

Arms & Empire Study Guide

created by MIM(Prisons) in June 2022

for Richard Krooth's *Arms & Empire: Imperial Patterns Before World War II* (1980)

INTRO

The Maoist Internationalist Movement (originally named the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement) was founded at a time when inter-imperialist conflict between the camp led by the United States and that led by the social-imperialist USSR posed a threat to the world. In one of the founding documents, written in 1983, comrades saw the combination of liberation struggles in the Third World and this inter-imperialist conflict as a hotbed for communist revolutions.(1)

MIM founders saw the success of communist revolution as an absolute necessity to prevent a new inter-imperialist war, that would likely lead to nuclear war. As such, they recognized that a revolutionary situation could arise within the United States in a matter of years, despite having a budding skepticism of the interests of most in our country in communist revolution.

For most of MIM's existence now we have not been in the situation described above. By 1991 the "Cold War" was over with the dissolution of the Soviet imperialist bloc. For a solid 3 decades we lived under a "unipolar world", where U\$. dominated organizations and alliances ruled the world (NATO, World Bank, IMF, etc).

For many years now (in 2022) China has been the rising imperialist power, mostly independent of the U\$.-dominated institutions, though deeply integrated with the U\$. economically. As the contradictions heighten in the U\$.-China economic system, they also heighten in the capitalist system overall. The post-USSR era brought a sacking of the wealth of the former Soviet states by kleptocratic capitalists. This aligned with the capitalist development of China, and the return of exploitative relations dominating over 1 billion people who became the primary producers for consumers in the United States and around the world. These processes of wealth extraction were the life-blood for global capitalism for those 3 decades of inter-imperialist peace. But, capitalism must keep expanding, and there is not much more room to expand. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a series of collapses in the international system of distribution that prioritized profitability over resiliency.

Earlier this year, Russia invaded Ukraine, in what many fear is the first hot war of what will be an escalating inter-imperialist war. Though to date, it has not yet exceeded in scale the U\$./USSR conflicts of the Cold War. It has brought with it massive trade barriers. The Americans have rallied the world to isolate Russia with great success, yet differences in interests have also arisen. This will force many realignments in the coming months and years. The battle for markets, using tariffs and embargoes and currency manipulations, will only escalate. This makes *Arms & Empire* such a relevant read today.

In 1997, MIM passed a resolution stating:

"For MIM's purposes, World War III began immediately after World War II ended in 1945. World War III continues today. It is a war between the imperialists and the oppressed nations. By defining World War III as post-World War II, MIM does not mean to say that imperialists did not wage war on the oppressed nations prior to 1945, only that the post-1945 period has specific characteristics (such as: 1. the leading roles of the U.S. and, for a time, the USSR and 2. the predominance of neocolonialism) which separate this period from the

pre-1945 periods.”(2)

We can say that world war is inherent to imperialism. As Lenin defined it, it is when the world has been completely divided up by competing monopolist powers, making the export of finance capital the dominant aspect of the economy, and finance capitalists become the shapers of the world. This competition translates to economic and military warfare, both of which result in large numbers of unnecessary human deaths. Imperialism kills millions. When warfare between the imperialists can be minimized for a period, the warfare is aimed primarily at the oppressed nations who are resisting the imperialists trying to control and exploit them.

On the eve of World War I, the revisionist Kautsky proposed a theory of ultra-imperialism to supersede imperialism, where the imperialists can band together to manage the world internationally. Today, there are many bad Marxists who unknowingly promote this metaphysical view of world imperialism where the western imperialist forces of NATO and the U.S. are an invincible unbreakable force, and that the best thing the communists can hope for is a counter-balance to U.S. hegemony while tailing other independent imperialists such as Russia or China. While also unknowingly parroting neo-Kautskyism, these revisionist Marxists also unite with the bourgeois Liberals on the world view of a post-Soviet world. The bourgeois liberals had their own theories of “the end of history” after the collapse of the Soviet Union that envisioned the current order to have proven itself as the stable state in which we would remain. In this book, Richard Krotz concisely points out why these fantasies can never come true. The internal contradictions of capitalism and imperialism, brilliantly exposed by Marx and Lenin, translate to antagonistic contradictions among the imperialists that cannot be resolved by synthesis but only by one aspect of that contradiction overtaking the other via warfare. This remains true despite brief periods of relative peace between the imperialists that must also coincide with periods of prosperity and great opportunity for the imperialists. And as MIM has pointed out, even in times of prosperity, the different interests of the labor aristocracy can dampen the plans of imperialist unity.(3)

Today, the labor aristocracy is talking about their inability to consume products not made by them in their movement to increased wages, decreased worktimes, etc. However, they seem to be able to consume products not made by them pretty well. Cars, phones, food, etc. are mostly produced by the third world proletariat, and the main gripe comes with things they don't own rather than things they don't produce: rent for example.

As we enter a period of heightened inter-imperialist conflict, we echo the sentiments of MIM's founders. We are not for war, but we recognize that war by the proletariat to overthrow imperialism is necessary to stop war. As military and economic warfare expands among imperialists and between imperialists and the oppressed nations, opportunities for successful revolutions to put the proletariat in state power increases. This is the solution to war. We aim to destroy imperialism, because imperialism is destroying the planet.

Notes:

1. Manifesto on the International Situation and Revolution
<http://almhvxlkr4wwj7ah564vd4rwqk7bfcjiupyf7rs6ppcg5d7bgavbscad.onion/archive/books/mt/mimFoundDocs.pdf> (first few pages)
2. Resolution on World War III (1997 MIM Congress)
<http://almhvxlkr4wwj7ah564vd4rwqk7bfcjiupyf7rs6ppcg5d7bgavbscad.onion/archive/etext/wim/cong/wwiii97.html>
3. Social-democratic gravy train opposes European Union (2005 MIM Congress)
<http://almhvxlkr4wwj7ah564vd4rwqk7bfcjiupyf7rs6ppcg5d7bgavbscad.onion/archive/etext/wim/cong/eu2005.html>
4. also see: “Ukraine: Imperialism in Crisis” in *Under Lock & Key 77* for broad discussion of

economic and military warfare against Russia in 2022.

Glossary

Blockade – A form of a political-economic united front usually by imperialist countries against other imperialist countries. Blockades usually arise along the lines of different sections of imperialism. Napoleon created a mainland European blockade led by French imperialism against British imperialism. In current situations, imperialist blockades are arising among Russia and China against the United States.

Cartels – A phenomena during capitalist downturn where material goods being sold are hoarded and released into the market in a controlled manner to maintain fixed prices. Cartels arise out of difficulties in consuming a product due to whatever reason. Diamond companies use this method due to people being unable to afford diamonds, and certain Latin American drug organizations use this method because Euro-Americans crack down on drug consumption within their borders.

Finance Capital – One of the key defining traits of modern capitalist-imperialism. Capital is defined in Marxist terms as value that can create more value (the bourgeoisie owns factories, land, and raw materials and creates surplus value from those capital). Finance Capital is a specific form of capital that the bourgeoisie uses at a specific stage of capitalism where monopoly industrial capital has merged with monopoly bank capital. The export of finance capital is a key defining feature of modern imperialism (companies exporting factories, land ownership, and raw material ownership into the Third World).

Free Trade – An idealist theory proposed by Adam Smith and other bourgeois intellectuals during their time where each country produces the best of their materials (French wine, British steel, etc.) to avoid warfare among these capitalist countries in the colonies and mind their own business on their own turf (colonies).

Mercantilism – A stage in capitalism where primitive accumulation of capital (chattel slavery, settler-colonialism, land conquest, etc.) is used to start the imperialist and colonialist foundations of empires.

Tariffs – Taxes imposed by a country or a union of countries in order to regulate or undermine imports and exports from/to another country and maintain national economic supremacy in a region.

Trade Wars – A series of tariffs, embargoes, bans, often leading up to military wars usually by imperialist countries. In 2022, China and U.S. are currently going through a trade war, another example would be banning of Russian oil for its actions in Ukraine by the United States.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Assign 1

read thru p. 21 (Chapter 1 (iii))

Assign 1 Questions

(p.xi) Krooth writes, “These patterns of empire evolved regardless of the specific will of any single individual caught in the web-like structures of international relations.” What does this mean? What are the implications of this statement?

(p.8) How would the concept of Free Trade solve the issues of warfare amongst European powers in

the views of Adam Smith and other intellectuals? Was the concept of Free Trade successful in resolving the problem of war and conquest? What are some examples of these ideas expressed by the major imperialist powers today to solve the problem of warfare?

(p.9) What allowed Britain to dominate the global economy while promoting free trade during this period? How does this compare to the United States circa the 1990s when they were big proponents of free trade agreements?

(p.11) What modes of production and what classes were clashing during this period?

(p.13) Why was there a sudden need for more markets and raw materials after the new mode of production won out?

(p.18) During Pax Britannica, it was almost like the British were attempting what we would later call neo-colonialism. What would make Neo-colonialism more successful in its more developed form 100+ years later?

(p.21) What does Krooth say drew the line between mercantilism and imperialism? What famous Marxist theoretician is Krooth borrowing this from?

(p.21) Today the United States carries an ever growing debt due to the amount of imports it buys compared to what it exports. How did Britain keep its bills paid during Pax Britannica when it was in a similar situation?

Assign 2

read p.21-43 (finish Chapter 1)

Assign 2 Questions

(p.21) What does it mean that a country's exports were less than imports but they were able to pay their bills through imperial earnings? How does this relate to the U\$. debt and the U\$. dollar today?

(p.22) Despite being a country under bourgeois dictatorship, Britain saw the Bourgeois revolution in France as competitors at best and enemies at worst with trade wars which led to military wars. What does this say about the nature of the imperialist powers?

(p.26) "All classes would be involved in war" through the progression of bourgeois wars which sprouted in Prussian militarism. Does this view of imperialist warfare as noted by General Karl Von Clausewitz hold up in the times of Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan? What would it mean for revolutionaries in the imperialist countries in regards to the draft and the anti-war movement?

(p.31) What are the different factors that led to clashes between imperial powers during this period? and which are found in the economic substructure and which are in the superstructure?

(p.35) Here Krooth speaks about the U\$. financiers' want to move freely in Latin America without needing to worry about the shackles of British banks. What does this say about U\$. imperialism in Latin America in regards to its relationship towards old world Europe?

(p.42) Here Krooth makes a lot about taxpayers paying for the war. How does this relate to the imperial earnings Krooth mentions on p.21? and how does this compare to today when there is no draft (for last 50 years), and U\$. military operations are ran from computer screens in Colorado, or using mercenaries and local proxy forces? and how does war affect people in the imperial core today compared to Germany losing 24% of their population in war, and Russia 19% in WWI(p.43)?

Assign 3

read p.45-66 (Chapter II thru Chapter III(i))

Assign 3 Questions

(p.45) With the victory of capitalism in Europe we see how all classes became part of warfare as Krooth describes through Prussian militarism in p. 26. How would this material change in warfare (as compared to only specific classes of fighting men and aristocrats being deeply involved in war) sprout new ideas of nationalism we see expressed by the quote “the economic rivalry between England and Germany will outlive the peace”? What are some examples of these types of ideas we see today?

(p.45) British and American interests according to Krooth wanted: 1) to confine Germany to Europe; 2) keep Germany at odds with France; 3) arm Germany as a bulwark against Soviet socialism. How did these three goals each contribute to more inter-imperialist conflict and another war?

(p.46) After the victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia, the world was watching Germany to see if they would follow the same path. Ultimately the social democrats beat out the communists, paving the road to fascism in Germany. What outside forces does Krooth say helped determine this outcome?

[need to rewrite](#) We see how the bourgeoisie divided Germany's former colonies into Class A, Class B, and Class C with each grouping showing the development and “civilization” of the colonies' societies (for example, Syria and Israel/Palestine was promised political independence while Pacific Islands remained a formal colony). What does this bourgeois view say about the imperial ambitions of certain colonies/neo-colonies once “development” rises? Example: southern Korea, India, Brazil, and etc.

(p.61) Krooth cites some interesting ideas floated by bourgeois leaders after World War I that never came to fruition. One included an “Imperial federalism.” What might an imperial federalism look like and what happened that made it a dead idea?

(p.63-64) “In several regions of Europe, alien rule was now maintained over large minorities of people who belonged ethnically to other states. ...But there were other factors that appeared to make war inevitable – national monopolies and cartels breaking down, world commercial redivision accompanying overproduction, tariffs and dumping, and a return to tight-knit empires following world crises and political antagonisms.” Do you see any of these conditions today? if so, where/how? Can you think of other contradictions today that may be leading us towards inter-imperialist war?

(p.65) Why did the bourgeois internationalists see cartels as potentially beneficial over nation-states in promoting economic prosperity and peace?

Assign 4

read p.67-91 (finish Chapter III)

Assign 4 Questions

(p.68) How are monopolies better able to adapt their fixed capital and variable capital(labor) as markets shifted? How did this allow them to further squeeze out smaller/older firms?

(P.70) Krooth lists the cartels' functions of limiting production, dividing market territory, controlling prices, and etc. as the major actions cartels partake in to resolve the contradiction of overproduction. What are some modern day cartels - ranging from diamonds, drugs, oil, etc. - that partake in this

practice and why would it be necessary for their market to use these practices?

(p.70) What is the difference between a monopoly and a cartel? Why did cartels begin forming when production exceeded consumption?

(p.71) By investing in new technology, firms tried to lower the cost of production and outcompete others with lower prices? Why does this lower the national average rate of profit?

(p.72-3) How were the capitalists able to afford the increase in wages during this period 1909-1938?

(p.75) One of the problems that the American bourgeoisie faced was that the reduced wages of proletarians within U.S. borders shrunk the market even more due to less proletarians being able to afford the goods that their class was producing in the first place. In our modern day where these proletarians became bourgeoisified labor aristocrats (where majority of the goods sold are not produced by them), what consequences would there be for movements calling for rise of living standards and wages of labor aristocrats? Would they proletarianize these labor aristocrats? If not, what would be the sign of proletarianization hypothetically?

(p.76) Which classes & groups supported and which opposed tariffs and protectionism? why did each class take their position?

(p.78) In the example of dumping that Krooth gives on p.77, a firm is able to sell a product for \$40 at home and \$3 abroad. Why would they do this? How is it possible to sell so cheap abroad without just losing money?

(p.83) Libertarianism is a political trend usually characterized by an absolutely free market form of capitalism? Given all we've read about monopolies, profit rates and competition so far, why is such a system an idealist pipe dream?

(p.88) In 1923, 1 million depreciated German marks equaled one old one to repudiate government debts. The United States' trade deficit today has greatly increased in recent decades. How have they been able to maintain such huge debts without depreciating the dollar significantly?

(p.91) By the end of the 1930s, the motto of imperialist economy was "to sell not to buy" as Krooth describes. With all imperialist countries scrambling to become the sellers and not the buyers, this only left the undeveloped nations of Europe and the colonies left to be promoted the motto of "to buy not to sell." How does this history disprove Adam Smith's theory of free trade? How does this play into the dialectical relationship of free trade and trade wars?

Assign 5

read p.93-113 (thru Chap IV part iv)

Assign 5 Questions

(p.94) How did Great Britain tie its trade to its colonies?

(p.95) Why did devaluing principal currencies allow dumping in the Franc zone?

(p. 106) One of the principles of the Japanese militarists was to prevent Chinese industrialization. What role do you think this had on the development of Chinese society and the revolutionary victory in 1949?

(p. 110) Japan inserted itself as the champions of Asia and opposed any other Asian country's industrialization (especially China) independent of Japan. Through exporting finance capital into

Manchuria and Mongolia, these extremely backwards regions of the world became industrialized on Japan's terms. What are some similarities between this policy and scam of the Japanese imperialists in the past and modern social-imperialist China?

(p. 112) Krooth describes here the contradiction between imperialist Japan and imperialist United States. Previously, Krooth explained in the book how the U.S. was looking to turn the Pacific into their pond (in contrast to the Atlantic being Britain's pond). How did a decades long process of free trade, trade wars, and eventually military wars showcase itself in the fight between the U.S. and Japan in the Pacific?

Assign 6

read p.113-131 (finish book)

Assign 6 Questions

(p. 113) How did having mostly internal colonies impact the interests of the United States in contrast to the European imperialists?

(p. 116) What are the "government-like agencies" that took over from private loans? How did/does this new order differ from the old order of private finance capital?

(p. 124) What were the internal and external contradictions determining the situation in Spain at this time based on this brief description, and how did they interact?

(p. 127) It's notable that arms manufacturers had no national loyalty leading up to the war. As we write these questions, Germany is buying large amounts of Russian gas despite a trade embargo on other goods while simultaneously sending arms to Ukraine (who is at war with Russia). Using Maoist political economy, how would you describe these contradictions?

(end) Describe some parallels in today's world to the conditions and contradictions that led up to World War II.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFO

Notable dates from book

250 years of mercantile wars (1565-1815)

1815-1854 = status quo, no war over colonies, just war on colonies(p.24)

1854 - Crimean war (p.24)

1873-1900 = period of crises and rise of cartels (p.29)

1880-1910 = huge increase in capital export (p.20)

1890-1915 - Britain built up alliance to oppose Germany (p.27)

1815-1914 - Pax Britannica (British World dominance)

1914 - the world is completely divided by imperial powers leading them to begin fighting each other (p.37)

28 July 1914 - 11 November 1918 = World War I

1914-1934 = 20 years of U.S. power

Background info on events from book

Prussia (p. 26) - Prussia Prussia[a] was a historically prominent German state that originated in 1525 with a duchy centered on the region of Prussia on the southeast coast of the Baltic Sea. It was de facto dissolved by an emergency decree transferring powers of the Prussian government to German Chancellor Franz von Papen in 1932 and de jure by an Allied decree in 1947.

Battle of Waterloo (18 June 1815) (p.7) - Waterloo was the decisive engagement of the Waterloo campaign and Napoleon's last. According to Wellington, the battle was "the nearest-run thing you ever saw in your life".[12] Napoleon abdicated four days later, and coalition forces entered Paris on 7 July. The defeat at Waterloo ended Napoleon's rule as Emperor of the French and marked the end of his Hundred Days return from exile. This ended the First French Empire and set a chronological milestone between serial European wars and decades of relative peace, often referred to as the Pax Britannica. (wikipedia)

The Crimean War [e] was a military conflict fought from October 1853 to February 1856[4] in which Russia lost to an alliance of France, the Ottoman Empire, the United Kingdom and Piedmont-Sardinia. The immediate cause of the war involved the rights of Christian minorities in Palestine, which was part of the Ottoman Empire. The French promoted the rights of Roman Catholics, and Russia promoted those of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Longer-term causes involved the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the expansion of the Russian Empire in the preceding Russo-Turkish Wars, and the British and French preference to preserve the Ottoman Empire to maintain the balance of power in the Concert of Europe. It has widely been noted that the causes, in one case involving an argument over a key,[5] had never revealed a "greater confusion of purpose" but led to a war that stood out for its "notoriously incompetent international butchery".[6]

...The Treaty of Paris, signed on 30 March 1856, ended the war. It forbade Russia from basing warships in the Black Sea. The Ottoman vassal states of Wallachia and Moldavia became largely independent. Christians there gained a degree of official equality, and the Orthodox Church regained control of the Christian churches in dispute.[9]

The Crimean War was one of the first conflicts in which military forces used modern technologies such as explosive naval shells, railways and telegraphs.[10] The war was one of the first to be documented extensively in written reports and in photographs. As the legend of the "Charge of the Light Brigade" demonstrates, the war quickly became a symbol of logistical, medical and tactical failures and of mismanagement. The reaction in Britain led to a demand for professionalisation, most famously achieved by Florence Nightingale, who gained worldwide attention for pioneering modern nursing while she treated the wounded.

The Crimean War marked a turning point for the Russian Empire. The war weakened the Imperial Russian Army, drained the treasury and undermined Russia's influence in Europe. The empire would take decades to recover. Russia's humiliation forced its educated elites to identify its problems and to recognise the need for fundamental reforms. They saw rapid modernisation as the sole way to recover the empire's status as a European power. The war thus became a catalyst for reforms of Russia's social institutions, including the abolition of serfdom and overhauls in the justice system, local self-government, education and military service. (wikipedia)

Treaty of Versaille (p.52) "The Treaties were conceived in hatred, vengeance, hypocrisy, and force, and beclouded by the idealism of Wilson's Fourteen Points." Here is a summary of those points:

U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points (8 January 1918), Summarized 1. Open diplomacy without secret treaties 2. Economic free trade on the seas during war and peace 3. Equal trade conditions 4. Decrease armaments among all nations 5. Adjust colonial claims 6. Evacuation of all Central Powers from Russia and allow it to define its own independence 7. Belgium to be evacuated and restored 8. Return of Alsace-Lorraine region and all French territories 9. Readjust Italian borders 10. Austria-Hungary to be provided an opportunity for self-determination 11. Redraw the borders of the Balkan region creating Roumania, Serbia and Montenegro 12. Creation of a Turkish state with guaranteed free trade in the Dardanelles 13. Creation of an independent Polish state 14. Creation of the League of Nations (<https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/peace/fourteen-points>)

Key summary quotes from book

End of the Introduction:

"For we will see that empire was systemic and competitive; that competition and nationalism then powered the changeover from one system of empire to another; that, consequently, the mercantile colonial system was replaced by a system of free trade with the coming of industrialism; that free trade was thereafter replaced by a return to colonial empires with the rise of monopolization in the leading nations; that war between the Powers resolved little in the fight for world domination; and that a new growth of monopolies led to strengthened colonial spheres of influence and renewed warfare."

Explanation of the Great Depression (top of p.119):

"The U.S. had long since closed down free trade into America, stopping Germany and other European countries from exporting to American shores to pay their debts. This secured the U.S. dollar for a while, making it the hardest currency in the world, pushing up its value vis-a-vis other currencies, but also making it inaccessible to nations that otherwise would have purchased from America. When other nations could not obtain dollars by exports to the U.S., obviously they could import nothing at all. And so U.S. exports tended to fall and had to be replaced with bilateral trade agreements. Up went U.S. unemployment when markets fell away and bilateral trade could not replace them. The down came the dollar, the U.S. devaluing in 1933 in an attempt to stimulate the exports again. But, alas, it was too late. The depression was on, production was down, America was spreading crisis to Europe!"

Lead up to WWII (p.129-30):

"Within European nations especially, the road to war was laid out in stages – the first for counterrevolution, the second for capitalist resurgence, and the third for crises and the rise of antagonistic governments seeking to take what all others held in trade, investments, colonies and profits. In the first period (1917-23) we can discern how civilian bands of reactionaries had used force and violence against the agrarian or socialist"revolutions"... The reactionaries demanded"law and order," eventually leading to "counter-revolutions." Yet the incipient fascist movements did not themselves assume government power, for the marketplace was being re-established and did not require a fascistic state.

"The second period (1924-29) had no use for a fascist government either. The powers of capitalist production were expanding, the market fetters were destroyed, and all the important nations save Great Britain were on the economic upgrade. While the United States enjoyed legendary prosperity and the Continent was doing almost as well, Hitler's putsch was a footnote in political economy. France evacuated the Ruhr, the Reichsmark was restored by U.S. loans, the Dawes Plan took politics out of reparations, Locarno was in the offing for

peace, and Germany was initiating seven fat years. The gold standard ruled from Moscow to Lisbon by the close of 1926; buyers could now pay for their imports, restoring the capitalist marketplace to its full capacity.

"Then came the Great Crash of 1929, the market economy turning down, general economic crisis forcing nations to be sellers but not buyers in the world. The continuing deadlock of market dealings demanded changes in the political way in which economic solutions were planned. The Italian trusts chose fascism as a way out of their economic malaise. The German cartels demanded continental markets and colonies, not by marketplace dealings - for they were shut out of the markets and colonies of the other Powers - but by military conquest. Hitler, their puppet, demanded no more than they asked, Germany taking the lead in totalitarianizing Europe. And with Japan in the Asian wing, the Axis Pact aligned fascist power over five continents.

"Thereby the material conditions of society – monopoly ownership, overproduction, market struggle, political bankruptcy, and military occupation – had ended the marketplace system. The monopolists and cartelists needed fascism to build themselves strong for a military confrontation which, they believed, would award them with more raw materials, more markets, more profits and more power. The liberal business interests, then opting for increasing national competitiveness, also blocked any move towards allowing the social means of production to provide for popular need, instead of their private profit. The fascists, combining jingoism and planned speed-ups for the working population, now displayed a tawdry alternative to the free marketplace. And the monopolists then brought them into power in hopes that their accumulation of private gain would continue undiminished. World War II inexorably followed, not only because leaders willed it, but also because the solutions to economic and political crises required it."