinian resistance. Its main targets were US army bases and generals, but it also targeted top political and economic leaders. Its main prisoners were assassinated (disguised as suicides) on October 17, 1977. It dissolved itself on April 20, 1998.

Raskolnikov, Fyodor Fyodorovich (1892–1939): A Bolshevik revolutionary, Raskolnikov played an important role during the Russian Revolution. He was successively deputy People's Commissar for the Navy in 1918, commander of the Volga-Caspian Military Flotilla in 1920 and then of the Baltic Fleet. After becoming a diplomat, he opposed Stalin and died in exile.

Ravachol, François Claudius Koënistein dit (1859–1892): French anarchist. After a life of poverty and criminal activity, Ravachol organized bomb attacks against magistrates involved in the repression of anarchists. He was sentenced to death and guillotined.

Razin, Yevgeny Andreyevich (1898–1964): Enlisted in the Red Army in 1917, he commanded a battalion during the Russian Civil War. He then taught at various military schools and headed the Department of History of Military Art at the Frunze Academy. Razin was wounded during the war, and afterwards became involved in a polemic with Stalin over Clausewitz. He was arrested but quickly released and rehabilitated by Stalin. Appointed general, he resumed his teaching, research and publications, including a monumental *History of Military Art*.

Real IRA: See IRA.

Red Army Faction (Germany): see RAF.

Red Army Faction (Japan): Japanese revolutionary organization founded in September 1969 as part of the student, anti-imperialist, and Vietnam War struggles. It had several hundred members. In November 1969, the group was hit by repression (around a hundred arrests), and one of its commandos hijacked a plane over North Korea. A new wave of arrests hit

the group in June 1970 (some 200 individuals were rounded up). Activists who escaped the crackdown set up the United Red Army.

Red Brigades: Italian revolutionary communist guerrilla organization. Formed in 1970 as a result of workers' struggles, they initially practiced armed propaganda before adopting a strategy of striking "at the heart of the State" (as illustrated by the kidnapping of Prime Minister Aldo Moro). In 1982, they split into three groups, of which only one, the RB-Combatant Communist Party, remained active until the 2000s.

Red Cavalry: During the Russian Civil War, a Red Cavalry corps was organized in the Don region by Semyon Budyonny. This corps later became the 1st Cavalry Army. This army, followed by two others, played an important role in the Russian Civil War and the Polish-Soviet War.

Red Front Fighters' League (Roter Frontkämpferbund – RFB): Paramilitary organization of the KPD. It was initially founded for the purpose of launching an insurrection, but later came to challenge the Nazis on the streets. The RFB organized 130,000 members in 1929. Banned in 1929, the organization went underground.

Red Guard (Russia): detachments of armed workers formed in Russia after the February Revolution of 1917 to maintain order in the city in place of the czarist police and defend the gains of the revolution. Together with a few mutinous military units, it was the Bolshevik Party's main armed force. The Red Guards played an essential role in the October Revolution.

Red International of Labor Unions: see Profintern.

Reign of Terror: A phase of the French Revolution, between March 1793 and July 1794, during which people accused of threatening the First Republic were severely repressed.

Restoration (First): First return of the Bourbon dynasty to the throne, between Napoleon's abdication in spring 1814 and the beginning of the Hundred Days in March 1815.

Restoration (Second): Second return of the Bourbon dynasty to the throne, after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo.

Restoration: generic term used to describe the return to the throne of Ancien Régime dynasties after a revolutionary republican episode.

Retzlaw, Karl (1896–1979): A Spartacist leader, Retzlaw became one of the leaders of the KPD's underground military apparatus in the 1920s, for which he was imprisoned. When the Nazis came to power, he went to Moscow, then left the USSR and joined Trotsky. He then rallied to the SPD, ending his life in West Germany.

Revolusi (Indonesia 1945–1949): In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Allies sought to restore Dutch authority over their former colony. They were confronted by a strong anti-colonial, social, and nationalist movement that had taken shape between the Japanese surrender and the return of colonial forces. Armed resistance to the attempted colonial reconquest lasted until the Netherlands recognized Indonesia's independence on December 27, 1949.

Revolution of 1848 (France): The people of Paris rose up on February 23–25 and overthrew Louis-Philippe and the monarchy born of the July Revolution. As a result, the Second Republic was established. The new bourgeois government then introduced anti-proletarian measures that led to the June Days uprising, a Parisian workers' revolt that was bloodily crushed. Episode of the "Springtime of Nations."

Rhine Campaign: Part of the First Coalition's war against revolutionary France. The Rhine was crossed seven times by the French army between 1792 and 1800. In 1794, France triumphed in the Rhineland (capturing the German city of Trier), and the conquest of the left bank of the Rhine was assured. The cities of Cologne, Bonn, Worms, and Coblenz fell to the French in this period.

Ricardo, David (1772–1823): British politician and economist of the classical liberal tradition. He published *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* in 1817. His work was extremely influential in England and was praised by Marx.

Richelieu, Armand Jean du Plessis de (1585–1642): French cardinal and statesman. As prime minister of Louis XIII, Richelieu worked to strengthen the king's power by enlisting the support of the bourgeoisie and implementing major political and military reforms.

Riga (Peace Treaty): Signed between Poland, Ukraine, and Soviet Russia on March 18, 1921, the treaty put an end to the Polish-Soviet War. The agreement granted Poland a considerable extension at the expense of

Soviet Ukraine. Not to be confused with the 1920 Treaty of Riga, signed between Latvia and Soviet Russia.

Risorgimento (“Resurgence”): Period in Italian history from 1849–1860, at the end of which the House of Savoy unified almost all of Italy by annexing the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the Duchy of Modena and Reggio, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Duchy of Parma and the Papal States to the Kingdom of Sardinia.

Rojava (War of Liberation): In July 2012, as a result of the Syrian civil war, Syrian Kurdistan (Rojava) achieved de facto independence. In November 2013, Kurdish, Arab, Assyrian, and other minority representatives formed an autonomous government in the region, at the center of which stands the PYD. Rojava faced a major offensive from the Islamic State, which it defeated in the Battle of Kobane. Following the victory in Kobane, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) advanced and liberated all the territory conquered by the Islamic State in Syria.

Rokossovsky, Konstantin Konstantinovich (1896–1968): A decorated officer in the First World War, Rokossovsky joined the Red Army and the Bolshevik Party. He brilliantly commanded a cavalry brigade during the Russian Civil War. Arrested and tortured during the purges, he was rehabilitated in March 1940. He distinguished himself as USSR Marshal during the Second World War (battles of Smolensk, Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk, Operation Bagration, etc.). After the war, he served as deputy minister of defense.

Rosengolts, Arkady Pavlovich (1889–1938): Bolshevik leader who played an active role in the October Revolution and the Russian Civil War. He later became minister of foreign trade and USSR ambassador to Great Britain. He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Rossel, Louis (1844–1871): With the rank of colonel, Rossel was the only senior French army officer to join the Paris Commune in 1871, where he was appointed War Delegate. He was shot by the Versailles government forces.

RSDLP (Russian Social Democratic Labour Party): The RSDLP was founded in March 1898 in Minsk. In 1903, the party split into the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions. In January 1912, the Bolshevik Party constituted itself as the “Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks).”

Following the October Revolution which it had organized, the party was renamed the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).

Rubashov: Fictional character in Arthur Koestler's novel *Darkness at Noon*. As an old Bolshevik leader, he was arrested during the purges and forced to confess to a betrayal he had not committed.

Rühle von Lilienstern, Otto August (1780–1847): German general and military theoretician, he fought in the Napoleonic Wars, including at Jena and Leipzig. He later became head of the Berlin War College. His works, including *Vom Kriege: Ein Fragment aus einer Reihe von Vorlesungen über die Theorie der Kriegskunst* (*On War: Fragment from a collection of essays on the theory of warfare*, 1814), influenced Clausewitz.

Ruhr Uprising: Communist insurrection aimed at defeating the far-right putsch of March 13, 1920, and establishing a Soviet republic. The Red Army of the Ruhr, commanded by Max Hoelz, was finally defeated by the Weimar army in April.

Russia (anti-Napoleonic guerrillas): The Russian peasant resistance to the Napoleonic invasion of 1812 was systematized by the deployment of cavalry detachments on the initiative of General Davydov. The guerrilla war fought in the rear of the Grande Armée proved devastating, especially during the retreat that brought the Russian Campaign to an end.

Russia (Civil War): see Russian Civil War.

Russia (Napoleonic Campaign): Invasion of Imperial Russia in 1812 by Napoleon's Grande Armée. After the battle of Borodino, Napoleon took Moscow. However, the Czar refused to capitulate, and the Russian army commanded by Kutuzov grew stronger, while supplies to the Grande Armée were compromised by the onset of winter. The French had to turn back in a retreat that turned into a disaster by 1813.

Russia (revolutions of 1905, February 1917 and October 1917): see Russian Revolution (1905), February Revolution (Russia), October Revolution (Russia).

Russian Civil War (1917–1921): This war mainly pitted the “Reds”—the Soviet power that emerged from the October Revolution—against various counterrevolutionary forces (monarchists, bourgeois liberals linked to the provisional government that emerged from the February Revolution,

generals aspiring to dictatorship) known as the “Whites.” Other forces were also involved: foreign interventionist forces, peasant “green” armies, nationalist armies (Ukraine, Caucasian and Baltic countries), etc. The war ended in victory for the Soviet forces, who exploited the division and unpopularity of their enemies.

Russian Revolution (1905): The revolution began on January 9, 1905, with a massacre of peaceful demonstrators (“Bloody Sunday”). The insurrectionary general strike of October 1905 succeeded in overthrowing the regime and securing a liberal constitution for Russia. Yet within two years, counterrevolution restored the autocratic czarist rule.

Russo-Japanese War: From February 8, 1904 to September 5, 1905, the Russian Empire fought the Japanese Empire. Following Japan’s victories on land and at sea, Russia had to concede the Liaodong Peninsula and the southern half of Sakhalin Island to Korea.

Rüstow, Wilhelm (1821–1878): Prussian officer and military theorist who, having taken part in the German Revolution of 1848, was forced into exile in Switzerland. He is best known for his work *Die Feldherrenkunst des 19. Jahrhunderts* (*The Art of War in the 19th Century*).

Sadi Carnot, Marie François (1837–1894): Moderate republican politician, who served as minister several times, Carnot was elected in the 1887 presidential snap elections. He supported French colonial conquests as well as an alliance with czarist Russia. He was stabbed to death by the Italian anarchist Caserio.

Saigon (Fall of the city to the Vietnamese forces): The capture of the South Vietnamese capital by FNL forces and the North Vietnamese army on April 30, 1975 marked the end of the Vietnam War. The city was renamed in honor of Ho Chi Minh (Ho Chi Minh City), who had died more than five years earlier.

Saint-Domingue Expedition: Napoleon’s military expedition to regain control of the slaves who had been rebelling in Haiti since 1791. 31,000 men aboard 86 ships met stiff resistance. Although temporarily victorious, the expeditionary force suffered losses that reduced it to a mere 2,000 survivors. These survivors capitulated and reembarked for France. Subsequently, Saint-Domingue reverted to its original native name of Haiti (Ayiti).

Sakharov, Andrei Dmitrievich (1921–1989): Physicist and Soviet dissident, Sakharov became known for his work on thermonuclear fusion and was involved in the development of the Soviet hydrogen bomb. He became a critic of the Soviet regime and advocated nuclear disarmament.

Salan, Raoul (1899–1984): French general, Salan fought in the First and Second World Wars. In 1945, he was appointed commander of the French Expeditionary Corps in Vietnam. Marked by France's defeat in the First Indochina War, he became involved in counter-insurgency during the Algerian War, organizing the methodical use of torture. He headed the anti-independence terrorist Organisation armée secrète (OAS, "Secret Army Organisation") and was one of the generals who attempted a coup d'état in French Algeria. Arrested in 1962, he was granted amnesty in 1968.

San Martín, José de (1778–1850): Spanish officer of Argentine origin, San Martín fought in Spain against the Napoleonic occupiers at the Battle of Bailén. Back in Argentina, he joined the independence movement and fought victoriously against royalist armies in Argentina, Chile, and Peru.

Sandinista: see Sandino, Nicaraguan Revolution, and Sandinista National Liberation Front.

Sandinistas (Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional, FSLN): The Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) was founded in 1961 as a socialist politico-military organization to fight the Nicaraguan dictatorship, inspired by the struggle of Augusto Sandino and various communist currents, including Guevarism. After a long rural and urban guerrilla struggle, the FSLN launched the Sandinista Revolution in 1979 and remained in power until 1990.

Sandino, Augusto César (1895–1934): Nicaraguan revolutionary, Sandino led the resistance against the American occupation of his country in the 1920s and 1930s. His guerrilla army of 3,000 fighters inflicted heavy blows on the army and the 12,000 US Marines sent to fight the rebels. Sandino and many of his supporters were treacherously murdered during peace negotiations.

Sandino's (Augusto César) Guerrilla War: The US controlled virtually the entire Nicaraguan economy and first intervened militarily to crush a liberal uprising in 1912. In 1926, a second liberal uprising was put down

by a new American intervention. From 1927–1933, Augusto Sandino continued the armed struggle in the form of a vast guerrilla war that kept the American troops at bay. American forces eventually left the country after strengthening local reactionary forces. A peace agreement was signed in February 1934, but Sandino was immediately assassinated by the security forces afterwards. Thousands of other unarmed guerrillas were subsequently murdered.

Santa Clara (Battle): On December 28, 1958, after a stunning offensive launched from the Escambray Mountains, a column of 300 guerrillas led by Che Guevara, with the help of the local population, succeeded in taking the town of Santa Clara, defended by 3,000 soldiers and an armored train. This victory precipitated the victory of the Cuban revolution.

Santucho, Roberto aka “Roby” (1943–1976): Argentine revolutionary, founder of the Workers’ Revolutionary Party (PRT) and commander of the People’s Revolutionary Army (ERP). He received military training in Cuba in 1961 and led one of the most important revolutionary urban guerrilla experiments in history, before being shot dead by the military.

Scharnhorst, Gerhard Johann David von (1755–1813): Prussian general from Hanover, he fought at Jena and Eylau. Scharnhorst made a decisive contribution to modernizing the Prussian army and reforming the state after the Peace of Tilsit, in the spirit of preparing the country for revenge. He contributed to Prussia’s reentry into the war against Napoleon, but was mortally wounded at the Battle of Lützen.

Schill, Ferdinand von (1776–1809): Prussian officer who, in 1807, led a Free Corps in a partisan struggle against Napoleon’s army. He was killed in a second attempt in 1809 when, refusing the Peace of Tilsit, he tried to provoke a general uprising against French domination.

Schlegel, August Wilhelm von (1767–1845): German poet, philosopher, and literary critic, he is known for his work in literature and linguistics, notably as co-founder of the Romantic approach to German literature.

Schlieffen Plan: Military plan dating from 1905, which was applied in modified form by the German armies at the very start of the First World War. First drawn up by General von Schlieffen, it was modified several times by General von Moltke. The plan collapsed at the Battle of the Marne.

Schlieffen, Alfred von (1833–1913): Prussian field marshal and strategist, he fought in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars. As a member of the German Imperial War Council, he devised the strategy used by Germany in 1914, aimed at outflanking the French armies by crossing through Belgium.

Schmitt, Carl (1888–1985): German legal scholar and philosopher. Official jurist of Nazi Germany, anti-Semitic, and anti-Communist, Schmitt regained prominence during the Cold War. His reactionary philosophy of “decisionism” is expressed in works such as *The Concept of the Political* (1932) and *Theory of the Partisan* (1963).

Schneller, Ernst (1890–1944): Pedagogue, head of the KPD Party school, communist deputy to the Saxon parliament, then deputy to the Reichstag, Schneller was arrested in February 1933 and sent to a concentration camp. He attempted to organize an insurrection in Waldheim prison. Together with 26 other communists, he was shot dead in Sachsenhausen concentration camp on October 11, 1944.

Schreiner, Albrecht (1905–1982): German communist leader who was the KPD's military chief for the entire German coastal region. He wrote numerous essays on historical and military issues, while continuing his activity in the M-Apparat (Militärischer Apparat, the KPD “Military Organization”). He was chief of staff of the 13th International Brigade in Spain and, after the war, held positions of responsibility in the GDR, notably in the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute.

Schutzbund (Republikanischer Schutzbund, “Republican Protection League”): paramilitary organization founded in 1923 by the Austrian Social Democratic Party in response to the rise of fascism. It was banned in January 1933 but did not dissolve. Its resistance to the government's attempt to disarm it on February 11, 1934 in Linz triggered an armed conflict known as the February Uprising.

Schwarzenberg, Karl Philipp (1771–1820): Austrian prince and field marshal, he fought in the wars against the French Revolution and Napoleon and participated in the battles of Ulm and Austerlitz. He led the Sixth Coalition army in the French campaign of 1814.

Scott, Winfield (1786–1866): After fighting in the American Indian Wars and organizing the genocidal deportation of the Cherokees, Scott became

supreme commander of the US Army during the Mexican-American War. He was also a presidential candidate and translator of Napoleon's works.

SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces): The SDF is a military coalition formed on October 10, 2015 in northern Syria to fight the Islamic State and Turkish invasions. Their main forces are the Kurdish YPG-YPJ, but they also include Arab, Syriac, and Armenian units.

Second Coalition: In 1798–1800, Great Britain, Russia, Austria, Turkey, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, a few German princes, and Sweden joined forces against revolutionary France. The conflict concluded in France's favor, thanks in particular to the Battle of Marengo.

Second Empire (France): Political regime established in France on December 2, 1852, when Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, first president of the French Republic, became Emperor of the French as Napoleon III. This new political regime succeeded the Second Republic, which had emerged from the Revolution of 1848. The Second Empire ended on September 4, 1870, following its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. It was succeeded by the Third Republic, which inaugurated the continuity of the republican regime in France.

Second International: The Second International was founded by the socialist and workers' parties of twenty European countries at the Paris Congress in July 1889. After enjoying immense growth, it collapsed when the social-democratic leaderships of its main sections united with their bourgeoisie during the First World War.

Second Intifada: Called the “Al-Aqsa Intifada,” this grassroots Palestinian opposition movement against Israeli occupation began on September 29, 2000.

Second Schleswig War: see Prusso-Danish War.

SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands – Socialist Unity Party of Germany): The SED was born in 1946 out of the merger of the SPD and KPD in the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany. As the only authorized major party (the others being under its leadership within the National Front of the German Democratic Republic), it had full powers in the GDR.

Senusiyya, also spelled Senussi (Resistance): Armed resistance movement against Italian colonization of Libya. Triggered in 1922 by the Fascist regime's undermining of the autonomy agreements, the conflict ended with the capture of Omar al-Mukhtar.

September Uprising (Bulgaria, 1944): The uprising was launched by the Bulgarian Communist Party on September 6, 1944, as the Red Army approached Bulgaria's border, to repel Hitler's armies. The Nazi Germany-allied government was overthrown, and the new government placed Bulgaria on the side of the USSR.

Sétif and Guelma massacre: On May 8, 1945, during ceremonies marking the end of the Second World War, Algerians demonstrated for independence. Repression led to riots, which were drowned in blood by the French army, air force, and navy (ships bombarding villages). Between 20,000–30,000 people were killed, mainly in Sétif, Guelma, and Kherrata.

Seven Years' War: This major conflict in European history lasted from 1756–1763. It pitted France and Austria against Great Britain and Prussia. Many other countries took part in the war, including Russia (on Austria's side) and Spain (on France's). Frederick II's Prussia and Great Britain were the big winners.

Shamil (1797–1871): Imam of Dagestan, Shamil was the military leader of the Chechens and other peoples of Ciscaucasia in their resistance to Russian conquest between 1830 and 1859, during the Caucasus War. He surrendered in 1859.

Shanghai (Insurrection): In March 1927, as part of the alliance with the Kuomintang aimed at liquidating the warlords in favor of the Chinese nationalist forces through the Northern Expedition, the Communist Party of China, led locally by Zhou Enlai, organized a workers' insurrection in Shanghai. It was a complete success—the only success of a Comintern-style insurrection in China. It was short-lived, however, as the Kuomintang overthrew the alliance and led to the Shanghai Massacre.

Shanghai Massacre: On April 12, 1927, Kuomintang troops, with the help of the Triads (such as the “Green Gang”), turned against the communists with whom they had been allied and who had controlled the city since the Shanghai Uprising in March. Thousands of communist and trade

union activists were murdered. Other massacres took place in other cities, marking the start of the Chinese Civil War.

Shaposhnikov, Boris (1897–1973): Shaposhnikov was an officer who rallied to the Russian Revolution. He headed the Frunze Military Academy, which was the leading Soviet military college, and was chief of staff of the Soviet Army from May 1937 to November 1942. A disciple of Clausewitz, his major theoretical work is *The Brain of the Army* (1927).

Sharpville Massacre: On March 21, 1960, a campaign of civil disobedience was launched in South Africa to challenge the “Pass law” (passport for moving inside of the country) imposed on blacks, and demand an increase in wages. Demonstrators were called upon to gather in front of police stations and volunteer to be arrested for “not carrying a pass.” In the township of Sharpville, where the black population was concentrated during apartheid, police fired into the crowd, killing 69 people and injuring 178.

Shinmin (Autonomous Region), also called Korean People’s Association in Manchuria: The Manchurian province of Shimin, home to two million Koreans who had fled Japanese colonialism in their homeland, became a self-governing territory in 1929, established by the Korean Anarchist Federation in China. In Manchuria, the local warlords, the Japanese army, and the Soviet Red Army, confronted each other. These forces eventually crushed the autonomous region in 1932.

Shliapnikov, Alexander (1885–1937): A Bolshevik revolutionary and one of the founders of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. A member of the Petrograd Soviet, People’s Commissar for Labor, he led the Workers’ Opposition within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1920–1921). He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Shtemenko, Sergei Ivanovich (1901–1976): Soviet military officer, Shtemenko held several important positions in the Soviet army and government. He was, among other things, chief of the general staff from 1945 to 1950. Shtemenko also wrote on military and political issues.

Sicily (1848 Revolution): Preceded by three other revolutionary waves (1812, 1820, 1837), the Palermo insurrection against the monarchy of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies led to a constitutional independent state that lasted around sixteen months. Sicily was reconquered by monarchist forces

from Naples (bombardment of Messina). An episode in the “Springtime of Nations.”

Sieg, John (1903–1942): German-American communist journalist, editor of the KPD press. He was one of the organizers of the resistance against Nazism in Germany, publishing the newspaper *Die Innere Front* (*The Inner Front*), which exposed Nazi atrocities. He was arrested and tortured by the Gestapo, and committed suicide in prison.

Sierra Maestra: Cuba's highest mountain range, located in the south of the country, where guerrilla warfare took place during the Cuban War of Independence (1895–1898) and the Cuban Revolution (1956–1958).

Sino-Japanese War: This refers to the Second Sino-Japanese War, which began in 1937 with Japan's invasion of eastern China. Japan took control of vast territories, but was never able to defeat the Chinese forces. The war brought about a truce in the Chinese Civil War between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China. From 1941, it became part of the Second World War, with Japan declaring war on Great Britain and the United States. It ended in 1945 with Japan's surrender, and was followed by a resumption of the Chinese Civil War.

Sino-Soviet split: the policies of the CPSU led by Khrushchev (de-Stalinization, peaceful coexistence, etc.) came into conflict with the principles upheld by the CPC led by Mao Zedong. The CPSU's line was openly denounced on April 22, 1960 in the CPC's newspaper, *People's Daily*. The USSR abruptly ended its assistance to China in the summer of 1960. The rupture spread throughout the international communist movement, and from February 1964 onwards became a conflict between states, with border incidents in 1969.

Sipyagin, Dmitry Sergeyevich (1853–1902): Russian reactionary politician, Sipyagin was governor of Moscow and then minister of the interior from 1899–1902. On April 28, 1902, he was shot dead with a revolver by a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. He was replaced by Plehve, who was also killed by revolutionary socialists.

Sixth Coalition: The Sixth Coalition brought together the United Kingdom and the Russian Empire against Napoleonic France, later joined by Prussia, Sweden, Austria, and a number of German states. It was formed

in 1812 when Napoleon began the Russian Campaign, and ended in 1814 with the defeat of France and the abdication of Napoleon.

Smilga, Ivar Tenisovich (1888–1938): Bolshevik revolutionary, he was elected Chairman of the Committee of Soviets in Finland in 1917 during the October Revolution and of the Central Committee of the Baltic Fleet in 1917–1918. Together with Mikhail Tukhachevsky, he commanded the 7th Army during the Polish-Soviet War in 1920, before taking on high economic responsibilities (vice-president of the State Planning Committee, or Gosplan in short). He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Smirnov, Vladimir (1887–1938): Bolshevik revolutionary, Smirnov led the Moscow Uprising in February 1917 and became a member of the Revolutionary War Council during the Civil War. He led the oppositional “Group of Democratic Centralism,” which later joined the Left Opposition. Smirnov was expelled from the party in 1927, and was arrested and executed during the purges.

Socialist Revolutionary Party (SR): Russian political party founded in 1901 with a mainly peasant base. The party evolved from the Narodnik movement. It had an armed wing, the SR Combat Organization, which struck at the very top levels of the Russian state (see attack on Sipyagin and attack on Plehve). The party split during the October Revolution: the majority, known as the “Left SR,” rallied around the Bolsheviks, while the minority, known as the “Right SR,” placed themselves first in opposition, then in a position of counterrevolutionary action against the new Soviet government, organizing the Tambov revolt, among other things. The left-wing SR split at the time of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, with some turning against the Bolsheviks and attempting an insurrection in Moscow, while others joined the Bolshevik Party.

Société des Amis du Peuple (“Society of the Friends of the People”): Revolutionary secret society, drawing on the heritage of Jacobinism, Babouvism (inspired by Gracchus Babeuf and his “Conjuration des Égaux”) and Carbonarism, aiming to overthrow the monarchy created by the July Revolution and replace it with a social republic. Founded in 1831 by Blanqui, it was put down by the police and reorganized as the Société des droits de l’homme (“Society of the Rights of Man”).

Société des droits de l'homme ("Society of the Rights of Man"): Revolutionary society aiming to overthrow the monarchy born of the July Revolution and replace it with a social republic. Founded in September–October 1833 based on the Société des Amis du Peuple, it was persecuted by the police and finally disbanded in 1834. The Société des familles ("Society of Families") took over as the new secret organization.

Société des familles ("Society of Families"): Revolutionary secret society founded in July–August 1834, with Blanqui and Barbès as its main leaders. Heir to the Société des droits de l'homme, its aim was to overthrow the monarchy created by the July Revolution and replace it with a social republic. Its membership ranged from 900–1,600, organized into sections, or "families" of 10 members each. On July 12, 1835, it managed to break 28 accomplice conspirators out of prison, but was dismantled by the police in March 1836. It was replaced in 1836 by the Société des saisons.

Société des saisons ("Society of the Seasons"): Revolutionary secret society aiming to overthrow the monarchy born of the July Revolution and replace it with a social republic. Founded in 1837 by Blanqui and Barbès, it succeeded the Société des familles and, with some 1,500 members, was organized into "weeks" of seven men (four weeks formed a "month" of 28 men, three months constituted a "season" and four seasons a "year"). On May 12, 1839, the Society of the Seasons launched an insurrection aimed at establishing a social republic. The insurrection was a failure, with 77 conspirators losing their lives and hundreds imprisoned.

Sokolnikov, Grigori Yakovlevich (1888–1939): Soviet revolutionary and economist. Close to Lenin and Trotsky, commissar of the 8th Army during the Civil War, Sokolnikov held high diplomatic positions (he signed the Brest-Litovsk Pact) and economic positions (People's Commissar for Finance during the NEP period). Opposed to Stalin, he was removed from office. He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Sokolovsky, Vasily Danilovich (1897–1968): Sokolovsky began his military career in the Red Army during the Civil War, and later worked on the General Staff. He played an important role in the victories of Moscow (1941) and Kursk (1943). Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Armed

Forces from 1952, he defined the official doctrine of the Soviet Army in *Military Strategy* (1962).

Solomin: Tikhachevsky's pseudonym, see under this name.

Somoza Debayle, Anastasio (1925–1980): Nicaraguan head of state and dictator. He was the last member of the Somoza family, which had ruled Nicaragua since 1936, and was in power from 1967–1979. The Sandinista revolution of 1979 put an end to his cruel and corrupt rule. Somoza went into exile in Paraguay, and was assassinated in September 1980 by a revolutionary commando.

Somoza García, Anastasio (1896–1956): Nicaraguan head of state and dictator. First member of the Somoza family, which reigned over Nicaragua until 1979. A member of the oligarchy, Anastasio Somoza allied himself with the US and obtained their military aid to suppress Sandino's uprising, who he had assassinated. He himself was assassinated by a revolutionary in 1956.

Song dynasty (960–1279): This dynasty reigned during an important period in Chinese history, characterized by significant cultural, scientific, and technological developments. It was divided into two distinct periods: the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) and the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279).

Sorin, V.: pseudonym of Sergey Kameney, see under this name.

Soult, Jean-de-Dieu (1769–1851): Soldier under the Ancien Régime, Soult had a brilliant career during the French Revolution and became one of Napoleon's marshals. His contribution to the victory of Austerlitz was decisive. He fought at Jena and Eylau before commanding Napoleon's armies in Spain, where he was defeated by Wellington. He fought at Waterloo and, after a brief exile, joined the Restoration regime.

South Korea (guerrillas): The dictatorial regime in South Korea gave rise to insurrections and guerrilla warfare, the repression of which resulted in some 100,000 deaths. During the Korean War, guerrillas were active behind the lines of American and allied forces and benefited from the influx of thousands of new fighters when the counteroffensive by American and allied forces in 1950 overwhelmed North Korean forces, leaving

many units behind the front line. The guerrillas remained active for many years after the armistice.

Soweto Uprising (1976): Soweto (South Western Township), located at 15 kilometers (9 miles) from Johannesburg, is a township on the outskirts of multiple large cities, where the black population was concentrated during apartheid. In June 1976, 20,000 schoolchildren and students revolted against the government's decision to make the white population's Afrikaans language compulsory. Hundreds were killed.

Spain (anti-Napoleonic guerrillas): In Spain, between 1808 and 1814, guerrilla warfare was used on a large scale for the first time in European history, forcing Napoleon to deploy a large number of combat units without ever really gaining control of the country.

Spain (Civil War): From July 17, 1936 to April 1, 1939, the Spanish Civil War was fought between military putschists backed by Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, and the legal Republican government and various popular and working-class forces (communists, anarchists). In the end, General Franco's fascist forces won the war, taking advantage of the lack of intervention by the Western democracies and the divisions in the Republican camp.

Spain (Second Republic): The Second Spanish Republic (1931–1939) was Spain's democratic government established after King Alfonso XIII's abdication. It faced political polarization, social reform, and economic challenges, culminating in the Spanish Civil War, which led to its fall and Franco's dictatorship.

Spain (War of Independence): Between 1808 and 1814, Bourbon Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom fought against France led by Napoleon. It began with an uprising in Madrid in 1808 against the occupying French army, and became widespread after Napoleon forced the King of Spain to abdicate in favor of his brother, Joseph Bonaparte. The French army clashed with guerrillas and the British army, and was forced to withdraw in 1813 to counter the invasion of France by the Sixth Coalition.

Spanish America (wars of independence): Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1807 distanced the colonies from their commitments to the Spanish Crown. In 1810–1811, the first separatist movements appeared in Venezu-

ela, the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata, Chile, and Mexico. These movements failed, but the violence of Spanish reaction reignited the struggle. Bolívar transformed New Granada into Gran Colombia (1819), to which, after the victory of Carabobo, he incorporated Ecuador (1821). After proclaiming the independence of the Río de la Plata (1816), José de San Martín freed Chile with O'Higgins (1817) and proclaimed the independence of Peru in 1821, just as General Iturbide triumphed in Mexico. In the Andes, Antonio José de Sucre's victory at Ayacucho (1824) led to independence for Upper Peru (Bolivia) in 1825.

Spanish Civil War (1936–1939): See Spain (Civil War).

Spanish Republic (1931–1939): See Spain (Second Republic).

Spanish War of Independence (1808–1814): See Spain (War of Independence).

Spanish-American War: From April–August 1898, this war set the rising imperialist United States against the old Spanish colonial power. Building on the Cuban War of Independence, it led to the emancipation of Cuba from Spain and to the US taking control of former Spanish colonies such as the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Guam.

Spartacist League (Spartakusbund): Revolutionary communist organization active during the First World War and the start of the 1918–1919 revolution in Germany. Its main founders were Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Initially a tendency of the SPD refusing to collaborate in the war, it formed the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) in December 1918.

Spartacist uprising: General strike and street fighting that took place in Germany between January 5 and January 12, 1919. The Spartacist workers and soldiers were crushed by the right-wing paramilitary Freikorps, under the command of the social democratic government of Gustav Noske.

Spartacist: see Spartacus League and Spartacist Revolution.

SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands – German Social Democratic Party): The SPD was founded in 1875. It was banned between 1878–1890, but in 1912 became the country's leading party in terms of the number of votes received in national elections. The leading party of the Second International, it rallied to social-chauvinism in 1914 by voting for

the war credits to finance the German campaign during the First World War. From 1918 onwards, it took part in the governments of the Weimar Republic. Banned by the Nazis, it became one of the main parties in West Germany, while in the East it merged into the SED.

Springtime of Nations: National and democratic (if not republican, at least constitutionalist) revolutionary wave sweeping Europe between February–July 1848. Although largely crushed, these uprisings often played a decisive role in the history of the countries involved, particularly in Italy and Germany, which were moving towards unification, and in France, which once again became a Republic, as well as in Hungary, Poland, Romania, Austria, Denmark, Switzerland, and Ireland.

Staël, Madame de: see de Staël-Holstein.

Stalin raid: following Hitler's invasion of the USSR, partisan units led by Sydir Kovpak waged guerrilla warfare in the Sumy and Bryansk Oblasts (regions) and later throughout most of Ukraine. From 1944 onwards, these forces marched westwards to continue devastating Hitler's rear as the Soviet Army liberated the Ukraine. This operation, known as the "Stalin Raid," brought Kovpak's partisans to the Romanian border.

Stalin, Joseph, born Ioseb Besarionis dze Jughashvili (1878–1953): Georgian Bolshevik revolutionary and Soviet statesman. He led the underground struggle in Georgia (he was deported seven times and escaped six times), contributed to the October Revolution and became Commissar for Nationalities. General secretary of the Communist Party in 1922, he followed Lenin's line until the latter's death. After dismissing Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev, and L. Kameney, he was in a position to impose his line from 1929 onwards, determining the entire policy of the USSR (industrialization and collectivization, purges, and repression, etc.).

Stalingrad (Battle): During the Second World War, the Soviet army fought Hitler's forces from July 11, 1942 to February 2, 1943. Hitler's armies initially advanced to take control of most of the city along the Volga, but a huge Soviet counteroffensive led by Marshal Zhukov surrounded the 290,000 Axis troops deployed on this front. The surrender of the remaining German army pocket sealed this decisive victory.

Stern, Manfred "Moses" (1906–1954): Bukovinian (region in Austria-Hungary) Communist, taken prisoner on the Russian front during

the First World War, Manfred Stern joined the October Revolution and the Red Army. As a military specialist, he carried out covert missions for the Comintern in Germany, the US and China. He became known as “General Kléber” when he commanded the International Brigades during the Spanish Civil War. Recalled to Moscow and arrested during the purges, he died in detention.

Sun, Tzu (6th century BC): There is no definite biographical information about Sun Tzu, who is famous for his work *The Art of War*, of which the main idea revolves around winning wars at the least possible cost, including through absence of combat, by means of ruses, espionage, great troop mobility, and quick and agile adaptation to the opponent’s strategy.

Sun, Yat-sen (1866–1925): Chinese statesman and founder of the Republic of China. Sun played a key role in ending the Qing dynasty and establishing a republican government in China. An advocate of anti-imperialist national liberation and social justice (land redistribution), and founder of the Kuomintang, he formed an alliance with the communists and fought against the warlords with the help of the Comintern.

Sutjeska (Battle): Episode of the partisan war in Yugoslavia. Between March and June 1943, in Montenegro, this battle pitted the People’s Liberation Army of Yugoslavia, led by Tito, against the forces of Hitler, Italy, and Croatia, who were attempting to surround and annihilate them. The partisans were victorious, breaking through the encirclement at the cost of heavy losses.

Suvorov, Alexander Vasilyevich (1729–1800): Russian Marshal, Suvorov distinguished himself during the Seven Years’ War, then in successive wars against the Ottoman Empire. He also led the fierce suppression of Polish and peasant uprisings. He commanded the Austro-Russian armies in Italy against the armies of the French Revolution. Suvorov, author of *The Science of Victory*, is one of the few generals never to have been defeated.

Svechin, Alexander Andreyevich (1878–1938): Major General during the First World War, he rallied to the side of the Soviets after the October Revolution and became head of the All-Russian General Staff. Dismissed following a dispute with Vāciētis, he was appointed professor at the General Staff Academy. His theoretical work, *Strategy*, published in 1926,

immediately became a classic. Svechin was arrested and executed during the purges.

SWAPO (South West Africa People's Organization): The SWAPO was originally a Marxist-oriented Namibian trade union. Having become a movement for national liberation, SWAPO led guerrilla operations against the South African army from its bases in Zambia and Angola. SWAPO has been Namibia's main political party since the country's independence in 1990.

Swierczewski, Karol, also known as "General Walter" (1897–1947): Polish Communist, Swierczewski joined Moscow's Red Guards during the October Revolution, before taking part in the Russian Civil War and the Polish-Soviet War. He commanded the 14th International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. During the Second World War, he organized the Polish army which was incorporated into the Soviet Army. He was killed by Ukrainian fascist partisans as Poland's Deputy Defense Minister.

Sytin, Pavel Pavlovich (1870–1938): Major General during the First World War, Sytin rallied to the side of the Soviets after the October Revolution. He held senior military positions during the Civil War. From October 1922, he taught at the Red Army's Military Academy. In 1924–1927, he worked at the Military-Historical Directorate dedicated to the study and utilization of war experience. He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Taiping Rebellion: Massive popular uprising in southern and then central China between 1851–1864. Nanjing [Nanking] became the capital of the rebel state known as the "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace" (Taiping means great peace in Chinese). Inspired by egalitarian principles (abolition of land ownership, gender equality, prohibition of arranged marriages, gambling, slavery, torture, prostitution, etc.), the revolt was crushed by the Qing dynasty after 15 years of war. The revolt, combined with the military campaigns and repression, claimed between twenty and thirty million lives, making it undoubtedly the deadliest civil war in history.

Tallinn Insurrection, also known in bourgeois historiography as the "1924 Estonian coup attempt": Led on November 1, 1924 by the Estonian Communist Party in Tallinn (formerly known as Reval), with the

support of the Comintern, it failed for lack of forces. This failure weakened the Estonian Communist movement for a long time to come.

Tambov Rebellion: Large-scale uprising of Russian peasants against Soviet rule. Fomented and organized by parties hostile to the Bolsheviks, it was mainly due to the requisitioning of food supplies as part of War Communism. In January 1921, the revolt spread to the regions/cities of Samara, Saratov, Tsaritsyn (modern-day Volgograd, and known as Stalingrad between 1925 and 1961), Astrakhan, and Siberia, and was gradually suppressed by the Red Army. Sometimes called the “Antonovschina” because of the leading role played by Alexander Antonov, a former member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

Tamil Tigers [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)]: The Tamil Tigers was an organization founded in 1976 with the declared aim of achieving independence for the Tamil regions of northeastern Sri Lanka. After 27 years of bitter armed struggle (with the creation of naval and air forces, suicide commandos, etc.), the LTTE was defeated and laid down its arms in 2009.

Tang dynasty (618–007): Coming to power after a long period of division in China, which had come to an end with the short-lived Sui dynasty, the first emperors of the Tang dynasty were initially tasked with stabilizing the newly reunited empire and restoring its power. With the Tang, the Chinese empire enjoyed a period of prosperity and considerable cultural influence.

Tauroggen (Convention): Under the Treaty of Tilsit, Prussia was required to support Napoleon’s Russian Campaign with a 20,000-strong army corps. Following French defeats by the Russians, the Prussian commander, General Yorck, signed a truce with the Russian army command at Tauroggen on December 30, 1812.

Tet Offensive: Military and insurrectionary campaign launched on January 30, 1968 by the combined forces of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam (FNL) and the People’s Army of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. During the offensive operations, one hundred towns were attacked. US and South Vietnamese forces eventually regained control, but the offensive convinced the US that they could not win the war and prompted their disengagement.

Thälmann, Ernst (1886–1944): German communist leader of the Hamburg Uprising of 1923. A member of the Comintern leadership, Thälmann became president of the KPD in 1925. He was imprisoned by the Nazis in 1933 and murdered in Buchenwald concentration camp.

Theory of the permanently operating factors: Theory affirming that “the outcome of the war will be decided. . . by permanently operating factors,” formulated by Stalin in February 1942. The theory emphasized that the enduring strengths of socialism, such as ideological commitment, economic planning, and the unity of the working class, would guarantee its victory over capitalism despite temporary setbacks or fluctuations in international relations.

Theory of the two periods of war: theory distinguishing between wars of the “manufacturing period” and those of the “mechanized period,” formulated by Stalin in February 1946, and provoking a campaign of criticism against Clausewitz.

Third Coalition: In 1805–1806, this coalition brought together the United Kingdom, the Russian Empire, the Austrian Empire, and Sweden against Napoleonic France. It ended with a crushing victory for France following the defeat of the Austrians at Ulm and the defeat of the Russians at Austerlitz.

Third International: See Comintern.

THKO (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu – People's Liberation Army of Turkey): The THKO was a revolutionary organization founded in 1971. It practiced armed struggle, prioritizing rural guerrilla warfare, but it was defeated and its last leaders shot dead at Kızıldere.

THKP-C (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi – People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey): The THKP-C was a Turkish revolutionary organization founded in December 1970 by Mahir Çayan. It practiced urban guerrilla warfare in 1971–1972, but was defeated and its leaders shot dead at Kızıldere.

THKP-C/HDÖ (Türkiye Halkın Kurtuluş Partisi Cephesi/Halkın Devrimci Öncüler – People's Liberation Front-Party of Turkey/People's Revolutionary Guard): The THKP-C/HDÖ is an organization

founded in 1976, based on the revolutionary strategy of the THKP-C. This organization was almost totally wiped out by the 1980 coup d'état.

Three Glorious Days: see July Revolution.

Thucydides (c. 460 BC–c. 395 BC): Ancient Athenian strategist (he commanded an Athenian squadron), Thucydides is best known as a historian. His work, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, tells the story of the war between Athens and Sparta in a precise and objective manner, exploring the underlying causes of the events, rejecting myths, rumors, and anecdotes.

Tilsit (Treaty): Peace treaty signed in July 1807 by Napoleon after winning the Battle of Friedland. The first treaty was signed on 7 July 1807 with Czar Alexander I. The second, which dismembered Prussia and reduced it to a vassal state of France, was signed on July 9, 1807 with the King of Prussia. The peace of Tilsit ended the War of the Fourth Coalition.

Timoshenko, Semyon Konstantinovich (1895–1970): After fighting in World War I, Timoshenko joined the Red Army and commanded the 1st Cavalry Army during the Civil War. He headed the Red Army during the Finnish War, replacing Voroshilov as Commissar for Defense. Marshal of the USSR, he was one of the main commanders of the Red Army during World War II.

Tito, (Broz, Josip) known as (1892–1980): Leader of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Tito carried out various missions for the Comintern (notably during the Spanish Civil War), and led the partisan war in Yugoslavia during World War II, liberating vast regions and inflicting heavy losses on the fascists. He founded and presided over the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

TKP/ML (Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Marksist-Leninist – Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist): The TKP/ML is a Maoist revolutionary organization founded in 1972 by İbrahim Kaypakkaya. Its armed wing, prioritizing rural guerrilla warfare, is TIKKO, the Turkish Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army. Almost wiped out by the coup d'état of 1980, the party reconstituted itself. The TKP/ML experienced several splits, including that of the MKP.

Tolstoy, Leo (1828–1910): Tolstoy is recognized as one of the greatest Russian writers of all time. In his major work, the historical novel *War and Peace*, Tolstoy describes the Russian social fabric at the time of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. His Christian philosophy of justice and peace, advocating simplicity and manual labor, earned him persecution from political and ecclesiastical authorities.

Triandafillov, Vladimir Kiriakovitch (1894–1931): Non-commissioned officer during the First World War, he joined the October Revolution and held several commands during the Civil War, during which he was wounded. Later assigned to the general staff, Triandafillov theorized Soviet military doctrine in several works including the classic *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies* (1929).

Tricontinent: A concept uniting the regions and countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America into a single group entity characterized by colonial, neo-colonial, and imperialist exploitation.

Tricontinental Conference: The Conference of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, held from January 3–15, 1966 in Cuba, brought together anti-imperialist forces from 82 Third World countries. Participants came from diverse political backgrounds, but the conference provided an important echo chamber for the principles of the Cuban Revolution.

Trinquier, Roger (1908–1986): Paratrooper officer during the First Indochina and Algerian wars, where he played an important role, Trinquier is known for his work on counterinsurgency warfare (*La guerre moderne*, 1961) which would be influential in France but also in the Americas.

Trotsky, Leon, born Lev Davidovich Bronstein (1879–1940): Prominent member of the Menshevik Party who joined the Bolsheviks in 1917, Trotsky played a leading role in the October Revolution and organized and led the Red Army during the Civil War. He led the Left Opposition after Lenin's death but was successively outvoted, marginalized, expelled from the party, exiled to Kazakhstan before leaving the USSR, before being finally assassinated in Mexico.

Truman, Harry (1884–1972): Truman became the 33rd President of the US in 1945, before the end of World War II, and died shortly before the end of the Korean War. His administration decided to use the atomic

bomb and fueled the Cold War through its interventionism (foundation of NATO, Marshall Plan). He fought against racial segregation within the armed forces.

Tsaritsyn (Battle): During the Russian Civil War, this battle opposed the Red Army commanded by Stalin against the White armies who wanted to seize this important port city on the Volga. It took place in three phases, from September 1918 to February 1919. It ended up being an important victory for the Red Army. The city of Tsaritsyn was renamed Stalingrad in 1925.

Tsaritsyn Group: Refers to the political and military leaders who had led the Battle of Tsaritsyn alongside Stalin, starting with Voroshilov, and who formed a bloc against Trotsky on military issues.

Tukhachevsky, Mikhail Nikolayevich (1893–1937): Non-commissioned officer during World War I, prisoner of war who managed to escape, Tukhachevsky joined the October Revolution and became one of the most important military commanders, organizers and theoreticians of the Soviet Union. He promoted and developed the mechanization of the army and forged the concept of “deep operations,” a military strategy that aimed to penetrate and deeply disrupt the enemy’s defenses through coordinated, successive attacks by combined arms forces, creating strategic breakthroughs and paralyzing their ability to respond effectively. He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Tupamaros (The National Liberation Movement): The Tupamaros was a Uruguayan Guevarist revolutionary organization that practiced urban guerrilla warfare in the 1960s and 1970s.

Turenne, born Henri de La Tour d’Auvergne (1611–1675): Marshal of France, Turenne played a crucial role in the French Wars of Religion and in European conflicts of the 17th century. His military tactics were innovative and his skills on the battlefield were impressive.

Turner, Nathaniel called “Nat” (1800–1831): see Nat Turner’s Rebellion.

Turpin de Crissé, Lancelot (1716–1793): French soldier and theoretician, Turpin de Crissé notably participated in the Battle of Fontenoy and after 40 years of service became lieutenant-general of the French armies.

His *Essay on the Art of War* (1754) and his *Commentaries on the Memoirs of Montecuculi* (1769) are classics.

Tyrolean Rebellion: Defeated in 1805, the Austrian Empire ceded Tyrol to the Kingdom of Bavaria, a vassal of Napoleon. The anticlerical and centralizing policy of the new regime provoked a peasant uprising in 1809, supported by Vienna. Led by Andreas Hofer, it won several victories before being defeated after several months of resistance.

UIC(S) [Union of Iranian Communists (Sarbedaran)]: The UIC(S) was a Maoist organization formed in 1976 which practiced armed struggle, first against the Shah's regime, then against that of the Islamic Republic. It organized an insurrection in 1982 in the city of Amol, but isolated, the uprising was crushed and the UIC(S) was almost entirely wiped out. In 2001, it became the Communist Party of Iran (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist).

Ulm (Battle): This battle pitted Napoleon's Grande Armée against the Austrian army from October 15–20, 1805 as part of the Third Coalition. It was a total and brilliant victory for Napoleon.

uMkhonto weSizwe: Following the apartheid regime's repression of peaceful protests such as in Sharpsville, the ANC decided to develop armed resistance and one of its leaders, Nelson Mandela, founded uMkhonto weSizwe ("the Spear of the Nation") in December 1961. uMkhonto weSizwe carried out sabotage and guerrilla actions until 1990, with the help of several African countries and the Eastern bloc.

Unified Red Army: Japanese revolutionary organization born of the Red Army Faction. The group that remained in Japan was decimated by internal purges and police operations. The group, which linked up with the People's Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), carried out several large-scale operations around the world (attack on Lod airport, attack on a Shell refinery in Singapore, hijacking of several aircraft, attacks on embassies in Indonesia, Kuwait, Italy, the Netherlands, etc.). The group ceased operations in 1988.

UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola – National Union for the Total Independence of Angola): UNITA was originally an ethnicity-based anti-colonial movement which came into conflict with the main anti-colonial force, the Marxist MPLA. After inde-

pendence, UNITA led a guerrilla war with the support of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), the United States, and South Africa. Losing its support with the end of the Cold War, apartheid, and the Mobutu regime (Zaire), it laid down its arms and became a legal political party.

Vaal uprising, also known as Township uprising: Townships were settlements on the outskirts of large cities where the black population was concentrated during the South African apartheid regime. In 1985, South African police fired on a demonstration commemorating the Sharpeville massacre, killing 21 people. The news provoked a revolt in the townships. The apartheid government declared a state of emergency and the repression claimed 600 victims.

Vācietis, Jukums (1873–1938): After distinguishing himself at the head of a Latvian regiment during the First World War, he rallied to the Soviet cause after the October Revolution, commanding first an armed force and then the entire Red Army during the Civil War. He had to leave this position in 1919, after which taught at the Military Academy. He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Vaillant, Auguste (1861–1894): After a miserable childhood, Vaillant became a Blanquist and then an anarchist. Returning from an unhappy exile in Argentina, he threw a bomb into the French Chamber of Deputies in retaliation for Ravachol's execution, injuring around fifty people. He was sentenced and guillotined.

Valmy (Battle): On September 20, 1792, the army of the French Revolution, made up of the old army and battalions from the Mass Levy ("Levée en masse"), faced off against the Prussian army marching on Paris. The result was a French victory.

Văn Thái, Hoàng (1915–1986): Member of the Indochinese Communist Party in 1938, he received political-military training in China and became the first chief of staff of the People's Army. He was promoted to the rank of general in 1948 and commanded the FNL forces, including during the Tet Offensive. He later became deputy minister of defense.

Varine, S.: pseudonym of Kamenev, Sergey, see under this name.

Vasilevsky, Aleksandr Mikhaylovich (1895–1977): Officer in the First World War, he rallied to the Soviet regime after the October Revolution.

and joined the Red Army. As director of military training between the wars, he contributed to Soviet military theory, publishing *The New Military Doctrine* in 1934. He took on important military responsibilities during the Second World War, before becoming minister of defense from 1949–1953.

Vauban, Sébastien Le Prestre de (1633–1707): French engineer, military architect, city planner, hydraulic engineer, and writer. An expert in siege warfare, Vauban designed or improved around a hundred fortified towns. He was appointed Marshal of France by Louis XIV.

Vauvenargue, Luc de Clapiers, marquis de (1715–1747): French soldier, writer, moralist, and aphorist. An impoverished nobleman, Vauvenargue spent ten years fighting in Louis XV's wars, ruining his health in the process. Encouraged by Voltaire, he published his *Réflexions et Maximes* in 1746.

Vegetius, born Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus (4th century-some time after 450): Roman writer, author of *De re militari*, a work on the army and Roman military tactics, which was a great success throughout the Middle Ages and modern times.

Vendée (war): This conflict pitted the royalists (the “whites”) against the republicans (the “blues”) in western France. The Vendée region had initially welcomed the Revolution, but the mass uprising in March 1793 sparked a peasant rebellion that developed into a counterrevolutionary war. It lasted from 1793–1796, with further flare-ups in 1799, 1815, and 1832.

Verkhovsky, Aleksandr Ivanovich (1886–1938): Officer in the First World War, Verkhovsky rallied to the February Revolution of 1917, joined the Socialist Revolutionary Party (SR) and became minister of war in Kerensky's government. He initially opposed the October Revolution, but later joined the Red Army. After the Russian Civil War, he taught and wrote several books on military theory and history. He was arrested and executed during the purges.

Versailles (Treaty): Signed on June 28, 1919 between Germany and the Entente countries at the end of the First World War, it determined the sanctions imposed against Germany. The latter lost certain territories and

colonies, and was forced to pay heavy reparations and severely curtail its military power.

Versailles reactionaries and Versailles: see Paris Commune.

Victor, born Claude-Victor Perrin (1764–1841): Marshal of France who made a career in the armies of the Revolution, and later in those of Napoleon. His contribution to the Friedland victory was decisive. Victor held commands in Spain, Russia, and Germany, before leaving France in 1814, where he was seriously wounded. At the Restoration, he rallied to the monarchy.

Vienna (congress): Conference of the great European powers held from September 18, 1814 to June 9, 1815. The nations that defeated Napoleon, along with the other European states, met to determine the conditions of peace, define borders, and attempt to establish a new European order. This gave rise to the Holy Alliance.

Viet Minh (Việt Nam Độc lập Đồng minh – contraction for League for the Independence of Vietnam): politico-military organization created in 1941 by the Indochinese Communist Party. Led by Ho Chi Minh, with Võ Nguyên Giáp as military commander, it led the victorious struggle against French colonial power during the First Indochina War.

Vietnam (first war): see First Indochina War.

Vietnam War: From 1955–1975, this war was fought between the National Liberation front of South Vietnam, supported by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (or North Vietnam), and the Republic of Vietnam (or South Vietnam), a puppet state backed by the armed forces of the United States. It resulted in the capture of Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) and the reunification of the country.

Vĩnh Yên (Battle): From January 13 to 17, 1951, this battle opposed French colonial forces to those of the Viet Minh, resulting in a French victory that temporarily reestablished their position in the First Indochina war.

Vitebsk (Battle): The battle pitted Napoleon's Grande Armée against the Russian rearguard on July 26–27, 1812, at Vitebsk, as part of the Russian Campaign. It resulted in a strategic Russian retreat.

Volk, Karl (1896–1961): Communist cadre of Galician origin, Volk was active in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, then in the Soviet diplomatic service, before taking on responsibilities in the KPD's military apparatus. He was the political commissar of the Hamburg Uprising of 1923. He was one of the organizers of the anti-Nazi resistance and, while in exile, distanced himself from the KPD because of the Moscow trials.

Volodarsky, V., born Moisey Markovich Goldstein (1891–1918): Member of the Menshevik faction, he joined the Bolsheviks before the October Revolution and became one of their best-known spokesmen. He was assassinated in Moscow in 1918 by a member of the right-wing Socialist Revolutionary Party.

Volta-Bani War: On November 17, 1915, a revolt broke out against French colonial rule in Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), due to the forced recruitment of soldiers to serve on the fronts of the First World War. The rebels defeated several military columns sent against them, and the movement encompassed a significant number of different peoples. The revolt, perhaps the largest of the colonial era, was suppressed from February–September 1916. One hundred and ten villages were destroyed by colonial troops.

Voltaire, François-Marie Arouet, known as (1694–1778): French writer, philosopher, and historian, Voltaire played a major role in the Enlightenment, defending freedom of expression, encouraging the creators of the *Encyclopédie* and contributing articles to it. In his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, he denounced religious fanaticism, and used his fame to help the victims of arbitrariness in a number of cases he made famous (Calas, Sirven, de La Barre, etc.).

vom Stein, Heinrich Friedrich Karl, born vom und zum Stein, Baron (1757–1831): Prussian statesman from Nassau, he was the key figure, as minister of state, in the Prussian reforms introduced after the 1807 Treaty of Tilsit: abolition of serfdom, access to land ownership, self-administration of towns, end of the nobility's tax privileges, and professional restrictions, etc. Forced to resign in 1808, he was appointed councilor to the Russian Czar Alexander I.

von Brühl, Marie (1777–1836): Aristocrat from Thuringia, wife of Carl von Clausewitz, she organized the publication of the ten volumes of her

husband's *Posthumous Works* between 1832 and 1837. She was also active as a patron of the arts in Berlin.

von Dach, Hans (1926–2002): Swiss officer and military theoretician. Believing that guerrilla warfare was the most appropriate form of resistance to a possible Soviet invasion, von Dach published a seven-volume manual on guerrilla warfare in 1957, called *Total Resistance*, which became a classic.

von Lossau, Johann Friedrich Constantin (1767–1839): Prussian infantry general from Brandenburg, von Lossau fought at Jena, and in the Russian, German, and French campaigns of 1813. He is known as a military theoretician and historian, mainly credited for his *Der Krieg* (1815).

von Manstein, Erich, from his full name Fritz Erich von Lewinski von Manstein (1887–1973): An officer with a remarkable record during the First World War in Berlin, Manstein played a key role in the rearmament initiated by the Nazis, particularly with regard to armored vehicles. He played a key role in the annexation of Austria and the invasion of Poland. He was the author of “Case Yellow,” a war plan which Hitler's armies successfully implemented against France in May 1940. He then took on major commands on the Eastern Front (Crimea, Stalingrad, Kursk, etc.). His book *Lost Victories* (1955), written to his glory and riddled with misleading facts, created the narrative of a German army that was unaware of war crimes and defeated because of Hitler's bad decisions.

von Meusebach, Karl Hartwig Gregor, Baron (1812–1897): German aristocrat, friend of Clausewitz and Hegel who immigrated to the US in 1845, becoming a famous colonizer in Texas.

von Pfuell, Ernst Heinrich Adolf (1779–1866): Prussian general, von Pfuell fought at Jena, then in the Russian and German campaigns. On behalf of the King of Prussia, he governed the city of Cologne, the Prussian-occupied sector of Paris, and the canton of Neuchâtel. Member of the Prussian National Assembly during the 1848 Revolution, governor of Berlin, minister of war, then minister-president of Prussia, his constitutionalist stance led to his dismissal.

von Phull, Karl Ludwig (1761–1829): Prussian general, von Phull fought against revolutionary and then Napoleonic France (he was the King of Prussia's chief of staff at the battle of Jena-Auerstaedt). After the defeat

of Prussia, he worked at the service of Czar Alexander I. His decision to position the Russian army in a fortified camp at Drissa to face the Grande Armée at the start of the Russian Campaign earned him the hostility of the Russian generals and his dismissal. He emigrated to the Netherlands, where he held various official positions.

von Roon, Albrecht (1803–1879): Prussian officer who published several essays on military geography early in his career. In 1848, he crushed the revolutionary army in Baden, then radically reformed the Prussian army, leading to Prussian victories in the Second Schleswig War, the Austro-Prussian War (von Roon fought at Sadowa) and the Franco-Prussian War. Appointed Field Marshal, he succeeded Bismarck as Prussian minister-president.

von Scherff, Wilhelm (1834–1911): Prussian officer, he took part in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871 as a staff officer. He also taught at the Berlin Military Academy and held various command posts. He wrote several works of military theory, including *On the Conduct of War* (1897).

von Schlieffen: see Schlieffen.

von Seeckt, Hans (1866–1936): German general who held high command positions during the First World War. Founder of the Reichswehr (army of the Weimar Republic), he served as its commander from 1920–1926. Between 1933–1935, von Seeckt was military advisor to the Kuomintang army in China.

von Stülpnagel, Carl-Heinrich (1886–1944): Officer in the First World War, he held several positions of responsibility in the German army during the Second World War, including commander-in-chief of the occupying troops in France. An active member of the generals' plot against Hitler in July 1944, he was arrested and hanged.

von Ungern-Sternberg, Nikolai Robert Maximilian, Baron (1885–1921): Russian general of German origin. Political adventurer, Buddhism enthusiast, and fierce anti-communist, he attempted to restore the Mongol Empire during the Russian Civil War. Nicknamed “The Mad Baron” or “The Bloody Baron,” von Ungern-Sternberg established a reign of terror in Mongolia for several months, before being captured and shot by the Reds.

von Willisen, Karl Wilhelm (1790–1868): Prussian general and military theoretician, he fought in the Napoleonic Wars (wounded at the battle of Auerstaedt). Professor at the Berlin War Academy, he wrote an influential *Theory of the Great War*.

Voroshilov, Kliment Yefremovich (1881–1969): Bolshevik revolutionary, he played a major role in the Civil War in the 1st Cavalry Army. Voroshilov was People's Commissar for Defense from 1925–1939. Marshal of the USSR, he played no further military role following the setbacks at the start of the Second World War, but retained important political functions.

Wallenstein, Albrecht von, Duke of Fiedland, Mecklenburg and Prince of Sagan (1583–1634): A powerful lord, Wallenstein owned a fourth of the country of Bohemia, and as generalissimo of the armies of the Holy German Empire, he scored many important victories during the Thirty Years' War.

War Communism: This refers to the emergency measures adopted in Russia by the Soviet government from 1918 to 1921, in response to the difficulties posed by the civil war: nationalization, food requisitioning, rationing, etc. These unpopular measures provoked the Kronstadt and Tambov revolts. On March 21, 1921, at the end of the civil war, it was replaced by the New Economic Policy (NEP).

War of Religions in France: A succession of eight civil wars in the kingdom of France from 1562 to 1598, opposing Protestants and Catholics, the latter generally supported by the king and his army. It culminated in the Edict of Toleration, known as the “Edict of Nantes,” which granted Protestants freedom of conscience and worship.

Warsaw (Battle): In August 1920, during the Polish-Soviet War, the Polish army, supported by France, fought against the Red Army commanded by Tukhachevsky. It was a decisive victory for the Poles.

Waterloo (Battle): On June 18, 1815, during the Hundred Days in Belgium, Napoleon's French army faced off against the Duke of Wellington's English army, reinforced by Marshal Blücher's Prussian army. This was a decisive defeat for the French army.

Wavre (Battle): On June 18–19, 1815, part of Napoleon's army under Marshal Grouchy was engaged in a battle with the Prussian rearguard in Belgium. The Prussians were driven back, but their resistance enabled the main Prussian army to intervene decisively at the Battle of Waterloo.

Weather Underground: Revolutionary organization founded in the US in June 1969 as part of the student, anti-imperialist, and anti-Vietnam war struggles. The group carried out some twenty bomb attacks on institutions and companies linked to the Vietnam War. Differences of opinion led to its break-up in 1976–1977. The May 19th Communist Organization, which led urban guerrilla warfare in the US in alliance with the Black Liberation Army, grew out of the group.

Weber, Max (1864–1920): German sociologist, historian, and political theoretician, he developed a conception of politics as the “art of mediating contradictions” and the personified will of the state. His main work is *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

Weimar Republic: Parliamentary political regime proclaimed in Germany on November 9, 1918, following the German Revolution of 1918–1919. Its history was marked by numerous tensions and internal conflicts. Following the appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor on January 30, 1933, power was seized by the NSDAP, which put an end to the parliamentary system.

Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, Duke of (1769–1852): British soldier and statesman. He defeated Napoleon's armies in Spain and then Napoleon himself at Waterloo. He would later become commander-in-chief of the British Army and prime minister of the United Kingdom.

Weydemeyer, Joseph (1818–1866): German soldier and revolutionary. Weydemeyer was member of the Communist League, and a proletarian military leader during the 1848 Revolution. In exile in the US, he served as a colonel in the Union army during the American Civil War.

Whites (White armies, white terror, etc.): The French flag of the Ancien Régime was white, the color of the king. With the French Revolution, the “Whites” came to designate the monarchists, opposed to the republican “Blues.” The term “Whites” (this time opposed to the “Reds”) was used to designate the supporters of the counterrevolution in the Russian Civil War from 1917 onward.

Wilhelm II (1859–1941): Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia from 1888 to 1918, he pursued a militaristic and expansionist policy, notably with the development of the German war fleet. He bore a heavy responsibility for the outbreak of the First World War.

Willich, August (1810–1878): German revolutionary, he played a leading role in the Baden Uprising of 1848. After his exile in the US, Willich also took part in the American Civil War as a general in the Union army.

Wilson, Woodrow (1856–1924): 28th President of the US (from 1913–1921), Wilson promoted a new European order after the First World War, with the emergence of nation-states from the ruins of the Central Empires and the creation of the League of Nations.

Wingate, Orde Charles (1903–1944): A British soldier, Wingate founded and commanded the “Chindits,” a British force operating on the Japanese rear front in Burma (Myanmar), during the Second World War. He had previously gained experience in the use of special forces, training Zionist commandos in Palestine and Ethiopian irregulars in Abyssinia.

Wollenberg, Erich (1892–1952): German revolutionary, he commanded the Red Army of the Bavarian Soviet Republic and took part in the 1923 Ruhr uprising in Bochum. He led the KPD’s clandestine military apparatus, and after the war held positions of responsibility in the GDR.

Workers’ Opposition: Bolshevik Party tendency formed in 1919. It was most prominent in the winter of 1920–1921, during the debate on trade unions.

World War I: From 1914 to 1918, World War I opposed two great alliances: the “Triple Entente” (or “Allies”) and the “Quadruple Alliance” between the Central Empires. The “Triple Entente” initially comprised France, the United Kingdom, Russia and their respective empires. It was joined by Belgium (invaded by Germany), Japan, Italy (in April 1915), Romania (in August 1916), and the US (in April 1917), as well as several other small states. Russia pulled out of the conflict after the October Revolution of 1917. The Central Empires were Germany and Austria-Hungary, joined by the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria. Fighting took place on various fronts, mainly in Europe, but a small part of Asia, Oceania, and Africa, as well as the North Atlantic, also saw military action. It involved

more soldiers, more deaths and more destruction than any previous war. Over sixty million soldiers fought in the war. Ten million people died and twenty million were wounded. It led to the collapse of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman empires.

World War II: From September 1, 1939 to September 2, 1945, two great alliances opposed each other: the "Allies" and the "Axis." The three main Axis nations were Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the Empire of Japan, with allies such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Thailand, and a few others. The main Allied powers were Great Britain and France and their respective empires, joined by the US and the USSR in 1941. The war ended in Europe on May 8, 1945, with the unconditional surrender of Germany, and came to a definitive end in the Asia-Pacific region on September 2, 1945, when Japan finally surrendered. It was the largest armed conflict known to mankind, mobilizing over 100 million soldiers from 61 nations, spreading out across some 22 million km², and killing an estimated 62 million people, the majority of them civilians. It was also the greatest ideological war in history: in almost every country, it was accompanied by a civil war of varying proportions between fascists and anti-fascists. The war also ushered in the Nazi racist genocide and the use of atomic weapons.

World War: see First World War and Second World War.

Wounded Knee Massacre: On December 29, 1890, the American cavalry massacred around 300 Sioux men, women, and children at Wounded Knee Creek, in present-day South Dakota. It was the final act of the American Indian Wars.

Wrangel, Pyotr Nikolayevich, Baron (1878–1928): Russian general who distinguished himself in the First World War. He served as major general under Denikin at the start of the Civil War, before becoming commander-in-chief of the White Armies in southern Russia. His defeat in Crimea in November 1920 was the last major episode of the civil war.

Wuchang Uprising: On October 10, 1911, revolutionaries and nationalist republicans rose up in the city of Wuchang against the imperial system that had ruled China for millennia. The uprising spread to other cities and, on February 12, 1912, led to the overthrow of the dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China.

Xenophon of Athens (430 BC—355 BC): Greek historian and soldier. A pupil of Socrates and a mercenary strategist, Xenophon took part in the expedition of the Ten Thousand, a Greek army cut off in enemy territory after the defeat of their Persian “employer,” and which made its way back to Pergamon. Xenophon recounted the story in his most famous work, the *Anabasis*.

Xiao, Jinguang (1902–1985): A soldier and member of the Communist Party of China since 1922, he served in the Northern Expedition and returned to the USSR from 1927–1930 to study military affairs. Xiao held the highest military positions in the Red Army, taking part in the Long March and commanding the Eighth Route Army during the Second Sino-Japanese War. He liberated Beijing and central China from the Kuomintang. From 1949–1979, he commanded the Chinese navy.

Yaroslavsky, Yemelyan Mikhailovich (1871–1943): Russian revolutionary, Yaroslavsky was one of the main leaders of the Bolshevik Party’s underground military apparatus. He held many political positions in the USSR and contributed to the History of the Civil War.

Yegorov, Alexander Ilyich (1883–1939): Russian military officer, member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party rallied to the Bolshevik Party, he commanded the Red Armies on the Southern Front during the Civil War and commanded the South-Western Front in the Polish-Soviet War of 1919–1920. After becoming Marshal of the USSR, he was arrested and executed during the purges.

Yên Bái Mutiny: Uprising of Vietnamese soldiers in the French colonial army in the provincial capital of Yên Bái, on February 10, 1930. The mutiny was organized by independentists with the aim of arousing the entire population against French colonial rule. It failed, and the main pro-independence leaders were arrested, tried, and put to death.

Yeryomenko, Andrey Ivanovich (1898–1970): Russian soldier, wounded in the First World War, he joined the Red Army and distinguished himself in the ranks of the 1st Cavalry Army during the civil war and the Polish-Soviet War. He also distinguished himself during the Second World War (during which he was wounded twice), and played an important role in the Battle of Stalingrad. In 1955, he was appointed marshal of the USSR.

Yorck von Wartenburg, Ludwig (1759–1830): Prussian general, Yorck first fought against Napoleon, then commanded the army that Prussia put in his service during the Russian Campaign. In 1812, however, Yorck signed the Convention of Tauroggen, marking Prussia's change of alliance against Napoleon. He participated with great success in the final battles against Napoleon and was made Marshal.

Young Italy (Giovine Italia): Giovine Italia was a political organization founded by Giuseppe Mazzini in August 1831, following the failure of the Carbonarist-inspired revolutions in the Kingdom of Naples and Piedmont that same year. The movement's primary goal was the unification of Italy.

YPG (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel – People's Defense Units) and YPJ (Yekîneyên Parastina Jin – Women's Defense Units): In July–August 2011, Kurdish self-defense militias were created in Rojava by the PYD, in the context of demonstrations against the Syrian regime. In 2012, with the liberation of Rojava, these militias were restructured into armed forces: the People's Defense Units (YPG). In 2013, women's units were founded, known as the Women's Defense Units (YPJ). In 2015, the YPG-YPJ become the main component of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Yuan, dynasty (1271–1368): Succeeding the Song dynasty and preceding the Ming dynasty, founded by Kublai Khan, this dynasty of Mongol origin ruled China through territorial expansion and cultural development.

Yugoslavia (Partisan War): After Hitler's invasion, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (later called League of Communists of Yugoslavia), together with other parties, founded the People's Liberation Front. Its partisans form the Yugoslav People's Liberation Army freed many territories from the puppet states set up by the Italians and Germans. Major anti-guerrilla offensives were organized by the Nazis to annihilate the partisans, such as the battles of Neretva and Sutjeska, but the partisans gained ground. In autumn 1944, they received help from the Red Army to liberate Belgrade. By spring 1945, the victory of the anti-fascist forces was complete.

Zachariadis, Nikos (1903–1973): Greek communist leader, he was general secretary of the Greek Communist Party for 25 years, including during Greece's partisan war and civil war. Imprisoned and exiled several times, Zachariadis died in disgrace and exile in the USSR.

Zaisser, Wilhelm (1893–1958): German communist and KPD leader, Zaisser received his political and military training in Moscow. He held several positions as military advisor, notably in China alongside the Kuo-mintang on behalf of the Comintern. During the Spanish Civil War, he commanded the International Brigades under the name of “General Gomez.” Member of the Comintern leadership in 1938–1939. He later became minister of state security of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) from 1950–1953, and was dismissed for opposing the SED leadership.

Zalka, Máté, born Béla Frankl (1893–1938): Hungarian soldier in the First World War, he was wounded and captured by the Russians. He became a communist during the October Revolution, and took part in the Russian Civil War and then the Polish-Soviet War. Trained in Soviet military schools, he became, as “General Lukács,” one of the main commanders of the Republican army during the Spanish Civil War. He was killed in action on the Huerta front.

ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union) and ZAPU (Zimbabwe African People’s Union): The Zimbabwe African National Union was an organization fighting against the white segregationist regime in Rhodesia. Founded in 1960, it was banned and clandestine, but in 1965 it set up an armed wing to wage guerrilla warfare (the “bush war” or “second Chimurenga”). ZAPU, the Zimbabwe African People’s Union, was a split from ZANU, founded in 1963. ZANU and ZAPU joined to form ZANU-Patriotic Front, which became the ruling party after the fall of the white, UK backed, regime.

Zapata, Emiliano (1879–1919): Mexican revolutionary, Zapata led a broad insurgent movement in the state of Morelos against the regime of General Díaz, aiming to restore to the indigenous peasants the communal lands that the large landowners had appropriated. He supported the democrat Madero, but eventually distanced himself because the latter did not satisfy the peasants. The war resumed when General Huerta overthrew and assassinated Madero. The Zapatistas defeated Huerta’s armies, only to face those of Carranza. Zapata was assassinated in an ambush and his movement disintegrated.

Zetkin, Clara (1857–1933): Teacher and journalist, member of the left wing of the SPD, she was one of the founders of socialist feminism, which she defended and imposed at the founding Congress of the Second International. She presided over the Socialist International Women and initiated the March 8 International Working Women's Day. Opposed to the war, for which she was imprisoned, Zetkin helped found the Spartacist League and later the KPD. She was forced to leave Germany after the Nazis took power and died in exile in Moscow.

Zhou, Enlai (1898–1976): Leader of the Chinese democratic and anti-imperialist student movement, he studied in Europe and became a communist in 1921. Political leader of the Huangpu Academy, Zhou Enlai took part in the military campaigns of the Nationalist army. He organized and led the Shanghai Uprising of 1926, narrowly escaping death when the Kuomintang turned against the Communist Party of China (CPC) and carried out the Shanghai Massacre. He led the Nanchang Uprising and then the CPC's underground apparatus. He joined Mao Zedong in Jiangxi and took part in the Long March. CPC delegate to the KMT during the anti-Japanese united front, he became prime minister and foreign minister at the founding of the People's Republic.

Zhu, De (1886–1976): An officer from Sichuan, Zhu fought in the Republican army after the 1911 Revolution and later served under the warlords. He studied in Germany and traveled to the USSR. An officer in the Kuomintang army, he refused to crush the Nanchang Uprising and joined the communists. He became chief of general staff of the Red Army and took part in the Long March. Commander-in-chief of the People's Liberation Army, Zhu received the rank of marshal and became vice-president of the Communist Party of China and People's Republic.

Zhukov, Georgy Konstantinovich (1896–1974): Wounded and decorated as a non-commissioned officer in the First World War, Zhukov joined the Red Army, took part in the civil war and became a specialist in mechanized warfare. Victorious over the Japanese at Khalkhin Gol (1939), he became the leading Soviet military commander and played a role in all the major Soviet victories of the Second World War. Marshal and hero of the USSR, he became minister of defense in 1955–1957.

Zimmerwald Conference: International meeting of socialist activists, including Lenin, held in the Swiss village of Zimmerwald from September 5–8, 1915, during the First World War. Participants (known as Zimmerwaldians) fought against the war and denounced the complicity of the leaders of the Second International. It was followed by the Kienthal Conference.

Zinoviev, Grigory Yevseyevich, born Ovsei-Gershon Aronovich Radomyslsky (1883–1936): Russian revolutionary who became a Bolshevik after meeting Lenin in exile in 1905. Member of the RSDLP Central Committee, Zinoviev returned to Russia with Lenin in 1917. Chairman of the Petrograd soviet after the October Revolution, he headed the Comintern at its creation. After Lenin's death, he moved closer to the Left Opposition. Marginalized politically, twice excluded from and reinstated in the party, he was excluded for the last time in 1934, arrested, subjected to a show trial, and executed in 1936.

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