

LENIN'S IMPERIAL- ISM FOR DUMMIES

traversefantasy.itch.io

7. After Lenin

Imperialism's emergence in the early 20th century fulfilled Marx's prediction: capitalism developed the socialization of labor, heightening the contradiction between social production and private property that condemns capitalism to its own destruction.

The communist revolutions after the 1917 Russian Revolution, rather than building communism as Lenin hoped, developed alternative welfare capitals to rival Western capital, mostly based now in the United States.

The struggle between American/West capitalism and alternative capitalism is yet to resolve. Imperialism remains the modus operandi of world systems, despite what else has changed.

6. Imperialism

The imperialist stage of capitalism is best defined by the following features:

(1) The concentration of capitals into monopolies (2) The merging of finance capital with industrial capital, under a financial oligarchy (3) The export of capital to developing countries (4) The division of the world by cartels, that is, by monopolist capitals (5) The division of the world by countries in which the greatest capitals are based.

Imperialist peoples become parasitic, as multinational profit is redistributed to improve the living standards of the (increasingly idle and non-productive) national working class. This produces a labor aristocracy: a pro-imperialist, anti-socialist working class.

5. Division of the World

Multinational capitals collude to form cartels in order to divide market share and optimize profits in their territories. These divisions go on to shape politics on a global level as different countries fall under different capitals.

The division of the world by capitalist cartels goes directly with the division of the world by the colonialist powers, each fighting on behalf of their capital to claim market share in pre-capitalist or developing countries by force.

Colonialism existed before capitalism, including even during earlier stages of capitalism before finance capital took the center stage. Only now, however, does finance capital become the focus and motive of global conflict.

4. Financial Oligarchy

The merging of finance and industrial capital, and their joint concentration, culminates in the emergence of a new class of super-capitalists who possess shares across firms and industries and exert their vast economic influence to lobby their government.

Their power is beyond economic and political, since they use child firms and holding companies to obscure or take responsibility for orders from above—i.e., from the mother firm.

It takes less than 40% ownership in a company to drive decisions. This fact, combined with the fact that firms and banks share capital and mutually own shares, means that capitalism is more stratified than ever before.

1. Monopolization

A capital is an investment of money in the production of some commodities. As such it is not merely money, but the social process of industrial production. There can be many capitals (or firms) in one industry, competing with each other to generate greater profits.

As Marx analyzed in Capital: Volume I, free competition among capitals does not last, but eventually results in their concentration and centralization into a monopoly, controlling all production within its particular industry.

The centralization of production within a single industry results in production becoming highly socialized, while the fruits of industry remain privatized.

3. Export of Capital

Whereas capitalism was characterized once by the export of commodities, it is now characterized by the export of capital—specifically, finance.

Rather than spend capital to raise the living standards of their own country, it is more profitable to invest abroad in industrial capitals from developing countries where wages and materials and land are cheap. Industrial capitals of developed countries may outsource production to developing countries for the same reasons.

The export of finance capital develops and accelerates capitalist relations in developing countries, advancing their capabilities while making them reliant on the exporting country.

2. Banks & Finance

Monopolization occurs not only in the context of industry but also of finance. Banks loan money to industrial firms to provide them with financial capital and fund their production, receiving in turn a portion of the value generated by the industrial capital.

Banking firms, along with their finance capitals, concentrate and centralize as they out-compete and absorb others. These banks wield the financial capital that controls industries of nations, and even multiple nations at once.

The monopolization of banks results in the centralization of not just individual industries, but entire economies which share the same capital linked together by shareholders across firms.