

while it is possible to put together a string of quotations to “prove” that Lenin believed in the inevitability of war between the two systems or in the impossibility of building socialism in one country, it is equally possible to find another set of citations to “prove” the opposite.

It must be remembered that Lenin did not pen a single theoretical work analyzing the foreign policy of a socialist state and describing the principles that should govern its relations with capitalist nations. During his entire political career, Lenin wrote only one major work dealing with international politics, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*. However, this work was published in early 1917, prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, and it dealt only with the economic forces shaping relations among capitalist states. It had absolutely nothing to say about the policies that a socialist state might follow in attempting to coexist with capitalist states. Thus, we find that Lenin developed a theory of capitalism which postulated inevitable war among capitalist states due to the unequal development of capitalism and the resulting conflicts over the redivision of the colonial world, but he did not develop any comparable theory concerning the inevitability of war between capitalist and socialist states.⁷

Lenin did make a number of ad hoc statements on the subject of war between capitalist states and socialist Russia, and these have often been cited in the West. Perhaps the most frequently quoted of all of Lenin’s statements is his remark that:

We are living not merely in a state, but *in a system of states*, and it is inconceivable for the Soviet Republic to exist alongside of the imperialist states for any length of time. One or the other must triumph in the end. And before that end comes, a series of frightful collisions between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states is inevitable.⁸

⁷ Frederic S. Burin, “The Communist Doctrine of the Inevitability of War,” *The American Political Science Review*, LVII, No. 2, 1963, pp. 334-354.

⁸ Lenin, *Sochineniia*, XXXVIII, p. 139, (emphasis in the original).