

## IV DOCUMENTATION

### LENIN'S "NOTEBOOK ON CLAUSEWITZ"\*

Donald E. Davis and Walter S.G. Kohn

#### INTRODUCTION

This work is edited and translated for the first time into English from the Russian-German edition published under the general editorship of A.S. Bubnov. The translation also includes Bubnov's preface and A. Toporkov's explanatory notes. Bubnov and his fellow editors, S. Ioffe, D. Rozenberg, V. Sidorenko and A. Toporkov, prepared their work from the original notebook of Lenin as found in Archive Number 18674, Lenin Institute, Moscow. Lenin selected and annotated his text from the first issue of Carl von Clausewitz' *Hinterlassene Werke*, Vols. I-III, *Über Krieg und Kriegführung* (Berlin, 1832-1834). Lenin's manuscript first was published in *Pravda* in 1923 and again in 1930. It appeared in the Bubnov edition here cited in 1931 and in 1936 it was printed in a special volume of Lenin's philosophical notes. In 1939 it was published as a separate title: *Zamechaniia na sochineniia Klauzevitsa "O Voine"* (Notes on Clausewitz's Work "On War").

In the first publication the German excerpts appeared on the left (even numbered) pages and the Russian translation on the right (odd numbered) pages. Lenin's comments and markings usually appeared in the margins, though sometimes he inserted them directly into the text. These scorings are closely followed here, even to the extent that some of the lines are thicker than others. Lenin's excerpts from Clausewitz are always in quotation marks. Lenin's remark "N.B." (*nota bene*) means "important," "take notice," "mark well." Sometimes Toporkov purposely repeats the footnote numbers.

Carl von Clausewitz's monumental study was written in the early part of the nineteenth century. His sentences were long, his style was complex, and his phrases were involved; yet his words were carefully chosen. Rendering this prose into meaningful modern English is not without problems. Since selected parts rather than the entire book had to be dealt with, it seemed essential to adhere to the original as closely as possible. Indeed, the draft translation included every "still," "yet," and "but." Subsequent editing hopefully achieved improved clarity and readability. Generally, Clausewitz's style has been maintained. Where the same verb, noun, or adjective occurred two or three times in quick succession, the translation tried to reflect this. One

\*V.I. Lenin, "Notebook of Excerpts and Remarks on Carl von Clausewitz, *On War and the Conduct of War*" in V.V. Adoratskii, V.M. Molotov, M.A. Savel'ev, eds., *Leninskii sbornik* (Lenin Miscellany), (2nd ed., Moscow-Leningrad, 1931), XII, 389-452. Translated and edited by Donald E. Davis and Walter S.G. Kohn.

particular problem deserves special mention. Clausewitz very frequently used the word *Politik* (and its adjective *politisch*) which can be translated as “politics” and/or “policy,” the former holding truer to the original. After some reflection it was decided to use “politics” exclusively even though on one or two occasions “policy” might have been more appropriate. It did not appear proper to translate so important a concept in two different ways. No translation can be absolutely satisfactory. This we acknowledge and we assume full responsibility for shortcomings found here.

#### CLAUSEWITZ AND LENIN

What is the precise relationship of the present manuscript to Lenin’s military outlook? Critics have recognized Lenin’s profoundly political nature; he was neither a military man nor a military thinker. Yet there were major military elements in his career: the Left-Zimmerwald movement, the October Revolution, and the Civil War. His “military” role was crucial, but he remained consistently a civil leader. To accept, in Stalin’s words, that Lenin approached Clausewitz’s work solely as a politician interested in the relationship between war and politics does not take us beyond the obvious. Lenin was fascinated by Clausewitz’s socioeconomic view of the nature of war and his extracts make this quite plain. Even so, there remains the question of exactly what Lenin had in mind when he accepted the Clausewitzian dictum that war was a continuation of politics by other means.

Lenin’s interest in Clausewitz’s writings is easily understandable. They lent precision and authority to political principles already established in Lenin’s *modus operandi*: struggle inherent in existence, military tasks subordinate to political ones, thorough preparations the basis of successful leadership, the importance of improvisation, emphasis on the dialectical relationship of war to peace, preference for offense rather than defense, and the peace-giving role of the conqueror. Studies of Lenin’s operational code have revealed the similarity between Clausewitz’s military suggestions and Lenin’s political practice. Lenin was a genius of political manipulation, expediency and the flash of spiritual lightning—or the *coup d’oeil* that Clausewitz fondly wrote about. Careful research into Lenin’s military activities as a “military-strategic” director shows merely an emphasis on economic and morale factors, discipline, and a particular configuration of the system of command. He was a kind of “one man political-military staff.” His actual military leadership consisted in trading space for time, coordinating battle fronts, constructing a centralized army, and exporting revolution.

These considerations serve to recall Clausewitz’s dictum that everything is politics. For Lenin, warfare remained what he had perceived it to be in his first investigations, a combination of military, economic,

diplomatic, and psychological activity. Once more we are reminded of Stalin's assessment, granted its purpose of building Stalin's own military reputation by diminishing that of Lenin: "Lenin did not consider himself an expert on military affairs . . . he told us frankly that it was already too late for him to study military affairs." Stalin went on to reject Lenin's comments and extracts from Clausewitz because they did not leave "as a heritage a series of guiding theses on the military question." Thus it is still necessary to ascertain the exact nature of Lenin's "politics" in reference to his military viewpoint. That inquiry introduces another interpretation of the place of this important document in the development of Leninism.

In 1915, while stranded in Berne, Lenin read Clausewitz. He was no stranger to military writings, as his closest collaborators testify. But why read "old Clausewitz" at this juncture? Bubnov gave two reasons: Lenin's preoccupation with defining the Bolshevik relationship to World War I, and especially to other socialist parties, and his research on imperialism. In each case the Clausewitzian formulation served as the basis for an examination of the origin and nature of World War I.

Clausewitz taught that war was a continuation of politics by other means. Lenin preached that imperialist wars were violent extensions of the politics of imperialism. The character of a war, said Lenin, depended on the internal regime of the country waging it. War reflected the domestic and external politics of the countries conducting it. Wars epitomized a given set of politics. If a war was fought for democracy, then it was democratic in character; if it was fought for imperialism, then it was imperialistic. According to Clausewitz, war was a clash of significant interests, distinguished by bloodshed from other social conflicts. Lenin described these interests as financial monopolies vying for colonial spoils. They used violent and nonviolent means. Military policy represented the sum of the financial interests of capitalist society acting to partition the world through violence when peaceful economic competition failed. Imperialist politics provided the contours of imperialist wars. Clausewitz once observed that wars had their own grammar in terms of technique, but not their own political logic, because this latter was established by the politics of the particular era in which they were fought. To paraphrase Clausewitz in Leninist terminology, the study of the politics of imperialism presupposed an understanding of those occasions when it was necessary to replace the imperial pen with the sword of empire.

Certainly, then, Lenin's military ideas were influenced by Clausewitz. But while admitting this, it must also be remembered that Clausewitz himself warned against putting the chariot of war before the political horse and thus reversing the famous dictum. Rather, Clausewitz's ideas helped Lenin to comprehend the political basis of World War I and only secondarily contributed to his fathoming its

own special grammar in terms of military technique. Accordingly Lenin maintained that World War I resulted from the expansion of capitalism into backward areas, through the export of money, with the result a scramble for colonies and the partition of the world into imperial and colonial states. Imperialism strove towards annexation and gave rise to acute territorial rivalries. It was the superstructure of moribund capitalism, which Lenin characterized as the extreme concentration of production and capital into financial oligarchies, that exported money rather than commodities. Cartels increased differences in the growth rates of countries and this uneven development, inherent in the nature of highly advanced nations exploiting backward colonies, could only be resolved through violence as colonies struggled toward emancipation. Militarism became the dominant instrument for the suppression of colonies by investment capital linked to a thriving armaments industry.

#### LENIN ADAPTS CLAUSEWITZ

Once Lenin's interest in Clausewitz is placed within this setting there is sense in the excerpts and comments presented below. Lenin borrowed and altered Clausewitz's model of war to fit the wider network of his own theory of imperialism. Military theory, Clausewitz insisted, investigated the components of war and separated them into categories by explaining their properties and effects. By these methods Clausewitz developed his theory of war. War was defined as belonging primarily to politics; it was not a thing in itself, merely a continuation of the politics of state. Clausewitz explained politics as a combination of ideas, emotions, and socioeconomic conditions—the three essential factors within society that were regulated by state power. Violence occurred as a result of an imbalance of one or a combination of these component parts of politics which required that equilibrium must be restored by force. Clausewitz's model, therefore, relied on an estimate of the balance of the constituents of politics to be regulated by the various elements of force in the domestic and international arena.

Lenin borrowed the Clausewitzian equilibrium model but gave it a new Marxian twist. Imperialism became the structure of politics whose ingredients were metropolitan powers and their colonies existing in a tenuous balance. War was the result of an imbalance in which one empire encroached on another, or where colonials themselves revolted. Furthermore, Lenin's system transformed Marxism itself by explaining the means of production in terms of cartels and describing the operation of the dialectic through the opposition of imperialists and exploited colonials. Lenin's method, like that of Clausewitz, sought to discover the content of both the equilibrium and disequilibrium, or war, but by an analysis of class character within the historical-economic condition of pre-World War I Europe. Further, Lenin attempted

to explain the structure of interests which grew out of the class conflict as it extended into the international order through the colonial relationship. Such a stratification into industrial versus nonindustrial systems was, for Lenin, inherently competitive in character because of the tendency of the financially powerful to exploit the weak. The fundamental problem of war in this system was how far these factors operated to produce deep-seated and chronic conflicts.

Lenin's definition of war as an extension of imperialist politics was a kind of hypothesis, or at worst a dogma, and the propositions he linked together were notions about the origins, growth, and operations of cartels and their colonial acquisitions. From this analysis Lenin foresaw colonial revolutions as a response of the unindustrialized or semi-industrial East to the industrial and financial needs of the West. This outlook has been widely accepted by Lenin's followers as a valid statement on the great colonial upheavals and as a prediction of the dominant form of contemporary revolutionary warfare, wars of peoples for national liberation. Thus, the Russian Revolution could be interpreted as the first fulfillment of Lenin's prediction and an omen of future colonial wars during a century of revolutions, a century of the imperialist wars which Lenin believed to be the common denominator of revolutions.

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## PREFACE

*A.S. Bubnov*

Lenin's excerpts from Clausewitz's *On War* are found in Volume XII of the *Leninskii sbornik*, which is mainly a philosophical collection. Lenin studied Clausewitz during World War I in connection with his philosophical studies.

In a letter dated January 7, 1858, Engels wrote Marx: "I am now reading, amongst other things, Clausewitz's *On War*. A peculiar way to philosophize but in essence very good." In Clausewitz Lenin immediately was attracted to this "peculiar way to philosophize" because it was permeated by dialectics and, like Engels, he also noted its peculiarities. In 1915 Lenin demonstrated that Clausewitz's ideas "were engendered by Hegel." Further, Lenin examined Clausewitz, apparently in 1915, in connection with the enormous research which

he conducted during these years for works which demanded the greatest clarity in understanding the nature of war and its connection with politics. The study of Clausewitz is reflected directly in Lenin's literary output of these years.

In Chapter I of his brochure *Socialism and War*, Lenin cited Clausewitz in one of the subtitles: "war is a continuation of politics by other, namely violent, means." He added: "this well-known dictum belongs to one of the most profound military writers, Clausewitz. Marx always rightly considered this position the theoretical basis of views on the significance of each given war. Marx and Engels always looked at individual wars exactly from this point of view." At the same time, in 1915, in his article "The Collapse of the Second International," Lenin, unmasking "the chief theory of social chauvinism," twice referred to Clausewitz. In a footnote Lenin took a quote from the sixth chapter of *On War*. Almost the whole of this chapter from Clausewitz is found in the following extracts. In the same work Lenin exposed the "crude chauvinism of Plekhanov" and wrote that "in application to wars, the basic position of dialectics, so shamelessly perverted by Plekhanov to please the bourgeoisie, consists of the fact that *war is simply the continuation of politics by other, namely violent, means.*" And then in this same work he revealed the more "subtle and conciliatory chauvinism of Kautsky" by writing that, "if we look closely at the theoretical premise of Kautsky's argument, we get that view which was ridiculed by Clausewitz eighty years ago."

In particular Lenin greatly valued the works of Clausewitz because his ideas were "engendered by Hegel." V.I. Sorin in his article "Marxism, Tactics, and Lenin" (*Pravda*, No. 1, 1923) attributed to Lenin the following views on the significance of Clausewitz: "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.'"

Lenin utilized Clausewitz when, in his polemic against the "left communists," he touched upon the question of defense. "To be seriously concerned about the defense of a country," wrote Lenin, "means to be thoroughly prepared and to learn intimately the relationship of forces. If force is deliberately insufficient, then the most important means of defense is a *retreat to the interior of the country* (those who would perceive this as only a hypothetical case, who are attracted to some kind of formula, can read from old Clausewitz, one of the greatest military writers, concerning the complete lessons of history on this score). But the 'left communists' do not hint that they understand the significance of the question concerning the relationship of forces."

The excerpts Lenin made from Clausewitz's *On War* are not simply a synopsis of Clausewitz's three volume work; they uniquely and clearly reflect the direction of Lenin's own thought in connection with

questions concerning war and its problems. A predominant part of his extracts is related to questions concerning the nature of war and war as the "continuation of politics by other means." Excerpting the title of the sixth chapter of Volume III, "War is an Instrument of Politics," Lenin made the following note in the margin—"the most important chapter." This chapter he virtually wrote out in full in his notebook.

Likewise, Lenin made a series of extracts concerning changes in the character of war in different historical epochs. The varying aspects of such a social phenomena as war caught his attention. Lenin made several excerpts from Clausewitz's remarkable judgments on attack and defense. Clausewitz saturated his treatment of these topics with dialectics. One excerpt dealt with the question of the general staff. Another, of a particularly military nature, treated the value of squads, battalions, and batteries where Lenin noted in the margin: "and now?" A series of chapters, chiefly of a specialized military character, Lenin left virtually intact. For example, from the third book in the first volume Lenin took an extract from the fifth chapter, "Military Valor of the Troops" and from the sixth chapter, "Boldness." This also applied to the fifth book. Lenin's excerpts lengthened in size as he proceeded from the first to the third volume. The largest number of excerpts were made from Volume III.

The enormous significance of Lenin's survey of Clausewitz's work *On War* is that his attention is focused on study of Clausewitz's ideas on the relationship of war to politics and, likewise, to the adaptation by Clausewitz of dialectics to the various aspects, questions, and problems of war as a social phenomenon. By its very nature this notebook, with its excerpts from Clausewitz and the various remarks and notes of Lenin relating to them, will have an exceptional significance for the study of the problems of war from the point of view of Leninism.

#### V.I. LENIN, NOTEBOOK ON WAR

A biographical reference to Clausewitz from the *Universal German Biography*,<sup>1</sup> (Vol. IV): "Clausewitz, 1780-1831." "While in Berlin during the post-war years (i.e., after 1806),<sup>2</sup> Clausewitz attended Professor Kiesewetter's philosophical lectures, which he followed with lively interest. The traces of Kiesewetter's dialectical method may still be detected in Clausewitz's formulation of his purely theoretical works." (p. 286) ((=Kantian<sup>3</sup>))

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Posthumous Works  
of General Carl von Clausewitz  
*On War and the Conduct of War.*<sup>4</sup>  
*On War.* Vol. I  
Berlin, 1832.

p. xvi "War is nothing but the continuation of diplomacy by other means."<sup>5</sup>

p. 28 (Section 24, Ch. 1 "What is War." — 1st Book: "On the Nature of War"):<sup>6</sup>

"24. *War is a mere continuation of politics by other means.*"

"So we see war not only as a political act, but also as an authentic political instrument, a continuation of political relations conducted by other means. What still remains peculiar to war itself is simply the peculiar nature of its means. The art of warfare in general, and the commander in each particular case, can demand that political directions and purposes not become contradictory to those means. This claim is by no means negligible. But however strong the reaction in particular instances to political designs, this must still be regarded only as a modification: for political purpose is the aim, war the means, and it is impossible to think of the means without the aim." (all Section 24).

(p. 29) "But so the reader may not get the wrong impression, we must remark here that by this *natural tendency* of war we mean only the philosophical, strictly *logical* tendency, but not the tendency of the forces actually engaged in conflict, which would include, for example, all the combatants' emotional forces and passions."

(*Before* this Clausewitz said that "the more grandiose and stronger the motives of war, embracing to a correspondingly greater degree the entire

Principle of the separation (isolation) of the objective from the subjective

existence of nations, the more the aim of war and the purpose of politics coincide and war appears to become more purely military and less political. But the weaker the motives and tensions are, the less the natural direction of the military element, e.g. *violence*, falls in line with politics. Consequently, war will be correspondingly diverted from its natural course. The political objective becomes equally distinguished from the aim of an *ideal* war, and it seems that war becomes to the same degree political." (pp. 28-29)

This is important: 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.) "To return to the main point: if it is true that in one kind of war politics seems to disappear completely whereas in the other it stands out very prominently, we can still maintain that both are equally political." (p. 29)

(Section 27, p. 30)

"So we see, *in the first place*, that under no circumstances must we think of war as *something independent*, but rather as a political instrument. Only with this in mind is it possible to avoid the kinds of contradictions found within all military history. Only in this way can the great book be unlocked to reasonable understanding. *In the second place*, this very viewpoint shows us how different wars must be according to the nature of their motives and the relationships from which they originate." (30)

"Thus war is not only a true chameleon because in each concrete situation it changes its nature somewhat. In its total appearances, together with its predominant inner



my italics



N. B.



N. B.



tendencies, war is also a strange trinity composed of the original violence of its elements, hatred and hostility considered as *blind natural instinct*, of the play of probabilities and chance making war a *free activity of the soul*, of the subordinate nature of a political tool devolving upon *pure reason*.

“The first of these three aspects is more closely directed to the people, the second more to the commander and his army, and the third more to the government.” (31)



! N. B.

This is a very appropriate remark concerning the political *soul*, essence, or content of war as opposed to its “*popular*” appearance.

“The Ends and Means in War” (Book 1, Ch. 2)<sup>7</sup> —to destroy the military force, —to conquer the country *for?* . . . for this: that the enemy’s *will* be broken and he would agree to sign the peace.

“At every conclusion of peace a multitude of sparks die out, which would quietly have continued to smolder. Tensions decrease. For in each nation and in every circumstance, there are a good many souls disposed towards peace who will entirely turn away from the course of resistance.” (33-34)



N. B.  
Exactly

“Struggle originally is the manifestation of *hostile feelings*. However, in our great struggles, which we call war, hostile feelings of one individual towards another. *intentions*. Usually there are no hostile feelings on one individual towards another. Nevertheless, such emotions are never altogether absent. National hatred, which in our wars too is seldom missing, replaces to a greater or lesser degree individual hostility of one person towards another. But even where this is absent and no bitterness exists to begin with, hostile



only  
“seldom”??

feeling is kindled during the actual fighting. For an act of violence, which someone inflicts upon us because of a command, ignites us to vengeance and retribution against him sooner than against the higher authority which commanded such action. This is human, or perhaps rather beastly, if you like, but that is the way it is.”<sup>8</sup> (122)

(There is national hatred in *any* war . . . ) p. 143:

“*War is an Act of Social Intercourse.*

“We say, therefore, that war is neither an art nor a science but lies within the realm of social life. It is a conflict of grand interests which is settled by bloodshed, and only in this way does it differ from others. Rather than with some art or another, it could better be compared with commerce, which is also a conflict of human interest and activities. *Much* [Clausewitz’s italics] more closely related to it is politics, which in turn may be regarded as a kind of commerce on a larger scale. Besides, it is the womb in which war develops. As the traits of living creatures are already secretly present in their embryos, so also are the contours of war hidden in politics.”<sup>8</sup> (143)

N. B.

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p. 184 “General Scharnhorst, who in his diary wrote *better* than anyone about the *real* character of war . . . ”<sup>9</sup> [Lenin’s italics]

:among others

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In ch. 5 “Military Virtue of the Army,” Book III — concerning strategy in general,<sup>10</sup> Clausewitz writes among other things:

“One may visualize the complete identity of the civilian and soldier, the nationalization of war and its development opposite to the old condottieri, yet one will never be able to eliminate the peculiar nature of military routine. But if this is impossible, those involved, for the period of their involvement, will always regard themselves as a kind of guild in which are preeminently established those regulations, laws, and customs wherein the spirits of war reside. And this will indeed be the case. Even if war were to be dogmatically viewed from the most sublime standpoint, it would be very wrong to scorn this guild spirit (*Esprit de Corps*), which can and must be present in every army to a greater or lesser degree.” (216)



NB

Ch. VI<sup>10</sup> —“Boldness”—in the same Book III —

“In the entire multitude of the cautious, a considerable majority is so out of faintheartedness . . .” (222)



prudence  
and  
cowardice

“Even reckless boldness, that is, boldness without any purpose, is not to be scorned. Basically, it is the same thoughtlessly emotional force passionately exercised. Only where boldness revolts against obedience . . . there it is evil” (222)

“In order to be sure of our readers’ approval, we need only note that given the same degree of insight; in war a thousand times more is ruined through timidity than boldness.” (223)

“Lucid thought or even the predominance of rationality deprive all emotional forces of much of their violence. Thus, *the higher we ascend in the rank, the rarer the degree of boldness*. For even if insight and intelligence should not increase with rank, objective *dimensions, relationships, and considerations* are still externally forced



upon the leaders in their different stations to such an extent *that they become all the more burdened the lesser their own insight.*" (223) [Clausewitz's italics]

|| NB  
||

"The higher we ascend in positions of leadership, the more will intelligence, judgment and insight predominate and the more will boldness, an emotional characteristic, be repressed. Therefore we so rarely find it in the highest positions, but how much more admirable is it there."  
'(225)

End Vol. I

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*On War*, Vol. II  
(Berlin, 1833)

"If that energy of forces is combined with a wise moderation in projected aims, a play of brilliant blows and cautious restraint is created which we so admire in the wars of Frederick the Great."<sup>11</sup> (p. 10)

"The hard-pressed will . . . place his entire and ultimate confidence in the moral superiority which despair lends to each gallant man. He will regard the greatest boldness as the greatest wisdom, perhaps even using a daring ruse. And if he should not meet with success, he will find in an honorable defeat the right to a future resurrection."<sup>11</sup> (p. 11)

||| "the  
right to  
resurrection"  
(of the  
vanquished)

" . . . judging from usual experience, a squadron consisting of 150 horses, a battalion of 800 men and a battery of 8 six-pounders are approximately equal in cost."<sup>11</sup> (p. 15)

||| and  
now?

"War exists more for the defender than for the conqueror, for invasion, in the first place, provoked defense (166-167) and with it war. The conqueror is always peace-loving (as Bonaparte always maintained); quite gladly would he march into our state without disturbance. But in order that he may not do so, we must want and prepare for war."<sup>12</sup> (167)

||| ha-ha!  
clever!

“A single inhabitant of the battle zone usually does not influence war any more than a drop of water influences an entire river. Yet the *total influence* the people of a country have on the process of war is not to be disregarded even in those instances where insurrections do not occur.”<sup>13</sup> (170)

(Especially, for example: information of the army. 170-171)

“He who mocks these observations (concerning political equilibrium, etc.) as utopian dreams does so at the expense of philosophical truth. They allow us to recognize the essential elements of things and their relationships. (173-174) Yet to deduce from these observations laws that regulate each single case while omitting all chance occurrences would clearly be rash. If, in a great author’s words, one cannot rise above anecdote and builds all history on that basis, one’s opinion will never be applicable to more than one case and philosophical conclusions regarding generalities will be extremely nebulous. Beginning everywhere with the most intimate, the summit of events, and descending only as far as circumstances demand, implies never reaching down to the depths of those general relationships.”<sup>14</sup> (174)

“The general conditions from which war springs, and which naturally constitute its basis, likewise define its character. We will have more to say about this later in connection with military strategy. These general conditions, however, made most wars incomplete. Then actual hostility had to wind itself through such a conflict of relationships that it remained only a very weak element.”<sup>15</sup> (197)

“*Dimly, by a mere stroke of judgment* (author’s italics) like most events in war.”<sup>16</sup> (202)

“Here (the influence of mountains on war) as in dioptrics, the degree of light on

“in most cases”

N.B.

“Even without an uprising”

N.B.

(and not only in war)

the picture increases as the object is moved in a certain direction, not indefinitely but only until the focus is reached beyond which everything is turned upside down.”<sup>17</sup> (279) (a certain kind of defense of a river could be called “elegant” . . . , but)

“ . . . but because elegance lightly touches on folly, which in war would not be as lightly pardoned as in society, few examples of this elegant kind are available.”<sup>18</sup> (308)

“From the practical but, of course, very uncertain meaning which the concept of a key of the country has in the narratives of generals discussing their own military enterprises, it was necessary to become definite and therefore more one-sided if a system was to be deduced.”<sup>19</sup> (334)

23rd Chapter “Key of the Country”

“The best key to the country mostly lies in the enemy’s army.” (338)

“One cannot deny that the vast majority of wars and campaigns come much closer to a state of pure observation rather than to a struggle of life and death, that is, a struggle in which at least one of the two sides seeks a decision by all means.”<sup>20</sup> (392)

“Because of the predominant importance of the topographical element, special use is made of that knowledge and that activity of the general staff which can be regarded as its most unique characteristic. Since the general staff usually is that branch of the army which writes and publishes most, it follows that these parts of campaigns receive more historical treatment. At the same time this results in the rather natural tendency to systematize them and from the historical solution of one single case arrive at general solutions for subsequent cases. But this is a vain and therefore false endeavor. Even with this more passive, more locally connected kind of warfare, each case is

clever!

(( an example of dialectics ))

N. B.

“the more definite = the more one-sided”

clever and intelligent

a majority of wars = only observation

the general staff= that part of the army which writes and publishes most of all.

different and must be treated differently. The most excellently reasoned memoirs (428-429) about such matters are therefore suited only to shed light on them but not to serve as prescriptions; strictly speaking, they become again *military history*, if only of a peculiar aspect of these particular wars.

“We have taken the common view and defined this as the general staff’s most characteristic activity. However necessary and praiseworthy this activity may be, we must, nevertheless, warn against the usurpation which frequently is detrimental to the whole. The importance acquired in this way by those of its leaders who excel in this branch of military service gives them a certain suasion over minds in general and primarily over the commander himself, resulting in bias.”<sup>21</sup> (429)

||| “staff narrowness”

“Without a commanding, domineering will, penetrating down to the last link, no effective leadership is possible. He who habitually wanted to believe in and expect the best of (437) people (438) would for this reason alone be quite unfit for good military leadership.” (438)

||| a good leader . . . and distrust towards the men

“Looking once again at the whole, we must remark that the basic differences between attack and defense will increasingly disappear if the principle of attack is so weak, the demand for a decision by both sides is so small, the positive motivations are so slight, and the internal delaying counterforces suggested by us are so numerous. A military campaign is obviously opened by an advance into the opponent’s theater of war. In a sense, this constitutes an attack. However, it is possible and indeed often the case that before long all the attacker’s energies on foreign soil are used in the defense of his own country. Thus (443) both (444) face one another basically in mutual observation, both concerned with not losing anything and,

||||| the difference between attack and defense disappears

||| on a foreign land to defend one’s own land

perhaps, both equally concerned with achieving a positive gain. It may actually happen, as with Frederick the Great, that the real defender even surpasses his opponent in this respect.” (444)

“It is this aspect of strategic maneuvering which has given the whole the false importance mentioned above. For one thing, this skill has been confused with the general’s entire intellectual worth. However, this is a big mistake for, as previously indicated, it is not to be denied that in moments of great decisions the general’s other moral characteristics may well dominate the force of circumstances. If this domination is more the impulse of great intuition and those flashes of genius which originate almost unconsciously and not, therefore, as a result of a long chain of reasoning, we are nonetheless dealing with a genuine citizen of the art of warfare. For the art of warfare, of course, is neither a mere mental act, nor are the mental activities involved of the highest caliber. Secondly, it was believed that each unsuccessful activity of a military campaign was the result of such aptitudes (446-447) of one or even both commanders. However, in reality, the general and primary reason was always found in the general conditions contributed by war to this game.” (447)

This game (of strategic maneuvers etc.) they considered the “highest (military) art” (447):

“This view was rather widespread in the realm of theory prior to the French Revolutionary Wars, which all at once opened up an entirely different world of military phenomena, initially somewhat rough and naturalistic but later, under Bonaparte, combined into a magnificent method bringing about successes that caused astonishment for -

war=  
game

revolution

French  
Revolution

young and old alike. Now the old patterns were discarded in the belief that everything was caused by new discoveries, grand ideas, etc., but also, admittedly, by altered social conditions. It was believed that the old ways were no longer needed and would never be experienced again. But with such upheavals of opinions, factions (447) are always created. (448) Here too, the old ways found their defenders who regarded the newer phenomena as rude blows of terror, as a general decay of the arts, and who believed the very aim of training to be the balanced, unsuccessful, futile war game. This latter view is based on such a lack of logic and philosophy that it can only be described as a hopeless confusion of concepts. But the contrary opinion, that nothing like it will ever occur again, is likewise very rash. Newer phenomena in the art of warfare can least be ascribed to new inventions or new directions of ideas and mostly to new social conditions and relationships.” (448)

“While there is no system, no mechanism for discerning the truth, yet there is a truth which is usually found only through trained judgment and the (451) rhythm (452) of practical experience. Thus history here presents no formulas, but here as everywhere it does present the *exercise of judgment*.” (452)

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||

||

N. B.

exactly!

truth  
not  
in

“systems”

*On War*, Vol. III

(N.B. This volume, by itself, represents only sketches.)<sup>22</sup>

p.5: “Thus, the act of attack in war, but preferably in strategy, is a constant changing and combining of attack and defense.”<sup>23</sup>

p.9: “Rarely, or at least not always, does the commander in chief contemplate precisely what he wants to conquer; rather, he lets it depend on circumstances.”<sup>24</sup>

p.93: "Most wars appear only as mutual indignation where each side takes up arms for its own protection and to intimidate the other, occasionally striking a blow."<sup>25</sup>  
 Under Bonaparte . . . (war) "took on its absolute character" (96)  
 In Chapter II (Book 8): "Absolute and Actual War"



all wars are such that both sides "only defend themselves"

"War may be a thing which sometimes is more war, sometimes less." (96)



(dialectics)

"In the 18th century, at the time of the Silesian Wars, war was exclusively a matter for governments, and the people participated in it only as a blind instrument."<sup>26</sup>  
 At the beginning of the 19th century the peoples on both sides were thrown into the scales." (101)



18th and 19th centuries  
 the difference

Historical changes in the character of war: the Tartar hordes—the small republics of antiquity—Rome—the vassals of the Middle Ages—the end of the 17th and 18th centuries.

"During the Tartar campaigns, the *people* amounted to *everything* in war; at the time of the old republics and in the middle ages they amounted to *very much*, if one restricts the idea of people to those in full possession of citizenship; owing to the conditions of the 18th century they amounted to *almost nothing* and had an indirect influence on war only because of their general virtues or vices."  
 (III) [Lenin's italics]



N. B.

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The French Revolution altered all this.  
 "War had suddenly become again a matter for the people." (116) . . . "the entire population with their natural weight entered into the scales." (*ibid.*)

"War then, by becoming a matter for the entire population, first on the one hand and then on the other, has assumed since Bonaparte an entirely different nature, or rather it has become much closer to its true nature,



Important!  
 (but an inaccuracy: belonging to the bourgeoisie and perhaps to everyone)

its absolute perfection. The means used had no visible limit, the latter being lost in the energy and enthusiasm of governments and their subjects.” (118)

||| “energy”  
|| N.B.: the  
|| “Enthusiasm”  
|| of the masses

“Thus (119) the war-like element, freed from all conventional barriers, had broken loose with all its natural force. The cause was the participation accorded to the populations in this great affair of state. Such participation originated partly from the conditions brought about by the French Revolution in the countries internally, partly from the French threat endangering all other people.

|| “participation  
|| of the masses”  
||| “internal  
||| changes”  
||| (revolution)  
||| and the  
||| “danger” . . .

“Whether this will always remain so, whether all future wars in Europe will always be waged with the full strength of states and therefore only for the sake of great interests vital to the people, or whether gradually there will again come about a separation of the government from the people—this is difficult to determine and we, least of all, wish to presume to make such a judgment.” (119)

Our aim: “. . . to show how each period had its own wars, its own limiting conditions and its own constraints. Therefore each era would retain its own theory of war even if everywhere, in ancient and modern times, there had been the enjoinder to develop war according to its basic philosophical principles. Consequently, the events of each period (119) must (120) be judged with a consideration of their

||| Each  
||| era —  
||| “its own  
||| wars”  
||| “peculiarity  
||| of each  
||| era” it  
||| must be  
||| studied  
||| for an  
||| understanding  
||| of its  
||| own generals

N.B. ||| peculiarities. Only he who can transfer himself into each epoch, not so much through a careful study of all petty circumstances but through a penetrating glance of the great ones, is in a position to understand and appreciate the generals of that time.” (120)

In one instance, it is advantageous for one side to bide its time (advantageous to

start a *defensive* war). In another instance, it is advantageous to make use of the moment for nothing in the future is promising (an advantageous *offensive* war).

“In the third instance, perhaps the most common, the future offers both sides nothing specific and thus no motive. In this case the political attacker, that is, the side with the positive motive, will obviously be mounting the military attack, because for this he has armed and every moment lost without good reason is lost *to him.*” (133) [Clausewitz’s italics]

“We have . . . already maintained that actually the conduct of war is most decisively influenced by the nature of the political objective, the magnitude of our or the enemy’s demand, and our entire political situation.” (135)

“It is traditional in European politics that the states in offensive and defensive alliances pledge themselves to mutual assistance. However, this does not mean that the enmity and interest of one side automatically become the same for the other. Rather do the partners assure one another in advance of a certain, usually very moderate, military force without consideration of the objective of the war and the efforts of the opponent.” (136)

“ . . . each invests a share of 30-40,000 men, according to the danger to be endured and the advantages to be expected, and acts as if he could not lose anything else in the process. (137)

“It (such a custom—Lenin) is a half-measure, an anomaly, for war and peace, basically, are concepts incapable of graduation. Nevertheless, it is no mere diplomatic custom which can be overcome by reason but is deeply rooted in the natural limitation and weakness of man.” (137)

“politically”  
the  
aggressor  
(N.B.  
concept)

the  
“character of  
the political  
aim” has a  
decisive influ-  
ence on the  
course of  
the war . . .

N. B.

“degrees,”  
“limits”  
of the  
concept war  
and peace

“Once the influence of the political purpose on war is admitted, and indeed it has to be admitted, there no longer remain any limitations. One has to accept coming down to even those wars which consist in a *mere threat to the opponent and assist towards negotiations.*” [Clausewitz’s italics] (138)



↓  
N. B.

Chapter Six  
B. War is an Instrument of Politics  
(Vol. III) (Title) (pp. 139-150)

“Now this unity (a unity which is united ‘in practical life’ by contradictory elements—Lenin) *is the concept that war is only part of the political relationship and therefore by no means an independent entity.*” [Clausewitz’s italics] (139)

the  
most  
important  
chapter

“It is well-known, of course, that war is caused only by the political relationship of governments and peoples. However, one usually imagines that in war every relationship ceases and an entirely different situation arises, subject only to its own laws. (139)

“We (140) maintain, on the contrary, that war is merely a continuation of political relationships with a mingling of other means. We say with a mingling of other means in order to maintain at the same time that this political relationship is not terminated by war itself, is not changed into something entirely different, but it is continued in its essence regardless of the means it uses, and that the main lines on which the events of war proceed and are tied together, are only its outlines running across war and connecting it to peace. And how else could it be imagined? Do the political relationships of different peoples and governments ever end with the termination of diplomatic



|| notes? Is not war merely another way of writing and speaking their thoughts? It has its own grammar, but not its own logic. (140)



N. B.

“Thus war can never be separated from political relationships. If it were, all connecting threads would, so to speak, be torn, resulting in a senseless and useless item.

“This notion would be indispensable even if war were entirely war, entirely the unbridled element of hatred. For all objects on which it is based and which determine its main direction, i.e., one’s own power, the power of the opponent, allies on both sides, the character of peoples and governments involved, etc., as we enumerated them in the first chapter of the first book—are they not of a political nature and are they not so closely connected to the entire political relationship that a separation would be impossible? But this notion becomes doubly indispensable (140-141) when we consider that in reality war is not such a consequential endeavor, aimed at extremes, as it is supposed to be in its concept, but rather it is a half-measure, a contradiction in itself. As such it cannot obey its own laws but must be regarded as part of a different whole—and this whole is politics.



“war — part of a whole”  
 “this whole = politics”

“In this way, then, politics transforms the all-conquering element of war into a mere instrument. The dreadful sword of battle which demands to be raised with both hands and every available ounce of strength in order to strike one blow and one blow only, becomes a light, easily handled dagger which at times turns even into a rapier to exchange blows, feints, and parades.” (141)

“If war belongs to politics, it will assume a political character. As soon as politics becomes more grandiose and more

powerful, war does too, until that peak is reached where war attains its absolute form." (141)

N.B.

"Only through this notion does war again become a unity, only with it can all wars be viewed as objects of *one* [Clausewitz's italics] kind, and only through it will judgment be supplied with the correct and precise position and viewpoint from which to make and evaluate great designs. (142)

only with this point of view are all wars equal to "things of one kind."

"Of course, the political element does not penetrate deeply into all the details of war: pickets are not mounted, patrols are not led because of political considerations; but all the more decisive is the influence of these elements on the design of the entire war, on the campaign, and often even on the battle.

"Nothing at all in life is as important as to figure out precisely the standpoint from which matters must be comprehended and evaluated, and to cling to it. For only from *one* [Clausewitz's italics] standpoint are we able to comprehend with unity the mass of appearances, and only the unity of the standpoint can protect us against contradictions.

"If, therefore, at the designing of war it is inadmissible to view matters from two or more standpoints, now through the eye of the soldier, now through that of the administrator, now through that of the politician, etc., the question then arises whether it is necessarily *politics* to which everything else must be subordinated.

is politics the chief thing?

"It is (143) presumed that politics unites in itself and harmonizes all interests of internal administration including that of humanity and whatever else philosophic intellect might present; for, indeed, politics is nothing *per se* but a mere attorney of all these interests against

What is politics?

other states. It is irrelevant that the direction may be false, that preferential treatment may be given to ambition, to the private interest, to the vanity of the ruler; for under no circumstances is it the art of warfare which can be regarded as its preceptor. Here we can regard politics only as representing all interests of the whole society.

“For the political viewpoint to terminate entirely with war could be imagined only if wars were life and death struggles from pure enmity. In reality, they are merely expressions of politics itself, as indicated above. The subordination of the political viewpoint to the military would be absurd because politics created war. Politics is the brain, war merely the instrument and not vice versa. Therefore, only the subordination of the military viewpoint to the political remains possible.

“We must reflect on the nature of real war, remembering what we said in the third chapter of this book: *that every war shall, above all, (143-144) be perceived according to the probability of its character and its main outlines as developing from the political dimensions and relationships.* Often, indeed nowadays we can even maintain *mostly*, war must be regarded as an organic unit from which individual limbs cannot be separated, where, therefore, each single activity has to fuse with the whole and to issue from the idea of the whole. Then it becomes absolutely certain to us that the highest standpoint for the direction of war from which the main lines emanate can be none other than that of politics.

“Viewed from this perspective . . . history becomes more understandable. (144)

“In a word, the art of warfare at its highest (144) standpoint (145) turns into

N. B.  
an approach  
to  
Marxism

politics = the  
“representa-  
tive of all the  
interests of  
the entire  
society”

war cannot  
be reduced  
to simple  
hostility

politics  
created  
war

author's  
italics

N. B.

politics but, of course, a kind of politics which delivers battles instead of writing notes.

“Moreover, general experience teaches that, despite the large variety and development of contemporary military affairs, the chief directions of war have, after all, always been determined by governments, that is, technically speaking, by a political, not a military authority.” . . .

For example: the great changes in military affairs from the end of the 18th century.<sup>27</sup> What was their cause?

“The enormous repercussions of the French Revolution abroad can, however, be observed much less in new means and views affecting the conduct of war than in the completely altered art of statecraft and administration, in the character of government, in the state of affairs of the nation, etc. That the other governments regarded all these matters incorrectly, that with accustomed means they wanted to stem forces that were new and overwhelming, all these are errors of politics.” (148)

“It can, therefore, be said: twenty years of victories for the revolution are chiefly the consequences of incorrect politics on the part of opposing governments.” (149)

“To be sure, even war itself, in its essence and in its forms, has undergone significant changes, bringing it closer to its absolute aspect. But these changes did not come about because the French government, in a sense emancipated, untied the apron strings of politics, but rather they resulted from the altered politics issuing from the French Revolution for France as well as for all of Europe. Such politics summoned different means, different forces, thereby making it possible to conduct war with an energy otherwise unthinkable. (149-150)

||| N. B.  
||| N. B.

||| Exactly!

“Therefore, the real changes in the art of warfare are also a consequence of changed politics and, far from indicating a possible separation of the two, they are rather strong proof of their intimate fusion. (150)

“Thus once again: war is an instrument of politics; it must necessarily bear its character, it must measure with its yardstick. The conduct of war in its main contours is therefore politics itself, which replaces the pen with the sword, but thereby does not cease to think according to its own laws.” (150) (End of chapter)

war =  
politics  
which  
replaces  
the “pen for  
the sword”

“If there are states which were overpowered by successive blows and where time proved fatal to the defender, whose patron saint it is—how infinitely more numerous are the examples of the attacker’s purpose being rendered entirely futile in the process. One only has to remember the success of the Seven Years War when the Austrians attempted to attain their aim with so much lackadaisicalness, caution, and prudence that they missed it altogether.”<sup>28</sup> (181)

Not from the work *On War* but from *A Survey . . . of Military Instruction*.<sup>29</sup>

“In political terms a defensive war is a war fought for one’s own independence. Strategically, defensive war means a campaign limited to my fighting the enemy in a theater of war which I have prepared for that purpose. Whether in this theater of war I fight defensively or offensively does not make any difference.” (247)

N. B.  
“a defensive  
war” in  
politics and  
strategy

N. B.  
right!

End of the excerpts from Clausewitz

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## A. Toporkov

1. *Universal German Biography* (Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie) was published by the Historical Commission of the Academy of Sciences in Munich in 56 volumes (1875-1912) and contains biographies of outstanding German personalities in all fields from the earliest times.

2. This refers to the war between France and Prussia in 1806 which ended with the total destruction of Prussia.

3. The word "Kantian" refers to Kiesewetter.

4. These are the works of Clausewitz published by his sister, [Toporkov means "wife"] Marie, in 10 volumes.

5. Lenin takes this citation from the "Notice to the Reader" by Clausewitz, an unfinished independent chapter. It is dated July 10, 1827 and consequently was written shortly before the author's death.

Here Clausewitz establishes the two fundamental ideas of his work. First, in his opinion there are two basic types of war. There is a war which seeks to shatter the enemy, to force him to his knees, and there is a war which seeks only to expand the borders of a country through a conquest of local and partial character. Between these two primary types, one can also establish a series of intermediate ones, but all the same the two categories mentioned must always be kept in mind.

The second principal thought emphasized by Clausewitz is that war is nothing other than an instrument of politics: war is a continuation of politics by other means. Only by maintaining this point of view can one analyze complex historical experience and secure a basis for practical activity.

6. From the first book on war. This part discusses the nature of war and contains eight chapters. Lenin made excerpts from Chapters 1 and 2. The first chapter is the most complete amongst all Clausewitz's work on war.

Clausewitz's reasoning amounts to the following: if we try to give a general and abstract definition of war, we will have to say that *war is a violent phenomenon with an aim to force the enemy to execute our will*. According to this definition, the aim of war will be the task of overcoming the enemy, of throwing him to the ground. The aspiration to overthrow the enemy at any price must, inevitably, provoke equal opposition from his side. From this we would draw the following conclusion: both sides are compelled to exert their forces to the utmost extreme. This intensity can have its own bounds only in the natural limitations of forces of the contending sides. Every war would have to lead to the complete exhaustion of one of the sides.

On the same matter, military experience tells us that wars rarely take on such an absolute character. Often both opponents do not fight as much as simply observe one another. The above-cited definition of war, being only abstractly true, leaves us completely helpless before the individuality of concrete military tasks under the definition and consideration of the necessary means to war.

First of all, *war is never an isolated act*. Wars do not arise suddenly. They demand a certain preparation. We may think that the intended enemy in the majority of cases will not commit his entire resources. In each case he will not fight up to the point of the complete exhaustion of all his forces.

In the second place, war does not boil down entirely to one mighty blow. War is decided by several successive actions. This inevitably flows from the fact that only a few of the means prepared for the struggle can be utilized at once and simultaneously as the situation requires.

Finally, the outcome of war can never be absolutely final; it allows changes in the future. The vanquished sees in his failure a temporary evil which can be corrected in the future.

All these circumstances deprive war of the character of an elemental explosion of mutual rage. Its own elemental character war preserves to the end, but it appears only as a moment of actual concrete understanding regarding war.

Actually, war is not defined by only one law, the extreme effort of all forces. Thus the political aim, which seemed eliminated by the furious struggle of the two adversaries, is again put in the forefront. The political goal again occupies a place more befitting it. If the sacrifice which we demand from the enemy is insufficient, then he will hardly put all his forces into the resistance.

Therefore, politics not only assigns the goals of war but it determines the measure of necessary efforts. Of course, this does not mean that unskillful politics, thanks to a negligible cause, cannot provoke an outburst of long accumulated fury and hatred.

Hence, one must not think that politics only acts as a moderating form in the element of war. It does not moderate as much as it directs this element. If politics is itself the greatest aim, deeply embodied in the life of peoples, then politics directs affairs not only to the outbreak of war, but right up to the absolute stage, never ceasing to be the directing factor in war.

The connection of politics with war graphically shows why war can embody various forms, starting with wars for destruction and ending with demonstration by observation detachments.

In connection with the two basic elements which characterize war, violence and politics, war has yet a third element, thanks to which it all the more resembles a game. In war, the situation is often far from clear; all things and events are perceived as if in a false moonlight, according to the character of Clausewitz's expression. A decision must be taken on the basis of probability. Besides, war abounds with differing situations. In war, chance plays an important role. Even more, these forces make war similar to the game by which it is conducted. War lives and revolves around danger. Therefore, in war the first place is occupied by courage, that is, the hope in chance or risk. All this connects war with card-playing. It's impossible to lose sight of this side of war. Nevertheless, war is not amusement, not play. War remains a serious means for the achievement of important goals.

The excerpts Lenin made from this chapter are directly joined to one another; they are made from sections 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28. In these significant sections Clausewitz gives the basic conclusions from the first chapter. Lenin, in his own excerpts, takes chiefly from those passages which characterize the connection of war with politics, and likewise those which speak about the dialectical nature of war. Lenin's own notes, which are placed in the text and which we have in full, and his underlinings, further stress this side of Clausewitz's judgments.

7. The second chapter of Clausewitz's first book treats the aims and means of war. In the first of its parts it closely adheres to the contents of the first chapter. The aim of war, in its abstract conception, is the disarming of the enemy and his destruction. Reality, although often approaching war in a certain sense, at the same time produces a great variety of aims and prerequisites which are established by politics. Frequently, in order to reach an advantageous peace, full disarmament of the enemy is demanded.

Even if the aims of war are diverse, its means are essentially one and the same: the sole means of war is battle. This teaching of Clausewitz, which was introduced by him on the basis of the experience of the Napoleonic Wars, was directed against those who created various strategems, plans and maneuvers which, it seemed, could bring matters to a victorious end. Clausewitz sharply criticized these people who preferred the parade flag to the military sword. With this, of course, Clausewitz does not lose sight of the determining influence of politics upon war.

8. Both citations are taken from the second book of Clausewitz, which examines the theory and methodology of military science. Clausewitz denies the possibility of any dogma, of any everlasting and unchanging principles of military science. In his opinion, military science is always concretely dependent upon many circumstances which alter the operations of social and philosophical laws. This, however, in no way signifies that it is unnecessary to think during war and that in war thought and knowledge play no role at all. In the opinion of Clausewitz, military theory must accept the view, character, and form of examination of critical concrete analysis of a given military situation. The more penetrating such analysis, the more absolute its use in the affairs of armed force.

The excerpts taken by Lenin from this section develop the argument of why it is impossible to construct a theory of war in an abstract form. Clausewitz points to the presence of moral elements which defy exact calculation. The second citation from this book contains a comparison of war with trade which illustrates the uniqueness of military affairs in distinction to the arts and sciences. This comparison clearly expresses Clausewitz's basic thought in this book. This idea was mentioned likewise by Engels in his letter to Marx of January 7, 1858. The third citation is taken from the chapter "On Examples." As is shown from the remark in the margin, this extract made an impression.

9. Here is an allusion to Scharnhorst's book *The Officer's Companion (Militärisches Taschenbuch zum Gebrauch im Felde, 1793)*.

This work contains a series of practical instructions which defies all systematization.

10. Both citations are extracted from the third book of Clausewitz, which has strategy for its subject. According to Clausewitz, strategy shows how combat is utilized for the achievement of the aims of war. Strategy cannot be a speculative theory. In his exposition Clausewitz demonstrates the basic strategic factors of a moral and a material order. Lenin omits all the purely military parts. His extracts are taken from Chapter 5, "Military Virtue of the Army," and from Chapter 6, "Courage."

11. These three citations Lenin took from the fifth book, "Military Forces." The contents of the book have an essentially military character and are devoted to such questions as camps, marches, quarters, supplies, etc. Clausewitz's discourse, in its details and particulars, must now be considered antiquated even though, basically, they preserve their full significance for our time. Clausewitz here develops his favorite idea that one must never "take for the action itself the conditions for the action" or "the instrument for the directing hand." In military science it is impossible to calculate by exclusively military means, mainly because we can set them in motion. Lenin took excerpts from two chapters: Chapter 3, "The Relationship of Forces" and Chapter 4, "Relation of Armed Services." In the first Clausewitz says that, in his time, numerical superiority had become more and more important. In modern history it is difficult to find victories over an opponent who outnumbered his adversary two to one, as happened in antiquity. Contemporary European armies are very similar to each other in armament, equipment and instruction. Thus, in Clausewitz's opinion, it should by no means be inferred that it is impossible to conduct a war with an army significantly weaker than the enemy's. War is possible in every kind of relationship of forces. Having equivalent military force is always desirable, but in this sense no limits can be established. As a general rule, one can say that the weaker the forces, the fewer the goals which can be set them and the shorter the period of possible activity of these forces. But if the inequality of forces is so great that there is no such limitation of aims which saves them from destruction, the oppressed can only rely on moral superiority. And in an extreme case, in a glorious defeat, they gain the right to a future resurrection.

12. This citation is taken from the sixth book of Clausewitz, which has the closest tie with the seventh, wherein Clausewitz dialectically develops the theory

of the defense and the offense. In his opinion, it is impossible to consider them as isolated, for defense is always active, that is, has the elements of attack whereas the offense is always constrained to drag with it "the weight of the defense." The defense and the offense, according to Clausewitz, are always instances, and not independent parts, of the whole. The transition of the defense to the offense, and vice versa, proceeds through a series of crises through the increase of certain elements and the decrease of others, namely, by means of the transition from quantity to quality. This doctrine of crises is among the most profound enunciated by Clausewitz. The experience of World War I once more confirmed the correctness of this doctrine.

Lenin made a series of excerpts from the sixth book. He took the first excerpt from Chapter 5, "The Character of Strategic Defense." In it Clausewitz develops his own doctrine of defense, disclaiming the very notion of a purely passive defense. A defense, according to his views, is aggressive. Hence the defense does not signify a condition close to fainting and paralysis, for it possesses its own flashing sword. Usually the side prepared for war is the side which wants to attack. But the main point follows that the side most prepared for war is the side most defended.

13. This citation was taken from Chapter 6, "The Means of Defense." To the defense Clausewitz attributes the following: *Landwehr*, fortresses, the people, the *Landsturm*, and allies. Lenin's citation comes from the section entitled "The People." The inhabitants of a country, even if not prepared for an active defense or an open uprising, exert an influence upon the course of military activities by their general sympathy and by their innumerable services to a friendly side. In a hostile country all operations are accompanied by great frictions. The large and small services rendered by the inhabitants to their "own" are incalculable. In particular, this means the information received concerning the enemy, which clarifies the state of his small as well as large units.

14. This citation is extracted from the same Chapter 6, from the paragraph entitled "The Allies." Clausewitz says that the country defending itself finds natural allies in all countries which are interested in the preservation of the existing order. The desire to preserve the existing order, and not to aid one side at the expense of the other, is always present. This is a constantly active tendency which is conditioned by the relationship of forces. Therefore individual states, in case of an attack being made upon them, will have many interested states on their side. This is a general law, as contrasted to various actualities which deviate from it.

15. The citation is noted from Chapter 8, "Views of the Defense." Clausewitz distinguishes several types of defense: in the first event the army quickly attacks the invading enemy; in the second the army occupies a position close to the frontier and waits for the appearance of the aggressor in order to attack; in the third the army, occupying a defensive position, not only awaits the appearance of the enemy before his position, but awaits the attack itself; and in the fourth case the army transfers the defense to the interior of the country. There are various tactical possibilities beginning with the battle calculated to drive away the invader and ending with retreat into the center of the country with the goal of waiting until the aggressor exhausts himself. The selection of the means of defense rarely rests the basis of an exact calculation of all considerations for and against one or another variant.

16. At this point Clausewitz says that the selection of the means of defense rarely originates on the basis of an exact calculation of all the considerations "for" or "against" this or another variant.

17. This citation is taken from Chapter 16, which treats the question of defense in the mountains. Clausewitz maintains that for an active defense the best position is in the open rather than the mountains. This is of course generally the case and signifies that the Alps do not defend Italy, nor the Pyrenees Spain. In the

mountains the defense may be prolonged for the aggressor's passage through the mountains demands a certain effort. The question concerning defense in the mountains cannot be decided simply, but depends upon a series of conditions.

18. This citation is taken from Chapter 18, which treats the question of the defense of rivers.

19. This citation is taken from Chapter 23, "The Key of the Country." Clausewitz enters into sharp polemics here with those theoreticians of military science who laid special stress upon the material means of war, on the nature of the terrain, and so on. This is precisely what he strongly objected to in the concept of "the key of the country," as it was usually used. In general, such keys do not exist. In a country there exists no particular position, the possession of which would predetermine the acquisition of the entire country. In war, combat decides everything, even how military means will be used in action.

20. This citation is taken from Chapter 28, which treats, as did Chapter 27, questions concerning the defense of a theater of military operations. In defense Clausewitz distinguishes two aspects: the expectation and the decision. Under no circumstance may the defense be permitted to be reduced only to expectation. True defense always has the aim of deciding the issue through battle. At the same time it is impossible not to recognize that in wars both opponents frequently do not strive for a decisive clash. In this case war is almost reduced to simple mutual observation.

21. A series of citations were taken from Chapter 30 by Lenin. Chapter 30, as well as Chapters 27, 28, and 29, are properly a continuation of Chapter 26. But this chapter has its own title: "The Defense of a Theater of War When a Decision is Not Pursued." Clausewitz here examines campaigns where the positive will to victory was very weak, and where it did not suffice to cling to the goal and bring the action to a decision at any price. In such campaigns there are aggressors but they do not pursue definite, self-devised goals; rather they strive to utilize, for the most part, all possible advantageous circumstances. In this event, where the activity of the aggressor knows not the logical necessity of seeking the goal steadfastly, the attack very much resembles the defense. Military history demonstrates that campaigns of the type indicated prevail numerically. Their quantity is so significant that the remainder can be considered as exceptions to the rule. Such were the campaigns of Hannibal, Fabius Cunctator, Louis XIV, the campaigns of Daun and Frederick II. However, on the basis of this verified history, it is impossible to conclude that such is the character of war in general. On the contrary, in Clausewitz's opinion, this experience demonstrates the essence of war in a perverted way. This real essence of war appeared with the greatest clarity in the wars of the French Revolution, and in the campaigns of Napoleon. In them the true face of war appeared, for the attacker was subjected to the logical necessity to pursue his goal steadfastly. The French Revolution learned to take affairs by the hand instead of touching them merely with the fingertips.

According to Clausewitz, such campaigns, in which the will to victory is not clearly expressed, are pseudo-wars, and it is incorrect to seek an explanation of the nature of war from them. On the contrary, they demand an explanation from the standpoint of real war itself.

In campaigns where a weak will for victory exists, instead of one aim, the aggressor will strive for many very different goals. The aggressor may strive to occupy as many large tracts of the adversary's country as possible without battle, to conquer the significant stores and bases, likewise without significant battles, take undefended fortresses, even to fight a successful battle, but without great risk and without great consequences, seeking chiefly trophies and honor for his arms.

Both sides await the occasion of a battle and try by adroitness to create a suitable situation. Accordingly, the defenders' main task will be to shield the fortresses by placing themselves before them, in order to protect their country by spreading themselves between them (a cordon system).

In such operations generally, according to the apt expression of Clausewitz, gains and losses are paid for in pennies, and all activity is squandered in petty transactions.

In the absence of anything real and essential it is natural enough that the unimportant acquires special significance in a system of military activities: it becomes the center of attention.

First of all, the original plan is affected by problems of topography. Once the defense executes a great elongation of position to protect the country, provisions and fortresses, significant barrier positions acquire a special importance—rivers, mountains, forests, marshes. General staff officers, specialists in these matters, in citing topographical arguments paralyze the will of energetic commanders. The general begins to see mountains solely from a parochial viewpoint. Forming a pattern of corresponding reality, they (topographical factors) become part of the second nature of the general who falls under the exclusive influence of such "specialists" of the general staff.

In a similar manner, maneuvers begin to play a special role. In such campaigns the general pitifully juggles a sword because he does not hold the heavy saber of true war. The experience of a series of wars won a particularly important place in military theory for maneuver, chiefly in a defensive war.

While maneuvering both sides grow accomplished in adroitness. But because military science also depends upon chance and fortune, such practice turns war into play. Certain talented generals carried this play to the greatest perfection. In this many theoreticians of military science wished to see the summit of military art.

But the French Revolution suddenly introduced a completely different world of military phenomena. Their false theory, in many instances, predetermined the failure of those who took arms and marched against the French Revolution and Napoleon.

22. The third volume contains the seventh book which considers the attack, the eighth book, "The Plan of War," and the appendixes, among them the lectures which Clausewitz read in 1810, 1811 and 1812 to the Crown Prince of Prussia.

The seventh book, "Concerning the Offensive," by content as well as by method is most closely patterned to adhere to book 6, "Concerning the Defense." The defense and the offense were found to be interdependent and mutually linked to each other. The extracts of Lenin were taken from the second chapter, "The Nature of the Strategic Offensive," and they disclose the dialectical nature of the offense.

From other chapters, which are chiefly of a specialized military character—some on attacks in marshes, in forests, on the capture of fortresses and so forth, Lenin did not make extracts.

23. This citation is from the second chapter of the seventh book—"The Nature of the Strategic Offensive."

24. This citation is from the third chapter of the seventh book—"The Objective of the Strategic Offensive."

25. From the eighth book, "The Plan of War," Lenin made, comparatively, the largest number of extracts.

The eighth book may be regarded as one whole. In the disposition of materials there is a great deal of unity but, on the other hand, certain details are insufficiently elaborated. This book is one of the best ever written on the theme of planning in military science. Clausewitz, first of all, underlined the significance of a plan in war. In the war plan are brought together all aspects of military activity. The plan of war includes the cumulative aim in which all particular aims are merged. An expression of the basic conception is found in it, and this imparts direction to the whole. The plan indicates, likewise, the dimension of the means and the measure of the energy and extends its influence to the merest details.

If the plan is to be approached in accord with given principles, it is far from easy to prepare a correct plan. Principles in this case are absolutely necessary. There must be one point of view on the subject, a clearly fixed aim and, in conformity with it, calculation of the means to be employed. A plan without principles serves no end.

It is necessary to elaborate a plan of war strictly while at the same time recognizing that logic, at this juncture, is a very inconvenient and awkward instrument. In his own expressive language, Clausewitz expressed this idea in the following way: war shows itself either in the greatest or in the least degree. The character of war changes in essence. It necessarily possesses changeability for nothing is firm on this unstable ground.

The cause of this basic difficulty Clausewitz saw in the dialectical distinction in war—total war and war as it is in actuality. We are already familiar with these ideas of Clausewitz from his first book. Clausewitz here only repeats and elaborates his thoughts. War cannot be known as an entity unto itself. Considered unto itself any war actually fought, not even excluding the Napoleonic Wars, disintegrates into a series of contradictory elements—undecided matters deprived of internal consistency.

In order to establish a unity within which the contradictions which pierce military science will meet, it must be understood that war is not something independent, but that it forms merely a part of political relations.

From this viewpoint on war as a simple arm of politics war again becomes something unified: there is the possibility of studying all wars as something uniform.

Wars, according to their individual character, may be arranged in a pattern by the degree of their intensity. Military experience gains continuity through politics: if politics strive for greatness and power, so will war. War can even rise to an absolute expression by itself.

His own theoretical conclusion Clausewitz corroborated through the experience of military history. Wars are conducted with the most variable intensity, the forces that are put in motion being more or less significant. Cabinet wars, where the people did not take part, could not, in particular, be fought with full intensity of forces.

War acquired an absolute character with the French Revolution. While it is difficult to predict the future, thanks to this event it is all the more probable that future wars will be conducted with no less intensity than the wars of Napoleon even though it is quite possible that if alienation of government and people occurs anew war again will assume the character of a small act degenerating into the simple observation of one belligerent army by the other.

Applying this conclusion to the question of the plan in military science, Clausewitz first of all indicated that in the construction of a plan of war or campaign it is absolutely necessary to apply politics in order to determine the scale of means needed to prepare for war. This may be determined only by knowing one's political aim, as well as the enemy's, by knowing the respective forces of states and their internal relations, the character of states and peoples, and the political relationships between a given state and other states.

It is absolutely obvious that in all considerations for and against any plan, it is impossible to understand and to evaluate such a multitude of factors solely by routine methods of discussion. Such calculations are of a very complex character: "These are such mathematical tasks that even Newton would fear them."

Many conclusions involved in the elaboration of a plan will be subjective. These conclusions acquire probability only when there is a firm base beneath the considerations and political calculations available. This is because they define war in its general outlines.

Therefore, military art at apogee becomes the politics which replace diplomatic notes with bloody battles. Military defeats primarily are the products of

mistaken politics. The purely military point of view in war and its perspectives is basically incorrect. Such a categorical conclusion, on Clausewitz's part, is extremely curious because he made the military a career.

In conformity with these generally established principles, Clausewitz examined military plans in those wars which contemplate limited aims as well as in those which aimed to overthrow the enemy.

The book finishes with a plan of war against France. It is notable in that in essence this plan found embodiment in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.

From this book Lenin made a series of extracts, chiefly from Chapter 6, which he considered very important; this chapter is almost wholly extracted by Lenin.

26. The three wars which Frederick II fought against the Austrians and their allies for the possession of Silesia are called the Silesian Wars. The first war was from 1740-1742, the second from 1744-1745, the third, the so-called "Seven Years War," from 1756-1763. The historical significance of these wars is that for the first time Prussia appeared as a great power maintaining a well-drilled army.

27. The French Revolution introduced very great changes into military science. The French army was recruited among all the citizens; access to the highest posts was open to all and independent of social origins; line tactics were abandoned; and wars assumed a decisive character.

28. The Seven Years War began in 1756 and ended in 1763. It was fought between Prussia and Austria with its allies Saxony, Russia, and Sweden. The main result of war was the increase of the political influence of Prussia as a state to the detriment of French colonial power.

29. "A Survey of Military Instruction," entitled more precisely "A Survey of Military Instruction Given by the Author to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince in the Years 1810, 1811, and 1812," contains a brief exposition and Clausewitz's basic ideas concerning military science, strategy and tactics. It has four parts: (1) The principles which affect war in general; (2) Tactics or the theory of combat; (3) Strategy; (4) Concerning the application in war of the principles presented. The quotation taken by Lenin is found in the part "Strategy." These lectures were first published in the Russian language (in the translation of Dragomirov) in St. Petersburg in 1888, and again in the journal *Military Messenger* in Moscow in 1923 with a foreword by S.S. Kamenev.

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#### FROM ENGELS TO LENIN

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chapters in Franz Mehring's book on Lessing are devoted to the military activities of Frederick the Great. Mehring's articles on the subject of war are F. Mehring, *Zur Kriegsgeschichte und Militärfrage* (Berlin, 1967) and F. Mehring, *Krieg und Politik* (Berlin, 1959). The Russian edition of Mehring is *Ocherki po istorii vojn i voennogo iskusstva* [Survey of the History of War and Military Art], (Moscow, 1956). Further, see F. Mehring, *Die Lessing-Legende. Zur Geschichte und Kritik des preussischen Despotismus und der klassischen Literatur* (Berlin, 1953).

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#### SOVIET MILITARY SCIENCE

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#### LENIN IN MARXIST THEORIES OF WAR

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#### ON LENIN BY CONTEMPORARIES

Some of Lenin’s immediate friends and contemporaries left penetrating comments about his grasp, execution of and general contribution

to military affairs. First and foremost there are the massive writings of Trotsky on the subject of war. Particularly see I. Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed* (New York, 1965), pp. 477-485. Apart from the works already mentioned by Trotsky, see: Trotsky, *Lenin* (New York, 1925), especially pp. 125 ff.; Trotsky, *Military Writings* (New York, 1969); J.M. Meijer, ed., *The Trotsky Papers, 1917-1922* (2 vols., The Hague, 1964, 1971); Trotsky, *Stalin* (New York, 1941), especially chapters 9-10; Trotsky, *The Stalin School of Falsification* (New York 1962), pp. 205-209; Trotsky, *My Life* (New York, 1930), chapters 33-37. Trotsky's *Sochineniia* [Works], (Moscow, 1924-1927), of which twelve of the projected 21 volumes have been published—see Volumes VI and IX particularly—should be consulted as a matter of course.

Many other, lesser-known individuals have rhapsodized about Lenin's interest in military affairs, beginning with Lenin's wife, N.K. Krupskaiia, in *Vospominaniia o Lenine* [Memories About Lenin], (Moscow, 1957), p. 32. See further: M.V. Frunze, "Krasnaia armiia vypolniaet zavety Lenina" [The Red Army Carries Out Lenin's Legacy] in *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* [Selected Writings], (2 vols., Moscow, 1957), II, 120-219, and his "Lenin i krasnaia armiia" [Lenin and the Red Army] in the same volume (pp. 300-306); A.S. Bubnov, *O krasnoi armiia* [About the Red Army], (Moscow, 1958); M.D. Bonch-Bruevich, *Vsia vlast' sovetam* [All Power to the Soviets], (Moscow, 1964), chapter 5; M.D. Bonch-Bruevich, the same tsarist general who helped the Bolsheviks maintain power, also wrote "Kak stroilas' krasnaia armiia" [How the Red Army Was Built], *Ogon'k* [Fire], No. 9 (1927), pp. 6-7; A.V. Lunacharskii, "Vospominaniia o V.I. Lenine" [Memories of V.I. Lenin], *Krasnaia zvezda* (23 February, 1928); K. Danishevskii and S. Kamenev, *Vospominaniia o Lenine* [Memories of Lenin], (Moscow, 1934); E.M. Iaroslavskii, "Vladimir Il'ich rukovodit boevoi rabotoi partii" [Vladimir Il'ich Leads the Combat Work of the Party] in *Vospominaniia o Vladimire Il'iche Lenine* [Memories About Vladimir Il'ich Lenin], (2 vols., Moscow, 1956), I, 341; A. Lozovsky, *Lenin—The Great Strategist of the Class War* (Chicago, 1924); N.I. Podvoiskii, *V.I. Lenin i krasnaia armiia* [V.I. Lenin and the Red Army], (Moscow, 1958); S.I. Aralov, *V.I. Lenin i krasnaia armiia* [V.I. Lenin and the Red Army], (Moscow, 1958); by the same author, *Lenin vel nas k pobede: vospominaniia* [Lenin Led Us to Victory: Memoirs], (Moscow, 1962); I.G. Bronin, *Lenin i krasnaia armiia* [Lenin and the Red Army], (Moscow, 1925); P. Tashkarov, *V.I. Lenin and L.B. Kamenev o strategii i taktike partii v 1917 g.* [V.I. Lenin and L.B. Kamenev on Strategy and Tactics in 1917], (Moscow, 1927). And for Stalin's famous reply to Razin, see "Otvét tov. I.V. Stalin tov. Razinu" [Answer of Comrade J.V. Stalin to Comrade Razin], *Bolshevik*, No. 3 (1947), pp. 6-8 (translated in R. Garthoff, *Soviet Military Policy*).

Worthy of note is the tremendous Soviet effort beginning about 1959 to resurrect and legitimize Lenin's dominant position in military matters in the pages of *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*. For instance, the entire fourth number in 1960 was devoted to Lenin. This effort reached a crescendo between 1967 and 1970 and began to taper off thereafter.

#### LENIN'S MILITARY STATEMENTS

Lenin's own military pronouncements are scattered throughout his writings. He never wrote a major work on the subject. Three useful selections are: *V.I. Lenin o voine, armii, i voennoi nauke* [V.I. Lenin on War, Army, and Military Science], (2 vols., Moscow, 1957); V.I. Lenin, *Voennaia perepiska, 1917-1922 gg.* [Military Correspondence, 1917-1922], (Moscow, 1961); Volume 34 of *Leninskii sbornik* [Lenin Miscellany], (Moscow-Leningrad, 1932) consists of his civil war telegrams, many included in the *Perepiska*. *Leninskii sbornik* appeared at irregular intervals in a total of 36 volumes between 1923 and 1956; additional numbers recently have appeared. There are five separate editions of Lenin's works, the second/third editions being published in a shortened seven-volume edition in English. The fourth edition also appeared in English. There are numerous chronological indexes to these editions. The special index to Lenin's military writings, which are scattered throughout the five editions of his works, is: N.N. Azotsev, *Voennye voprosy v trudakh V.I. Lenina* [Military Issues in the Works of V.I. Lenin], (Moscow, 1964). Included in the Azotsev volume in addition to the excellent annotated index is a fine preface commenting on Lenin's military writings (pp. 3-42) and a very important fourth chapter (pp. 282-294) listing and annotating the various literature on Lenin as a military leader.

There are two further brief bibliographic articles on this subject: N.N. Azotsev and D. Grinishin, "Voennye voprosy v vospominaniakh o V.I. Lenine" [Military Questions in the Memoirs on Lenin], *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 3 (1964), pp. 93 ff.; V. Zevin, "Kritika i bibliografiia" [Criticism and Bibliography], *Voенно-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 4 (1966), pp. 90-98. The latter work is a review of the new or expanded material on Lenin's military activity in the fifth edition of his works.

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