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**On
Studying
Some
World
History**

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**ON STUDYING SOME
WORLD HISTORY**

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING 1973

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This pamphlet, consisting of four articles on studying some world history, discusses the process of the development of world history and exposes the basic contradictions of the present-day world. It also expounds the objective laws that imperialism will be destroyed, socialism will flourish and victory will belong to the national-liberation movement.

Printed in the People's Republic of China

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WHY IT IS NECESSARY TO STUDY WORLD HISTORY

Chairman Mao has taught us: **“No political party can possibly lead a great revolutionary movement to victory unless it possesses revolutionary theory and a knowledge of history and has a profound grasp of the practical movement.”**¹ While always stressing the need to seriously study Marxist-Leninist theories and investigate and study, he has taught the Party members and cadres that they must attach great importance to studying history, both Chinese and foreign, and that whether or not it has a knowledge of history is one of the conditions for a proletarian revolutionary party winning or not. At a time when there is an excellent situation in the Chinese revolution and world revolution which are developing vigorously, it will be of great help to our cause of socialist revolution if we study some world history.

Characteristic Feature of World Situation

The era in which we live today is **“a great era of radical change in the social system throughout the world,**

¹ Mao Tsetung, “The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War,” *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1967, Vol. II, p. 208.

an earth-shaking era.”¹ Countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people want revolution — this has become an irresistible historical tide. The time has gone for ever when two superpowers could dominate the world. Living in such an era, we must be prepared to engage in great struggles which will have many features that are different in form from those of the past.

Socialist China must strive to make greater contributions to mankind. Since the Chinese revolution is part of the world revolution, all the revolutionary tasks we undertake are closely linked to the revolutionary struggles of the world’s people. To have the world at heart, it is necessary to understand it. The world today is a development of the world yesterday. The contemporary struggles of the world’s people against imperialism and its lackeys are a continuation and development of their past and long struggles against class oppression, oppression by foreign invaders and colonial rule. To study world history will enable us, by acquiring a knowledge of the entire process of world history and drawing on historical experience, to better understand the special feature of the present world situation, foresee its general trend, strengthen our confidence in the victory of the proletariat and the revolutionary people and raise our consciousness of proletarian patriotism and internationalism. This will benefit the promotion of mutual support between the people of China and other countries in revolutionary struggles and thus help in the still greater development of world revolution.

¹Mao Tsetung, speech delivered on January 30, 1962 at an enlarged working conference of the Central Committee.

The characteristic feature of the world situation today is “upheaval,” or “global upheaval.” This “upheaval” which has a class nature is an expression of the sharpening basic world contradictions. What accounts for the “global upheaval”? Is it a good or a bad thing? How should this complicated international phenomenon be assessed? Reading world history will tell us that to overthrow the old social system and establish a new one is a great revolution marked by soul-stirring class struggles and earth-shaking changes. This has been the case in every great turning point in human history. The course of the collapse of the Western slave system was filled with recurrent slave uprisings in the ancient Roman Empire and unending foreign invasions, with civil wars going hand in hand with external wars. In the course of the collapse of the world feudal system, the bourgeois world revolution swept Europe and America; there were frequent civil and international wars, attempts at a comeback and opposing it and the alternate emergence of systems of monarchy and republic — a great upheaval lasting almost 200 years.

In the more than 100 years since the birth of Marxism, when the proletariat appeared on the world scene, the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes and the liberation struggles of the oppressed people have rolled on with full force and rocked the whole world. Therefore, the great upheaval in the world situation is a normal occurrence in the great era of revolution and in accord with the objective law governing the development of history. Today’s world “upheaval” reflects the life-and-death struggle between contemporary revolutionary forces and counter-revolu-

tionary forces — an “upheaval” by which the imperialist-ruled old world is headed for collapse and a socialist new world is advancing to victory.

Grasping the Objective Law of Social Development

Chairman Mao has pointed out: **“Classes struggle, some classes triumph, others are eliminated. Such is history, such is the history of civilization for thousands of years.”**¹ Reading world history will help us to know and grasp the objective law governing the development of human society in the light of the concrete historical course of the worldwide class struggle and gain still greater initiative in the struggle. Modern and contemporary world history is a record of the criminal acts of capitalism, colonialism and imperialism in exploitation and aggression at home and abroad and also one of the heroic struggle of the world’s revolutionary people and the oppressed colonial people against exploitation, aggression and oppression. In the long course of struggle, capitalism, colonialism and imperialism have changed from strong to weak in moving step by step towards their extinction, while the revolutionary people and the oppressed colonial people have grown from weak to strong in advancing to victory. This is what historical dialecticism means. The historical course of the rise and fall of any once rampant colonial empire in world history, be it tsarist Russia or fascist Germany which were thrown

¹ Mao Tsetung, “Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle,” *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1969, Vol. IV, p. 428.

off the historical stage, or the rapidly declining British Empire, has vividly demonstrated the objective law of historical development that capitalism is bound to perish while socialism is sure to triumph.

An unrivalled maritime overlord in the 19th century, the British Empire, by gunboat policy and power politics, became a vast colonial empire which spread across five continents and on which “the sun never sets.” But instead of solving the deep contradictions inherent in capitalism, the policy of expansion only deepened and widened them. With the steady progress of the proletarian socialist revolution and the vigorous development of the liberation movement of the oppressed people of the colonies, the British Empire has been irrevocably and rapidly declining. The rise and decline of the British Empire throws light on how to look at modern imperialism and social-imperialism. Throwing their weight about everywhere in the world, the two superpowers today look like huge monsters. But, sitting on the volcano of the people’s revolution, they are in fact plunged into the depths of inextricable crises. Like the star over the British Empire, the stars over them are falling.

The course of imperialism heading for doom is also one in which the revolutionary forces of the whole world constantly expand and develop. Though invariably weak and small at the beginning, the people’s revolutionary forces are in essence invincible because they represent the orientation of historical development. They will grow from small to big and from weak to strong so long as they dare to struggle and are good at waging unyielding struggles to the end despite any setback. The revolutionary truth that **“a weak nation can defeat a strong, a small**

nation can defeat a big¹ has not only been confirmed by the Chinese revolution, the Albanian people's revolution and the Korean people's war against U.S. aggression and for national salvation but also by the war of the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Lao peoples against U.S. aggression and for national salvation. This has also been repeatedly borne out by many previous facts in world history. The 1775-83 American War of Independence is a case in point. Then the world's biggest industrial country with a population of almost 30 million, the British Empire sent 90,000 troops to its northern American colony which had a population of only three million. The latter had only a small number of out-of-date guns, a few guerrilla bands and some militia groups. At the start of the war, it lost many battles to the British aggressor troops who thereby occupied much of its territory. But supported by the people and progressive forces in European countries, the mobilized masses launched guerrilla warfare, persisting to the end in their war of independence, a war of justice. Their protracted struggle culminated in a defeat for the British Empire and the winning of independence. Countless historical facts tell us that in the present struggle against the policy of aggression pursued by U.S. imperialism and social-imperialism, the only way for us is to be guided by a correct revolutionary line, **"dare to fight, defy difficulties, and advance wave upon wave. Then the whole world will belong to the people. Monsters of all kinds shall be destroyed."**²

¹ Mao Tsetung, "People of the World, Unite and Defeat the U.S. Aggressors and All Their Running Dogs" (Statement of May 20, 1970).

² Mao Tsetung, "Statement Supporting the People of the Congo (L.) Against U.S. Aggression" (November 28, 1964).

Learning from Strong Points of the People of All Countries

The people of all countries have always supported each other in their revolutionary struggles. A reading of world history will help us obtain a better understanding of the fact that the Chinese people and the oppressed people and nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America shared the same experience in the past and are facing the common task of struggle against imperialism. Thus, we will more conscientiously carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in foreign affairs and fulfil our duty of proletarian internationalism still better in resolutely supporting the just struggle of the oppressed people and nations.

World history shows that Asia, Africa and Latin America have splendid ancient civilizations; they have made great contributions to human progress. As a result of Western colonialist invasion after the late 15th century, vast areas of the three continents were reduced to colonies or semi-colonies and subjected to ruthless exploitation and enslavement by the Western colonialists. The vicious slave trade and various forms of cruel plunder by the Western colonialists changed Africa from a land of wealth, beauty and traditional civilization to a "dark" continent. Four centuries of plunder by the colonialists reduced the African population by 100 million. After throwing African Negroes into the abyss of unprecedented suffering, the slave traders came to China to trick large numbers of Chinese labouring people and shipped them to America as "coolies." Like African Negroes and American working people, hundreds of thousands of Chinese labourers lived in deep misery; they sweated and shed

their blood together with them. Where there is oppression, there is resistance. Fighting shoulder to shoulder against the Western colonialists, they cemented their militant friendship in blood. The British colonialist bandit and butcher Gordon who took part in suppressing the Chinese Taiping Revolution was killed by the Sudanese people when he went to Africa to repress them. A common historical experience has helped the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America to take the road of mutual support and close unity in struggle. Though they are separated by mountains and rivers, the common struggle against colonialist aggression has bound together the oppressed people and nations of the three continents.

A knowledge of this history enables us to realize profoundly that the Chinese people and the oppressed nations and people of Asia, Africa and Latin America are class brothers and comrades-in-arms who are as closely linked as flesh and blood and share weal and woe and that China and the overwhelming majority of the Asian, African and Latin American countries belong to the third world. Therefore, **“The Chinese people regard victory in the anti-imperialist struggle of the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America as their own victory and give warm sympathy and support to all their anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist struggles.”**¹

Guided by Chairman Mao’s proletarian revolutionary line in foreign affairs, the Chinese people have steadily developed friendly contacts with the people of other countries and modestly learnt from their strong points.

¹ Mao Tsetung, “Talk with Guests from Asia and Africa” (April 28, 1961).

Redoubling efforts to learn from one another conforms to the world historical trend. World history shows that it is the millions and millions of slaves who propel the progress of history as well as science and culture. The masses are the masters of history and the true makers and successors of the outstanding cultures of mankind. The people of all countries, big or small, have made their contributions to mankind; they have both strong and weak points, as well as things from which others can learn or draw lessons. Through long years of friendly exchanges with other peoples, we Chinese people in the past learnt many useful things from them to enrich and develop our own national culture. The proletariat should adopt the Marxist analytical attitude towards all things. Blind worship of foreign things is wrong. On the other hand, the metaphysical attitude of refusing to come into contact with foreign things, and not studying and analysing them, is also completely wrong. The correct principle and the one we should follow is to **“make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China.”**¹

Studying Marxist Theory

Studying some world history helps us to **“read and study seriously and have a good grasp of Marxism.”** Lenin said that Marx’s theory **“is the summing up of experience, illuminated by a profound philosophical conception of the world and a rich knowledge of history.”**² Without a

¹ Mao Tsetung, quoted from *Hongqi* editorial, No. 6, 1967.

² V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1970, p. 33.

certain amount of knowledge of world history, it is not possible for us to understand very well how the proletarian revolutionary teachers formulated revolutionary theories on the basis of class struggle in their time, nor is it possible for us to have a deep understanding of the spirit and essence of Marxist-Leninist theories. Among the important Marxist-Leninist documents, many brilliant theoretical works are scientific conclusions arrived at after analyses of concrete historical facts. Marx's *The Civil War in France*, for instance, started with an analysis of the historical process of the Paris Commune revolution and summed up the historical experience of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, thereby enriching and developing the Marxist theory. Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* is a penetrating treatise on the emergence, growth and end of primitive society, further confirming the law of development of human society. Therefore, to study some world history and thence to understand the historical background of these Marxist works and the historical conditions dealt with will help us to really grasp the content of these works and learn in a better way the standpoint, viewpoint and method with which proletarian revolutionary teachers examined and solved questions.

To study Chairman Mao's works on the Chinese revolution, it is also necessary for us to know some world history. In analysing questions relating to the Chinese revolution, Chairman Mao always proceeds from the overall situation in class struggle both at home and abroad, and examines these questions in the context of the entire international situation. In his brilliant work *A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire*, Chairman Mao

examined the class struggle in China through an analysis of the various basic contradictions in the world, arrived at a series of scientific conclusions and pointed out the only correct way for the Chinese revolution. Full of confidence, Chairman Mao predicted that a high tide in the Chinese revolution was imminent. Chairman Mao refuted the pessimistic ideas of Liu Shao-chi and other swindlers who questioned "How long can we keep the Red Flag flying?" and pointed out that the root cause of the theoretical error of these pessimistic and despondent opportunists following the defeat of the great revolution in 1927 was **"mainly from the failure to understand clearly that China is a semi-colonial country for which many imperialist powers are contending."**¹ It is obvious, therefore, that if we really want to grasp the meaning of this work of Chairman Mao's and have a deep understanding of the opposition and struggle between the two lines in the Party at that time, we should have a certain amount of knowledge of the international situation and the conditions in the various imperialist countries which were contending for control of China during that period. Chairman Mao's great theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat has summed up the historical experience of the international communist movement, and has inherited, defended and developed Marxism-Leninism. To really understand and grasp this theory of Chairman Mao's, it is essential to study the history of the international communist movement.

For a long time, all renegades to Marxism-Leninism — from Bernstein, Kautsky, Trotsky, Khrushchov and

¹ Mao Tsetung, "A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire," *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1967, Vol. I, p. 117.

Brezhnev in foreign countries to Chen Tu-hsiu, Wang Ming, Liu Shao-chi and other swindlers in China — in their efforts to “amend” Marxism-Leninism to suit the needs of the imperialists, have resorted to such tricks as tampering with and distorting the Marxist-Leninist classics and emasculating the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism, making them acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Studying some world history will help us to explode their lies and sophistry all the more forcefully and see through their anti-Marxist-Leninist nature.

Grasping Class Struggle

How to study world history which is so rich in events covering several thousand years in every part of the globe and so full of extremely complex contradictions? Lenin said: **“Marxism provided the clue which enables us to discover the laws governing this seeming labyrinth and chaos, namely, the theory of the class struggle.”**¹ If we do not grasp class struggle as the key link when we study history, it will be impossible for us to have a clear understanding. As long as we use Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought as our guide and firmly grasp class struggle — the key link — which runs through the history of mankind, we can discover the laws governing the historical events which are full of changes, and not lose sight of the central link amid the complex historical phenomena. The profound treatises by proletarian revolutionary teachers on world history are our guide in learning and studying world history and our sharp

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Karl Marx*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1967, p. 16.

weapons for criticizing histories by the bourgeoisie and revisionists. Therefore, we should devote special attention to studying them.

Studying history is needed to carry out the actual class struggle. We will have a clear aim when we closely integrate our study with class struggle and the struggle between the two lines at home and abroad, and in this way we can grasp the key points, and achieve the goal of closely combining the study of world history with the study of works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin as well as Chairman Mao's works, and closely integrating the study of history with the actual struggle. Since modern and contemporary world history and the history of the international communist movement are more closely connected with actual class struggle, we should stress them in our study.

AGAIN ON STUDYING WORLD HISTORY

In his important report *Reform Our Study* in 1941, Chairman Mao urged our whole Party to study Chinese history and pay particular attention to studying the history of China since the Opium War (1840). This is the guiding principle in our study of history and historical research, that is, the principle of stressing the present rather than the past.

In studying world history, therefore, we should also lay emphasis on modern and contemporary history which is closely related to existing class struggles and shows that all the basic contradictions in the world today have their historical origins. Many current international problems can be traced back to modern and contemporary history for background and sequence. Drawing on the experience and lessons from class struggle in these periods is of direct value to us in gaining a deeper knowledge of today's world situation and correctly understanding the acute and complicated current class struggle.

Three Stages

If we start counting from England's bourgeois revolution of 1640, modern and contemporary world history covers a span of over 300 years. It can be divided into three stages. The first, from 1640 to the eve of the 1871

revolution of the Paris Commune, is the period of "free" capitalism, in which capitalism through protracted struggles replaced feudalism in a number of countries in Europe and America. The second stage, from the 1871 Paris Commune to immediately before the 1917 October Socialist Revolution, is one in which "free" capitalism was going over to imperialism until imperialism finally took shape. In this period, the socialist revolutionary movement of the proletariat and the national-democratic revolutionary movement were on the rise and making onslaughts against capitalism, colonialism and imperialism. Led by Lenin, the 1917 October Socialist Revolution in Russia opened a new epoch in world history. Modern world history thereby entered its third stage, the period of contemporary history. As Chairman Mao has pointed out, **"This is the historic epoch in which world capitalism and imperialism are going down to their doom and world socialism and people's democracy are marching to victory."**¹

Modern-contemporary world history covers the growth and decline of capitalism and the inception, growth and advance to victory of socialism. The struggle of the proletariat and all other exploited toilers against the capitalist class, the struggle of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples against colonialism and imperialism, and the united struggle of a growing number of medium-sized and small countries against aggression, interference, subversion and plunder by the two superpowers are the main contents in the annals of modern-contemporary world history. In the final analysis, the complex contra-

¹ Mao Tsetung, "The Present Situation and Our Tasks," *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1969, Vol. IV, p. 173.

dictions of the present world are expressions of the various contradictions of the old world as they develop and interact in new historical circumstances.

Basic Contradictions

The revolutionary teachers of the proletariat have made penetrating analyses of the basic contradictions of the periods of modern-contemporary world history, the nature of capitalism and imperialism, the socialist revolution and the revolution in the colonies and semi-colonies, and made a series of wise forecasts and scientific conclusions in many of their outstanding works, especially in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* by Lenin and *On New Democracy* by Chairman Mao. These are the theoretical guidance for our study of modern-contemporary world history. Only by taking the Marxist-Leninist theory as our guide can we see through the distortions of history by the bourgeoisie, grasp the laws governing the development of modern-contemporary history and draw on historical experience and lessons for the benefit of current class struggles.

The fundamental contradiction in a capitalist society is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The development of capitalism is described as an idyllic process by all its worshippers, from reactionary men of letters in the pay of the bourgeoisie to the modern arch imperialists. But lies cannot hide facts. Indeed, **“the bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than**

have all preceding generations together.”¹ But “capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt.”² Modern world history tells us that the inception and the growth of capitalism is a history of unbridled plunder at home and abroad. In order to develop capitalism, the new aristocracy and bourgeoisie of England launched the enclosure movement which continued 300 long years from the end of the 15th century to the beginning of the 19th century. They drove peasants en masse off the land by force, burnt down their houses and turned the farmland into grazing grounds or big farms, and then enforced brutal laws to compel the homeless peasants to become wage slaves of the capitalists. In its westward expansion, the United States of America used fire and sword to disperse and kill the Indians. Now only 900,000 Indians remain, most of them sequestered on reservations, living in darkness and misery. Marx pointed out: **“The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production.”³**

Feudalism was replaced by capitalism and this was a historical advance. But the change was no more than the substitution of one exploiting class for another and one system of exploitation for another. The establishment of

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1972, p. 37.

² Karl Marx, *Capital*, Ger. ed., Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1953, Vol. I, p. 801.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 790.

the capitalist system along with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie put new fetters on the proletariat and the other labouring people, who fell victim to brutal capitalist economic exploitation and political oppression. Imperialism is today declining on a worldwide scale and the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are locked in violent struggle. The study of modern-contemporary world history to familiarize ourselves with the economic and political development of the bourgeoisie will help us to gain a more profound understanding of the exploitative nature of the bourgeoisie and the inevitability of the downfall of the capitalist system, and understand more clearly the truth that **“imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat”**¹ as Lenin put it. This will inspire us to fight on heroically for a world without exploitation of man by man and for the emancipation of all humanity.

Struggle for Hegemony Between Imperialist Countries

One of the basic contradictions in modern-contemporary world history is the conflict and contention among imperialist countries. Capitalism developed to the stage of imperialism towards the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century. In this stage, the contradictions inherent in capitalism become ever more acute and broader in scope. The contradictions, in essence, are the contentions among imperialists for world domination and spheres of influence in colonies. Imperialism is monopolistic, parasitic, moribund capitalism. Lenin said: **“An**

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1969, p. 10.

essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between several Great Powers in the striving for hegemony”¹ and **“‘world domination’ is, to put it briefly, the substance of imperialist policy.”**²

Rivalry among the big colonialist and imperialist powers has never ceased in modern-contemporary world history. In the 17th century, it was mainly contention for maritime hegemony between Britain and the Netherlands. In the 18th century, there was fierce rivalry between Britain and France for maritime and European hegemony. In the 19th century, a complicated situation arose on the European continent, with Britain, Russia, France, Germany and Austria locked in strife for supremacy at different times. Rivalries became sharper when world capitalism entered the stage of imperialism. At the beginning of the 20th century, the contradictions between the two overlords, Britain and Germany, became the main imperialist contradictions of the time. A late-comer among the imperialist pirates, Germany went all out in expansion in the Middle East and elsewhere. It attempted to realize its ambition for world domination by occupying the Middle East, the hub of communication between Europe, Asia and Africa and an important strategic area leading to the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, and seizing British and French colonies. The Middle East thus became an important area for which the imperialist powers contended with one another. Britain, the old-line colonial empire, planned to defeat its powerful rival Germany in war, wrest Mesopotamia and Palestine from Turkey, enslave

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

² V. I. Lenin, “A Caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism,” *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., State Publishing House for Political Literature, Moscow, 1949, Vol. XXIII, p. 24.

the Arab people and consolidate its colonial rule in Africa. Several other imperialist countries also had their sinister designs for dividing up the world. The rapid sharpening of their contradictions led to World War I of 1914-18, bringing mankind unprecedented suffering. But war gave rise to revolution and the outbreak of the revolutions in Russia, Germany, Hungary, Turkey and other countries spelled the end of tsarist Russia, the German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire — the seemingly powerful colossi who were aggressive by nature.

The study of modern-contemporary world history will enable us to see the deep historical background of today's contention between two superpowers for world domination. As imperialist and social-imperialist countries, they are bound to be governed by the laws of imperialism, to take the beaten path of hegemonism. This is dictated by the nature of imperialism and their downfall is also inevitable.

One of the late-comers among the imperialist countries, U.S. imperialism in its early period seldom became involved in the scramble for supremacy among the European powers because of conditions peculiar to the development of capitalism in the United States. Its first step was aggression and expansion in Latin America. Starting and winning the 1898 Spanish-American War, the first war to redivide colonies in world history, U.S. imperialism became overnight the overlord in the Western Hemisphere. In the short period of 30 years after entering the stage of imperialism, the United States was involved in 33 military invasions and interventions in Latin America.

Moreover, the United States lost no time in contending with other imperialist countries for hegemony in the

Pacific region and in Asia. There were both contention and collusion over the years between U.S. imperialism and Japanese imperialism in their complicated scramble for hegemony in the Pacific. Their deep, irreconcilable contradictions culminated in the surprise raid on Pearl Harbour by Japanese militarism in 1941 and the Pacific War of 1941-45. U.S. imperialism amassed vast wealth in the two world wars. As the No. 1 imperialist country after World War II, the United States stretched its tentacles everywhere around the world. While plundering other peoples economically, it resorted to the big-stick policy of undisguised armed interference in the internal affairs of other countries, starting a new scramble for world hegemony. But times have changed. The unprecedented upsurge in the revolution of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples in the postwar period, the drastic decline of world capitalism, the sharpening of different contradictions in and outside the United States and growing contradictions among the imperialist countries — all these very soon sent U.S. imperialism tumbling from the peak of its strength.

The modern history of Russia also tells us about tsarist Russia's "**never changed and neglected aim — Russia's world hegemony.**"¹ By suppressing the revolution in Poland and Hungary, occupying large tracts of Chinese territory and engaging in expansion in West and Central Asia, the old tsars built a huge colonial empire astride Europe and Asia towards the end of the 19th century. Tsarist Russia always regarded hegemony in the Middle

¹F. Engels, "The Foreign Policy of the Tsarist Government of Russia," from *Marx and Engels, Works*, Ger. ed., DV, Berlin, 1963, Vol. XXII, p. 21.

East and the Balkan Peninsula as the first strategic objective to achieve. Doing its utmost to expand its navy and contending for an outlet from the Baltic Sea, it tried to clear the way through the Black Sea Strait and control the Mediterranean Sea to build up its maritime hegemony. To realize this global strategy of aggression and expansion, it unleashed wars abroad. Its contention with Japan for supremacy over East Asia led to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. Defeated, it divided and shared with Japan their spheres of influence in East Asia at the expense of the sovereignty of China and Korea, in addition to supporting Japan in its aggression against the two countries. Meanwhile, it worked together with Britain in the West. The two concluded secret treaties for dividing up spheres of influence in Iran, Afghanistan and China's Tibet and jointly sent forces to put down the revolution in Iran. But all the schemes between the imperialist countries could in no way stop the tide of revolution. It was during World War I, an imperialist war, that the revolutionary situation in Russia developed rapidly until tsarist Russia, the main bulwark of the reactionary forces in Europe, was changed into the source of the storm of the socialist revolution and the Russian proletariat won the world's first victory in socialist revolution. History thus proclaimed the end of the dream of a huge tsarist empire. Completely betraying the road of the October Socialist Revolution and fully inheriting the old tsar's mantle of expansionism, the Soviet revisionist renegade clique now entrenched in the Kremlin has restored capitalism and pushed social-imperialism. It can be said with certainty that it is only a pipe dream for the Soviet revisionists to try to re-establish a big colonial empire in the era when the imperialist system is heading for collapse.

Looking back on the history of the imperialist countries contending for world domination and suffering continuous defeats and of U.S. imperialism and tsarist Russian imperialism is of great help in observing today's contention for world hegemony by the two superpowers and some other international problems. The nature of imperialism determines that while frequently colluding, the imperialist countries have no way of reconciling their conflicts in contending for world hegemony. Their collusion means greater suppression of the peoples, whereas their bitter rivalry provides favourable conditions for the victory of the revolutionary people. The revolutionary people must regard the contradictions among imperialists as an inevitable historical phenomenon as capitalism heads towards its doom, and concretely analyse and correctly handle them from a class standpoint. Plunder and aggression by the imperialist powers and the strife for hegemony among them, particularly between the two superpowers, account for the complex conflicts in some areas and also give birth to the tempestuous anti-imperialist struggle of the people in the intermediate zones. Only by overthrowing imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism can these peoples solve their problems in their own interests, independently and with the initiative in their own hands.

Where There Is Oppression There Is Resistance

Modern-contemporary world history is also the history of the unceasing heroic struggles of the proletariat and the oppressed nations and people of the world against capitalism, colonialism and imperialism. The great truth

“The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history”¹ has been proved by many historical facts — from the first great trial of strength between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie of France in June 1848 to the hoisting of the Red Flag of the Paris Commune — the world’s first dictatorship of the proletariat — in 1871; from the monumental triumph of the October Socialist Revolution to the great victory of the Chinese people’s revolution and on to the new development of the current international communist movement.

Side by side with the vigorous advance of the revolutionary movement of the world’s proletariat, the oppressed nations’ liberation movements have developed into a violent historical trend. Asia, Africa and Latin America have become an arena seething with revolutionary storms that hit directly at imperialism. This is the outcome of the acute development of the contradictions between the oppressed nations in the colonies and semi-colonies on the one hand and imperialism and colonialism on the other. It has undergone a long historical process. The revolution always advances according to this law: The more the oppression, the greater the resistance; long suppressed, resistance is bound to break out rapidly. In the few hundred years since the end of the 15th century, the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America have suffered all sorts of plunder and oppression by Western colonialism and imperialism and have set into motion one revolutionary storm after another in fierce offensives against colonialism and imperialism.

Large-scale wars for independence and liberation of the colonies broke out in Latin America at the end of the

¹ Mao Tsetung, *Quotations*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1972, p. 118.

18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Taking the lead were the hundreds of thousands of Negro slaves in Haiti who in more than ten years of fierce fighting routed 60,000 colonial troops of France and Spain and forced the arrogant Napoleon’s aggressor troops to surrender; in 1804 they founded Latin America’s first independent state of Blacks freed from colonial rule and the slave system. This was followed by the uprisings of the people of many Latin American countries which destroyed the colonial system of Spain and Portugal on the continent. In the mid-19th century when the Asian people became politically awakened, the first revolutionary tide against colonialism and feudalism in Asia swept from the Persian Gulf and India to China. Marx and Engels hailed these great new things with great revolutionary enthusiasm. Engels predicted that **“the opening day of a new era for all Asia”**¹ would come before long. A new source of great world storms opened up in India, Viet Nam, Korea, the Philippines and China in the early 20th century and especially after the October Socialist Revolution in Russia. This turned Asia into a vast battlefield against imperialism. In Africa, the enslaved Black people, armed with such primitive weapons as bows and arrows and shot-guns, have fought heroically for several centuries against the Western colonialist aggressors armed to the teeth with advanced weapons. Since World War II, Asia, Africa and Latin America have become the focal point of the contradictions of the present-day world and are seething with struggles on an unprecedented scale against imperialism and colonialism and neo-colonialism.

¹ F. Engels, “Persia and China,” from *Marx and Engels, Works*, Ger. ed., DV, Berlin, 1961, Vol. XII, p. 215.

The ever-growing national-democratic revolutionary movements in the heartland of capitalism, such as the struggle of the Afro-Americans against racial discrimination and the struggle of the people of Northern Ireland for national independence, all have profound historical origins. The U.S. bourgeoisie for generations has been the class enemy of the Afro-Americans whose ancestors were Black slaves shipped from Africa to America by Western colonialists. More than 20 million Afro-Americans in the United States are fighting ruthless exploitation and oppression by the monopoly capitalists. In his statement supporting their struggle against racial discrimination, Chairman Mao penetratingly pointed out: **“The evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and thrived with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the Black people.”**¹

Revolution Will Triumph

The advance of history shows that the great trend of our era — countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people want revolution — is an outcome of the logical development of modern history. The rise of the third world is not accidental but an inevitable result of the struggle against imperialism and colonialism by the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The people invariably want revolution and the revolution is bound to win. But the road of revolution is tor-

¹ Mao Tsetung, “Statement Supporting the American Negroes in Their Just Struggle Against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism” (August 8, 1963).

tuous, progressing in the course of struggle which is full of twists and turns. This is the dialectical law of historical development. In modern world history, the bourgeois revolution in England beginning in 1640 went through a zigzag course of struggle for nearly half a century. So did the bourgeois revolution in the United States beginning in 1775 for nearly a century and the bourgeois revolution in France beginning in 1789 for more than 80 years. It was after such protracted struggles that the bourgeoisie in these countries consolidated their domination. The people in the colonies have been doing the same in their struggle for independence. The colonialists and imperialists never quit their colonies of their own accord. They are bound to create all kinds of troubles for the people’s revolution. It was not until they had fought wars of independence for almost 20 years in the early 19th century that the people of Latin American countries freed themselves from Spanish and Portuguese colonial rule. After their independence, however, many countries were turned into “commercial colonies” by British imperialism as a result of economic infiltration. Under the signboard of “pan-Americanism,” U.S. imperialism imposed the chains of neo-colonialism on many Latin American countries by combining the big stick and carrot tactics.

These historical experiences show us that there has never been a genuine revolution without going through a tortuous course of hard struggle, or a revolution that has advanced without a hitch after victory was won and does not have to undergo the protracted struggle between those attempting at a comeback and those opposing it. Since this is true for the bourgeois revolution, the socialist revolution led by the proletariat has to go through an even

sharper and more tortuous struggle in order to win final victory.

However, the whole course of modern-contemporary world history clearly shows that socialism is certain to replace capitalism, just as capitalism replaced feudalism. This is an irresistible law of history. The tide of world revolution is pushing ahead today precisely in accordance with this law. No force in the world can prevent the inevitable downfall of imperialism, nor can any force hold back the sure victory of the revolutionary cause of the people.

Chairman Mao pointed out: **“The correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything.”**¹ The proletariat and the revolutionary people are able to overcome all difficulties on their road of advance, speed up the pace of revolution and promote historical advance provided they have a correct Marxist-Leninist line. The study of world history will enable us to have a still deeper understanding of Chairman Mao’s great theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and his proletarian revolutionary line and policies, and spur us to continually raise our consciousness of class struggle and the struggle between the two lines and our consciousness of continuing revolution, so as to carry the socialist revolution through to the end.

Lenin pointed out long ago: **“But the morrow of world history will be a day when the awakening peoples oppressed by imperialism are finally aroused and the deci-**

¹ Mao Tsetung, quoted from the editorial of *Renmin Ribao*, *Hongqi* and *Jiefangjun Bao*, December 1, 1971.

sive long and hard struggle for their liberation begins.”¹ This great day has now come! In such an earthshaking great era, it is most useful for every revolutionary to read some modern-contemporary world history and draw on the rich experience accumulated by the people of all countries in their revolutionary struggles, military or political, economic or cultural, with or without bloodshed, positive or negative.

¹ V. I. Lenin, “The Question of Nationalities or ‘Autonomisation,’” *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., SPHPL, Moscow, 1957, Vol. XXXVI, p. 559.

ON STUDYING SOME HISTORY ABOUT IMPERIALISM

In studying world history, it is highly significant to study some history of imperialism so as to gain an understanding of its nature and characteristics in the political, economic and other aspects and a grasp of the process and laws of its development and decline as a guide to revolutionary practice.

The great Lenin personally took part in class struggle in the era of imperialism. In accordance with the basic principles of Marxism, he studied how world capitalist economy and politics had developed in the half century after the publication of Marx's *Capital* and wrote *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* and other brilliant works which are penetrating expositions of the nature of imperialism and the laws pointing to its inevitable doom as well as of the historical tasks of the proletariat. In fighting "Left" and Right opportunist lines and in leading the Chinese people in protracted struggles against imperialism, modern revisionism and reactionaries of various countries, Chairman Mao has inherited, defended and developed Lenin's theory on imperialism, issued *On New Democracy* and other celebrated works, put forward famous theses such as imperialism and all reactionaries are paper tigers and made a series of profound analyses of the contemporary world situation and the strategy and

tactics of proletarian revolutionary struggles. The proletarian revolutionary teachers' works on imperialism are our theoretical guide in studying the history of imperialism.

What Is Imperialism?

What is imperialism? Lenin said: **"Imperialism is a specific historical stage of capitalism. Its specific character is threefold: imperialism is (1) monopoly capitalism; (2) parasitic, or decaying capitalism; (3) moribund capitalism."**¹ History tells us that prior to the 1870s, capitalism was in the stage when free competition was predominant. The constant accumulation of capital and concentration of production in the last 30 years of the 19th century led to the emergence of monopoly, and capitalism characterized by free competition gradually moved on to the stage of monopoly capitalism, that is, imperialism. Imperialism is the continuation of the development of capitalism and the highest and final stage of capitalism. Taking the world as a whole, capitalism entered the period of imperialism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. At that time, monopoly replaced free competition in the world's main capitalist countries, such as Britain, the United States, Germany, France and Russia. Just as Lenin pointed out: **"Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the**

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., SPHPL, Moscow, 1949, Vol. XXIII, p. 94.

international trusts has begun; in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.”¹

Owing to different socio-historical conditions at that time, the chief imperialist countries in Europe and America developed their own particularities. Britain in the 19th century was a typical “colonial imperialist country.” By routing the “Invincible Armada” of Spain, which was “mistress of the seas” in the early period, successively defeating two other rivals on the seas — Holland and France — and launching wars to grab overseas colonies, Britain by the end of the 19th century had built a colonial empire, with colonies whose total area was more than a hundred times as large as the British Isles. Relying mainly on exploitation of the people in the colonies for its existence, the British Empire distinctly manifested the parasitic and decaying nature inherent in the imperialist system. A late-comer, the United States was an upstart imperialist country. In 1898, it unleashed the Spanish-American War, a war to re-distribute colonies, turning Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Cuba into U.S. colonies or dependencies. During World War I, it amassed enormous wealth and directly took part in the armed intervention which vainly tried to strangle the new-born Soviet Russia. Thus it **“turned an exceptionally tragic page in the bloody history of bloody imperialism.”**² Tsarist Russia was a military-feudal imperialist country where monopoly capitalism merged with the economic and political rem-

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1969, p. 106.

² V. I. Lenin, “Letter to American Workers,” *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., SPHPL, Moscow, 1950, Vol. XXVIII, p. 44.

nants of serfdom, thereby forming the most reactionary and most barbarous state system — tsarist autocracy, a veritable prison for all the nationalities of Russia. It was not only the gendarme of Europe but also of Asia, as Lenin said: **“Russia’s reputation as an international gendarme was firmly established.”**¹

Though the imperialist countries may differ on some specific points, their nature is the same, which is monopoly capitalism. **“The deepest economic foundation of imperialism is monopoly.”**² It is on this basis that a handful of financial oligarchs manipulate state power and control the economic lifelines. The fundamental aim of all imperialist activities is to guarantee high profits for monopoly capital. It is imperialism’s nature to plunder. Imperialism cannot exist without violence or plunder and without aggression or expansion. Since capital-imperialism and social-imperialism are both imperialist, they are inevitably governed by the imperialist laws; they carry out reactionary imperialist policies and take the imperialist road to decadence and decline.

Uneven Development and Contention for Hegemony

Lenin pointed out that uneven economic and political growth is an absolute law of capitalism, and at the stage of imperialism, **“this growth is not only becoming more**

¹ V. I. Lenin, “The Tsar Visits Europe and Members of the Black-Hundred Duma Visit England,” *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., SPHPL, Moscow, 1947, Vol. XV, p. 425.

² V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1969, p. 119.

and more uneven in general, its unevenness also manifests itself, in particular, in the decay of the countries which are richest in capital (England)."¹ This is because the rule of monopoly capital not only cannot eliminate competition but brings monopoly and competition together, with the result that competition between the monopolies of various countries becomes still more intense and anarchy in all capitalist production becomes more serious than ever before. Meanwhile, with scientific and technological innovations constantly being introduced, some late-comers among the capitalist countries can utilize the new discoveries and other advantages to catch up with or surpass the old capitalist countries. On the other hand, the old-line capitalist countries are rapidly going down the road of decline and destruction because their decaying and parasitic nature inherent in monopoly rule is becoming even more manifested. In the first half of the 19th century, Britain was known as the "workshop of the world," and even up to the 1870s, Britain's coal, iron and cloth output exceeded the total output of the United States, Germany and France taken together. But by the 1880s, the United States surpassed Britain and topped all other countries in industrial production. Early in the 20th century, Germany outstripped Britain and was only second to the United States. Governed by the law of uneven economic and political development, some imperialist countries are on the ascendant while others are on the decline, and the invariable uneven development constantly leads to intense struggles for hegemony. It is the inevitable law of imperialism to redivide the world in accordance with "capital" and "strength."

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

To strive for world domination and redivide colonies, imperialist countries always make the vigorous expansion of their navies to gain supremacy on the seas an important measure in their arms expansion and war preparation. "Mistress of the seas" and second to none in the 19th century, Britain pushed the gunboat policy. Not satisfied with the few crumbs left over by the British and French imperialists, the late-comer Germany, another imperialist country, began building a powerful fleet. Confronted by Germany's challenge, Britain immediately began building a new type of warship — the so-called "Dreadnought." Not to be outdone, Germany immediately did the same. In their struggle for naval supremacy, Britain and Germany discussed several times the question of limiting naval armaments. But while mouthing disarmament, both countries actually spared no efforts in expanding their armaments until the outbreak of World War I, which weakened Britain's economic and military strength. Since World War II, the revolutionary struggles of the world's people have developed as never before; in particular, the people in the colonies have awakened. The British Empire on which the "sun never sets" rapidly declined; once "mistress of the seas," Britain is now like the "sun sinking behind the western hills."

A review of the history of Britain's rise and fall and comparing it with the actions of today's two superpowers — which are pushing the gunboat policy, practising neo-colonialism and colluding as well as contending with each other in a vain attempt to continue to dominate the world — will enable us to see clearly that they are following in the footsteps of the old-line imperialist countries. But times have now changed. The era in which the impe-

rialist countries could lord it over others on the seas with impunity is gone for ever. The Latin American countries and peoples are now taking the lead in the valiant struggle to defend their 200-nautical-mile territorial seas and safeguard their marine resources. This in a way reflects the irresistible historical trend of the present era.

Temporary Compromise, Sharpening Struggle

The history of imperialist interrelations tells us that **“there never has been and never could be even, harmonious, or proportionate development in the capitalist world.”**¹ After the end of World War I, the imperialist pirates of Britain, France, the United States and other victor countries called the Paris Peace Conference and the Washington Conference to share the spoils, bringing into being the so-called Versailles-Washington system to redivide the world. Although imperialist countries colluded in dismembering the defeated countries, dividing weak and small nations and opposing the revolution of the people, their temporary compromise of one day only entailed fiercer struggles the next. The struggle for world hegemony between the imperialist countries is irreconcilable. The alliance between them is one between pirates who can never unite. Historical facts have proved that, instead of eliminating the contradictions between the imperialist countries, the “Versailles-Washington” system deepened them because of the predatory nature of the peace treaty and the uneven sharing of the spoils.

¹ V. I. Lenin, “The Third International and Its Place in History,” *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., SPHPL, Moscow, 1950, Vol. XXIX, p. 282.

Lenin pointed out: **“An essential feature of imperialism is the rivalry between several Great Powers in the striving for hegemony.”** They always tried their utmost to **“weaken the adversary and undermine his hegemony.”**¹ Britain, France, the United States and Japan all aspired to hegemony after the end of World War I. France attempted to re-establish its dominant position on the European continent by completely conquering Germany, even dismembering it. But Britain did not want to find Germany weakened too much, even less to see France become powerful, because London was using the tactic of the “balance of power” to maintain the confrontation between Germany and France and thus prolong British hegemony in Europe and the rest of the world. The United States sought to get the upper hand in the contention for world domination by taking advantage of its economic power. As a result, it was opposed by Britain, Japan and other countries. Japan’s all-out expansion in China and the Pacific region during and after World War I also led to acute contradictions with Britain and the United States. As their contradictions multiplied, the imperialist countries became locked in bitter strife, each scheming to swallow up its opponents, or, failing this, to weaken them and tie them down by all possible means. After the end of World War I, the United States did everything in its power to groom Germany, promoting the recovery of the latter’s economic and military strength as a counterweight to Britain and France and to oppose the then socialist Soviet Union. It took just more than 10 years for Germany to produce more iron and steel than Britain and France com-

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Eng. ed., FLIP, Peking, 1969, p. 109.

bined. When the arch fascist Hitler came to power and frenziedly pushed a policy of aggression, Germany once again became the source of an imperialist war. In the Far East, the industrial and military power of Japanese imperialism also grew enormously, with its cotton textiles and other light industrial goods edging out British and U.S. products everywhere in the Asian market. Economic expansion inevitably leads to military expansion. With their economic strength rapidly rising, the two fascist imperialist countries Germany and Japan went in for wild arms expansion and war preparations, trying their best to end the "Versailles-Washington" system and redivide the world. Thus, the imperialist countries plunged the world into another war a mere 20 years after World War I.

During World War II, while Germany, Italy and Japan were defeated and Britain and France seriously weakened, U.S. imperialism whose territory was not ravaged by war further increased its economic strength because of the war. In the postwar period, it took over as the overlord of the capitalist world. U.S. industrial production, exports and gold reserves made up half, one-third and three-fourths of the capitalist world's totals respectively. With nuclear weapons in one hand and the U.S. dollar in the other, U.S. imperialism used dual tactics to do evil at will. It not only tried to enslave the people of the Asian, African and Latin American countries. **"Even towards its own allies in Western Europe, North America and Oceania, U.S. imperialism follows the policy of the law of the jungle, trying to trample them underfoot."**¹ The

¹ Mao Tsetung, "Statement Supporting the Panamanian People's Just Patriotic Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism" (January 12, 1964).

U.S. monopoly capitalist class at one time arrogantly claimed that the 20th century was the "American century" and that the United States would have "eternal prosperity." When U.S. imperialism was throwing its weight around, thinking itself supreme in the world, Chairman Mao in 1947 clearly pointed out: **"The war boom in the United States of America was only temporary. The strength of the United States of America is only superficial and transient. Irreconcilable domestic and international contradictions, like a volcano, menace U.S. imperialism every day. U.S. imperialism is sitting on this volcano."**¹ Chairman Mao's wise predictions have been confirmed by historical facts. Under the leadership of Chairman Mao, the Chinese people wiped out the U.S. running dog Chiang Kai-shek's 8 million troops, driving the U.S. imperialist forces off the mainland of China. Puncturing the U.S. imperialist paper tiger, the heroic Korean people defeated the U.S. aggressors in the early 1950s. The struggle of the world's peoples against U.S. imperialism has been surging forward, making one onslaught after another against it. Going from bad to worse, U.S. imperialism has thus tumbled from its "pinnacle." In the 1960s, the heroic fight by the three Indochinese peoples has dealt U.S. imperialism heavy blows and greatly quickened the pace of its decline. The U.S. economy, inflated in the course of war, is bogged down in grave crises which have erupted five times in the more than 20 postwar years. Interwoven in financial and dollar crises, these crises have lasted so long and grown so serious that there has been no way out of them to this day.

¹ Mao Tsetung, "The Present Situation and Our Tasks," *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1969, Vol. IV, p. 172.

The "dollar empire" of yesterday has become the world's biggest debtor country, harassed by dollar devaluation and a vast outflow of gold. The economic position of U.S. imperialism has rapidly deteriorated: The U.S. share of the capitalist world's industrial production dropped from 53.4 per cent in 1948 to 41.3 per cent in 1970, and its share of the capitalist world's export trade has gone down from 32.4 per cent in 1947 to 16 per cent in 1969. U.S. imperialism's dream of "eternal prosperity" has become a laughing stock. The struggle of workers, Blacks, youth and women against monopoly capital and the movement against the war of aggression are gathering momentum in the United States, shaking U.S. imperialist rule to its core.

Moribund Capitalism

Wild imperialist plunder at home and abroad, imperialist countries' contention and infighting and the decline of one imperialist country after another eloquently confirm Lenin's scientific conclusion that imperialism is "**moribund capitalism**" and "**imperialism is the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat.**" Capitalism's inevitable doom, the certain triumph of socialism and the replacement of the capitalist system by the socialist system are all determined by the historical laws of the movement of the basic social contradictions. With the decaying and parasitic nature of capitalism in the stage of imperialism fully exposed, all kinds of inherent capitalist contradictions have become far more acute than before.

As Chairman Mao has analysed in his *On Contradiction*, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie became intensified, the contradiction between monopoly and non-monopoly capital emerged, the contradiction between the colonial powers and the colonies became intensified and the contradiction among the capitalist countries resulting from their uneven development manifested itself with particular sharpness. It is the development and struggle of these contradictions that provide the necessary prerequisite for the victory of the socialist and the people's democratic revolution led by the proletariat. From his study of the laws governing the development of imperialism, Lenin drew the important conclusion that because of the uneven political and economic development of imperialism the world imperialist front would be broken through where it is weakest and the socialist revolution would triumph first in one or several countries. History has fully confirmed the proletarian revolutionary teacher's scientific prediction. During World War I, tsarist Russia was the focus of all the contradictions of imperialism and the weakest link in the imperialist chain. Led by Lenin, the 1917 October Socialist Revolution was crowned with great victory, giving birth to the world's first socialist country and ushering in a new epoch for mankind. The great victory of the Chinese revolution and the victories of the revolutions in other Asian and European countries during and after World War II are all new proof of the Marxist-Leninist theory.

The history of imperialism also tells us that it will never leave the stage of history of its own accord. The more it nears its doom, the more it will put up desperate

struggles by adopting all kinds of tactics for military adventures and political deception. As Chairman Mao has said, **“Make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again . . . till their doom; that is the logic of the imperialists and all reactionaries the world over in dealing with the people’s cause, and they will never go against this logic.”**¹ To shake off its serious political and economic crises and save itself from imminent doom, Germany under the fascist Hitler introduced a fascist dictatorship, frenziedly suppressing the revolutionary Germans and carrying out the cruellest possible economic exploitation and political oppression of the people at home under the reactionary slogan of “guns instead of butter.” Unleashing World War II, it barbarously plundered the people of other countries. But, like “lifting a rock only to drop it on one’s own feet,” as a Chinese saying goes, these aggressive outrages touched off the people’s unprecedented anti-fascist struggle around the world, which brought the complete downfall in a mere 12 years of Germany under Hitler who had dreamt of establishing “1,000-year empire.” Chairman Mao has pointed out: **“Imperialism has pushed the great masses of the people throughout the world into the historical epoch of the great struggle to abolish imperialism.”**² The aggression, subversion, control and interference by U.S. imperialism and social-imperialism today everywhere in the world are the expressions of their last-ditch struggle. They have aroused and are arousing the world’s people and the small and medium-sized countries to

¹ Mao Tsetung, “Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle,” *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1969, Vol. IV, p. 428.

² *Ibid.*, p. 425.

wage a just struggle against the two overlords, which is now raging. It is the people’s revolutionary struggle that gradually weakens imperialism, until its extinction.

Struggle Against Imperialism and Opportunism

In their last-ditch struggle the imperialists always make fostering an opportunist faction in the workers’ movement one of their basic policies. The super monopoly profits they have grabbed enable them to buy over the upper stratum of workers and encourage opportunism. The old and new revisionists are all scabs bribed by the monopoly capitalists with their superprofits, the completely bourgeoisified labour aristocracy and the agents of imperialism. Worming their way into the international communist movement, they have made every effort to cover up the contradictions and nature of imperialism, prettify imperialism, spread the ideas of imperialism and benumb the fighting will of the world’s revolutionary people. They play the reactionary role the imperialists themselves cannot play. Lenin called these renegades to the proletariat, who defended the interests of imperialism, **“‘social-imperialists,’ that is, Socialists in words and imperialists in deeds.”**¹ He repeatedly taught us that it is necessary to integrate closely the struggle against imperialism with the struggle against opportunism and revisionism. **“The fight against imperialism is a sham and humbug unless it is inseparably bound up**

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1969, pp. 131-32.

with the fight against opportunism.”¹ We clearly see today that the Soviet revisionist leading clique is following in words and deeds what Lenin repudiated. While paying lip-service to socialism and even to “communism,” it in fact pursues the imperialist policy of expansion and plunder and tries to carve out spheres of influence by every means. The Soviet revisionists are social-imperialists, pure and simple.

The vigorous development of the world revolution since the end of World War II has brought about further changes in the tactics of imperialism. While resorting to corruption and infiltration with regard to the proletariat which has not seized power, the imperialists engage in subversion and “peaceful evolution” in dealing with the proletariat in power. Simultaneously with military adventures or armed invasion, they carry out political deception and push a neo-colonialist policy. They either establish indirect colonial rule by bribing hidden traitors and grooming puppets; or, flaunting the banner of “military aid” and “economic aid,” they engage in big capital export and commodity dumping so that the recipient countries are exploited economically and controlled politically and militarily; or they try to turn other countries into their dependencies or colonies by taking advantage of the so-called bilateral “friendship treaties” they have signed. In short, they stop at no intrigue or conspiracy in their efforts at world domination, to enslave other people and maintain imperialist rule. Whatever new tactics the imperialists may turn to, exploitation always arouses struggle and oppression always entails resistance. Each time they commit ag-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

gression, they put a new noose around their necks. The more evil they do, the tighter the nooses become. All their atrocities can only hasten their doom.

Days of Imperialism Are Numbered

Basing himself on Marxist-Leninist theory in studying the present and past of imperialism and summing up the positive and negative experience of the people in China and the rest of the world in their protracted struggles against imperialism, Chairman Mao has put forward his conception of the strategy and tactics in the fight against imperialism. He pointed out: **“The first imperialist world war and the first victorious socialist revolution, the October Revolution, have changed the whole course of world history and ushered in a new era.”** In this era, imperialism **“has fully revealed its decadence.”¹** Chairman Mao said: **“Imperialism and all reactionaries, looked at in essence, from a long-term point of view, from a strategic point of view, must be seen for what they are — paper tigers. On this we should build our strategic thinking. On the other hand, they are also living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers which can devour people. On this we should build our tactical thinking.”²** This scientific thesis is our powerful ideological weapon for defeating imperialism. Imperialism is moribund, not

¹ Mao Tsetung, “On New Democracy,” *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1967, Vol. II, p. 343.

² Mao Tsetung, speech delivered on December 1, 1958 at a meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China held in Wuchang, quoted from *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1969, Vol. IV, p. 99.

dead, capitalism. This reactionary thing still has a dual character in the face of the last decisive struggles waged by the people. It is inconceivable that the world's people can make a clean sweep of imperialism overnight without arduous, complex and protracted struggles. But there is no doubt that so long as they have the courage to wage struggles, know how to wage them, and persevere in waging them, imperialism will perish and the people's revolution will triumph. Countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people want revolution. This has today become an irresistible historical tide. The days of imperialism are numbered. To seize one victory after another in the revolution, the people the world over still will experience tortuous and strenuous struggles. Studying the Marxist-Leninist theory of imperialism and the history of imperialism will help us understand more profoundly the nature of imperialism and social-imperialism and the laws pointing to its inevitable doom, strengthen our confidence in the certain victory of the proletarian revolutionary cause, implement still more conscientiously Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and policies and fight confidently and courageously for the complete liberation of all mankind.

ON STUDYING SOME HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL-LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The history of the national-liberation movement is an important part of modern and contemporary world history. In studying world history, we should, proceeding from the needs of the revolutionary situation and tasks, pay attention to studying the history of the national-liberation movement and learn from the rich historical experience of the world's oppressed nations and peoples in opposing imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism. This will help us to know and grasp the objective laws of the development of present-day world history and take a more effective part in the struggle against imperialism and social-imperialism.

Historical Cause of National- Liberation Movement

The history of the world shows that modern colonialism emerged in the wake of the inception and growth of capitalism in Europe. In 1415, the Portuguese colonialists occupied Morocco's Ceuta in North Africa and established the earliest colonialist stronghold in the world. Then they went southward, set up a number of colonial

settlements along the West African coast, sailed round the Cape of Good Hope and carried out expansion in Asia. Towards the end of the 15th century, the Spanish colonialists crossed the Atlantic and invaded the Americas. This was followed by other colonialist countries whose tentacles reached various parts of the world.

Lenin pointed out: **“Colonies are conquered with fire and sword.”**¹ The process of colonialist expansion is a sanguinary history of aggression and plunder, massacre and enslavement. It brought catastrophe to the people of various nationalities in Asia, Africa and Latin America and seriously hampered the social development of countries on these continents. In the Americas, they slaughtered millions of Indians and looted several million kilogrammes of gold and some 100 million kilogrammes of silver from late 15th to early 19th century. In Africa, they engaged in the criminal slave trade. To get one Black man shipped alive to America, at least five died on the way or even before they left the mainland, with the result that Africa lost 100 million Black people in 400 years. Colonialist pillage was no less savage in Asia. In India, colonial rule brought utter poverty to the people who died in large numbers. A famine in 1770 took a toll of some 10 million lives in a region in the northeastern part of India. In China, the combined forces of eight imperialist powers bloodily suppressed the Yi Ho Tuan Movement in 1900 and forced the Ching

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Socialism and War,” *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., SPHPL, Moscow, 1948, Vol. XXI, p. 275.

government to sign the unequal “Protocol of 1901”¹ under which, among other stipulations, China had to pay an “indemnity” of 450 million taels of silver which was extorted from the people. Atrocities committed by the colonialists have exposed the shameless lies spread by imperialism and revisionism that colonialism is “the emissary of civilization.” The common plight of the peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America under colonialist bandit invasion and subjugation is the historical cause that makes these regions the storm-centres of the national-liberation movement today.

Colonialism has resorted to all manner of stratagems in perpetrating crimes of aggression and plunder under ostentatious signboards. In 1898, U.S. imperialism forcibly occupied the Philippines and established its colonial rule there under the signboard of supporting the Philippine people in their fight against Spanish colonialist rule and for national independence. As Engels pointed out: **“There was no land grab, no outrage, no repression on the part of Tsarism which was not carried out under the pretext of enlightenment, of liberalism, of the liberation of nations.”**² Flaunting the banner of maintaining “peace” and “order,” tsarist Russia time and again suppressed the uprisings of the Polish people for

¹ In September 1901 the Ching government concluded an unequal treaty with the eight imperialist countries — Britain, the United States, Germany, France, Russia, Japan, Italy and Austria-Hungary; its main provisions were that China had to pay those countries the huge sum of 450 million taels of silver as war reparations and grant them the special privilege of stationing troops in Peking and in the area from Peking to Tientsin and Shanhaikuan.

² F. Engels, “The Foreign Policy of the Tsarist Government of Russia,” from *Marx and Engels, Works*, Ger. ed., DV, Berlin, 1963, Vol. XXII, p. 23.

national independence. It sent 140,000 troops to drown the 1848 Hungarian revolution in blood. It was also under the pretext of "safeguarding the capital" that it swallowed up Finland by armed force. And again under the name of "supporting the fraternal Slav nations' struggle for liberation," it stepped up infiltration and expansion in the Balkan region.

Irresistible Historical Trend

Where there is oppression and aggression, there is resistance. The process of invasion and enslavement of the colonies and semi-colonies by colonialism and imperialism is also the process of resistance by the oppressed nations. The liberation movement of the oppressed nations and the wars of national liberation constitute a great cause sweeping away stumbling blocks on the path of history and propelling society forward. Historically unavoidable and reasonable, they are "**inevitable, progressive and revolutionary.**"¹ For hundreds of years the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, dauntlessly advancing wave upon wave, have never ceased fighting against colonialism and imperialism. From the very day the colonialists set foot on the sacred territories of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples, the oppressed nations and peoples who love freedom and independence dealt head-on blows at the invaders with rocks, arrows, spears and cannons. In 1510, the Hottentots in the area of the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa wiped out harassing colonialist

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Junius Pamphlet," *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., SPHPL, Moscow, 1948, Vol. XXII, p. 298.

marauders at one fell swoop. In early 16th century, the Araucanian people of Chile in South America resolutely repulsed the colonialist invaders and valiantly defended their independence. In 1662, the Chinese people, led by Cheng Cheng-kung, drove the colonialists out of Taiwan and recovered the island which is China's sacred territory. In late 18th and early 19th centuries, the Latin American peoples launched revolutionary struggles against colonial rule and for national independence. The African peoples have also carried out epic struggles against colonialist and imperialist invasion and partitioning. From mid-19th to early 20th century, one revolutionary wave after another swept the Asian continent, dealing heavy blows at the colonialist and imperialist forces. In 1862, the heroes of the Taiping Revolution in China annihilated the foreign rifle detachments under the American colonialist Ward, who received due punishment and was killed. In 1911, revolutionary soldiers and people in Tabriz, Iran, courageously resisted the invading armies of tsarist Russia which had come to suppress the Iranian revolution. All this illustrates the unyielding spirit of resistance on the part of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples who would never submit to colonial rule.

The Great October Socialist Revolution led by Lenin ushered in a new era in human history, "**having created a new front of revolutions against world imperialism, extending from the proletarians of the West, through the Russian Revolution, to the oppressed peoples of the East.**"¹ The national-liberation movement entered a new

¹ J. V. Stalin, "The October Revolution and the National Question," *Works*, Eng. ed., Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, Vol. IV, p. 170.

historical stage and became part of the world proletarian socialist revolution. After World War II, the balance of class forces in the international arena underwent a major change in favour of the revolutionary people. The national-liberation movement surged forward as never before, forming an irresistible historical trend in the present-day world. Under the leadership of Chairman Mao, the Chinese people overthrew the counter-revolutionary rule of U.S. imperialism and its running dog, the Kuomintang reactionaries, won great victory in the new-democratic revolution, and embarked on the socialist road. The people of more and more countries and regions in Asia, Africa and Latin America have taken the revolutionary road of armed struggle. In the two decades or more after the war, the people of over 60 countries have won political independence after unremitting struggles. The dykes of the imperialist colonial system are crumbling under the impact of the revolutionary storm of the national-liberation movement.

Biggest Neo-Colonialists of Present Era

Imperialism and colonialism, however, will never step down from the stage of history of their own accord. They invariably resort to every means possible to hold back this historical tide of revolution. U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism have gradually replaced old colonialism and become the main pillars of modern colonialism and the biggest neo-colonialists of the present era. They are suppressing and undermining the national-liberation movement everywhere and carrying out expansion in Asia, Africa and Latin America and other

parts of the globe in a vain attempt to establish a new colonial system to enslave the world's peoples. Thus, the national-liberation movement faces the arduous militant task of opposing the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., the two overlords, and it cannot win complete victory without opposing the neo-colonialism of these two superpowers.

In the early postwar years, U.S. imperialism, taking advantage of the fact that it had battered on the war while Germany, Italy and Japan had been defeated and Britain and France had been weakened, became the overlord of the capitalist world. Its counter-revolutionary "global strategy" is aimed at making inroads into and controlling the intermediate zone between the United States and the socialist countries, putting down the revolutions of the oppressed nations and peoples, with the ultimate aim of dominating the whole world. To realize this plan, it has resorted to counter-revolutionary dual tactics. For more than 20 years since World War II, it has ceaselessly launched aggressive wars and carried out subversion and interference. However, like "lifting a rock only to drop it on its own feet," U.S. imperialism's attempt to dominate the world has boomeranged; it has earned nothing but universal condemnation and is besieged ring upon ring by the people of the whole world.

The Khrushchov-Brezhnev revisionist renegade clique restored capitalism in the Soviet Union in the mid-50s, which made that socialist country undergo a qualitative change. Following this, the Soviet Union emerged on the world stage as a social-imperialist country. Usurping the fruit of the Soviet people who had spent long years in building socialism, the Soviet revisionist renegade clique has not only followed in the footsteps of the old

tsars but greatly enlarged their blueprint of a "Slav empire." Carrying nuclear weapons, warships of the Soviet revisionists prowl the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. They rave that it is the "inalienable, legitimate right" of the Soviet revisionist fleet to sail "anywhere on the high seas." Colluding as well as contending with the U.S. imperialists, the Soviet revisionists are dreaming of establishing a great colonial empire stretching from Europe to Asia, and from Africa to Latin America.

Under the guise of "supporting the national-liberation movement," Soviet revisionist social-imperialism does its best to infiltrate into the Asian, African and Latin American countries to carry out neo-colonialist aggression in an attempt to turn these countries into "eggs in the Russian basket." However, deceit and blackmail by the Soviet revisionists are becoming less and less effective. More and more Asian, African and Latin American countries and people have come to see that their "military aid" is nothing but a bait to control the armed forces of the recipient countries. Their "economic aid" is an even more important means to carry out colonial expansion in these areas. By exporting capital, dumping commodities and other methods, they are working overtime to plunder the strategic materials and natural resources of these countries. Like the old-line imperialists who sucked the blood of the peoples of other countries, the Soviet revisionists are doing everything they can in "skinning the ox twice."¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1965, p. 141.

Broad Intermediate Zones

Like two slices of bread with meat between them, the two superpowers — Soviet revisionism and U.S. imperialism — are trying to sandwich other countries in various parts of the world. They not only plunder the small and medium-sized countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, but also practise the "jungle law" policy towards their "allies" in Europe, Asia, North America and Oceania. The Soviet revisionists are sparing no effort to extend their sphere of influence to West Europe. Thus, between these two overlords and the socialist countries there exist two broad intermediate zones. The first intermediate zone includes the Asian, African and Latin American countries which have suffered from colonialist and imperialist aggression and oppression in the past and are today carrying on a valiant struggle against imperialism and colonialism, and especially against the two superpowers. The second intermediate zone includes the major capitalist countries both in the West and in the East except the two superpowers. These countries, too, are subjected to the control, intervention and bullying of the two overlords to varying degrees, and the contradictions between these countries and the two superpowers are daily developing. The two superpowers' wild ambitions to dominate the world and their aggressive activities have aroused the world's people to rise and fight against them. Countries in the first as well as in the second intermediate zone are getting united in different forms and different scopes to oppose the power politics and hegemonism of the superpowers. This is a trend of world history.

For Complete Victory of National-Liberation Movement

The historical experience of the world's people in opposing colonialism, imperialism and hegemonism tells us that old colonialism is a paper tiger, imperialism is another paper tiger and superpowers are also paper tigers. British imperialism, swaggering around and blustering as it did during its heyday, dominated the world for only 200 years or so and declined in World War I. The next to lord it over the world is U.S. imperialism. After World War I, it stretched its aggressive claws to every part of the world and swaggered like a conquering hero. But after half a century or so, this paper tiger has also been punctured by the people of the world and fell off from its apex. Today Soviet revisionist social-imperialism is baring its teeth and looks overbearing, actually it is also beset with difficulties both at home and abroad and is sitting on a volcano of crises. So long as the world's people distinguish true from false friends, are not afraid of pressure or threat, refuse to be deceived and stand up to persist in struggle, they can surely repulse aggression, threat and control by Soviet revisionism and expose the true nature of this paper tiger.

Chairman Mao pointed out: **"To defeat the reactionary rule of imperialism, it is necessary to form a broad united front."**¹ In opposing the hegemonism of the superpowers, the countries and people in the two intermediate zones share common interests. To win victory

¹ *Chairman Mao Tsetung's Important Talks with Guests from Asia, Africa and Latin America*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1966, p. 7.

in the national-liberation movement, the people of Asian, African and Latin American countries must not only support and help each other; there is the necessity and also the possibility for them to form an alliance with the second intermediate zone in its struggle against hegemony, uniting all the forces that can be united and forming the broadest possible united front.

Chairman Mao has pointed out: **"In the fight for complete liberation the oppressed people rely first of all on their own struggle and then, and only then, on international assistance."**¹ The historical experiences — both positive and negative, successes and setbacks — of the national-liberation movement have repeatedly proved this principle to be correct. Today, under the signboard of "international aid," Soviet revisionist social-imperialism is imposing its counter-revolutionary revisionist line on others, and betraying and strangling the national-liberation movement. Under these circumstances, all the oppressed nations and Asian, African and Latin American countries and people will find themselves in a passive position and in a blind alley if they do not adhere to the principle of maintaining independence and keeping the initiative in their own hands and relying on their own efforts. Self-reliance means integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the revolutionary practice of one's own country to formulate the correct line, principles and policies suited to the country's concrete conditions. Self-reliance means relying on the manpower and resources of one's own country to continually overcome difficulties that will inevitably

¹ Mao Tsetung, "Talk with African Friends" (August 8, 1963).

arise in the course of the revolution. Self-reliance means fully mobilizing and closely relying on the country's broad masses, especially the workers and peasants. At present, the two superpowers are colluding and contending with each other in their attempt to dominate the world. They always hatch plots to strangle the national-liberation movement. The oppressed nations and peoples must adhere to the principle of maintaining independence and keeping the initiative in their own hands and relying on their own efforts in order to break through all kinds of complicated and difficult situations, crush all the schemes to undermine the national-liberation movement and win victory.

To triumph over decadent forces, new-born forces must go through a long process of repeated struggle in which contradictory aspects transform themselves into each other. The road to national liberation invariably involves strenuous efforts and is full of twists and turns. This notwithstanding, the future is bright. To know and grasp this historical law is an important condition for the revolutionary people to win victory. The revolutionary people certainly will meet with difficulties and setbacks since the struggle is protracted and arduous. Yet it is exactly these difficulties and setbacks that will help raise the people's consciousness in struggle, accumulate revolutionary experience, temper revolutionary cadres, thus guaranteeing the revolution to develop and grow in strength on a deeper and more consolidated basis. The Chinese people have struggled for more than a century to overthrow the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism, and it was not until 1949 that they finally won great victory in their

revolution. To achieve national independence and liberation, the heroic Vietnamese people have since mid-19th century waged valiant struggles for more than 100 years. They have defeated several colonialist aggressor countries; in particular, they have badly battered U.S. imperialism and set a splendid example for the world's people in persisting in long-term struggles. So long as the revolutionary people are resolved to engage in protracted struggle and have faith in victory, keep on fighting in spite of setbacks, they are sure to overcome every difficulty and win final victory in the fight for national liberation.

Our great leader Chairman Mao has pointed out: **"We are now in a great new era of world revolution. The revolutionary storm in Asia, Africa and Latin America is sure to deal the whole of the old world a decisive and crushing blow."**¹ The liberation struggle of the world's oppressed nations and peoples, the struggle against hegemony waged by all the countries subjected to the aggression, control, intervention and bullying of one or two superpowers and the revolutionary struggle of the world's proletariat, which converge into a sweeping historical torrent, will bury once and for all vicious colonialism and imperialism and the hegemonism of the superpowers, and herald the liberation of the world's people.

¹ Mao Tsetung, "Message of Greetings to the Fifth Congress of the Albanian Party of Labour" (October 25, 1966).

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外文出版社出版(北京)
1973年(32开)第一版
编号:(英)3959-2472
00039
3-E-1301P