

APPENDIX TO NOTES ON BUREAUCRATIC-COMPRADOR CAPITALISM, ARTICLE ONE

THE CASE OF ITALY

OR HOW TO DISTINGUISH AN IMPERIALIST NATION FROM AN OPPRESSED ONE

By Edith B.

The present article should be considered as an appendix to my recent article, «*Pasaron*», which deals with the third world inside of Europe itself – considered to be the heart of imperialism in the world. This appendix will briefly deal with the question of how to distinguish an oppressed from an imperialist country, aside from the symptoms of socio-economic backwardness, using Italian imperialism as an example.

Firstly, we will start from Lenin's definition of imperialism. He put forward the following «Five Aspects» of imperialism's economic basis:

«If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up.

But very brief definitions, although convenient, for they sum up the main points, are nevertheless inadequate, since we have to deduce from them some especially important features of the phenomenon that has to be defined. And so, without forgetting the conditional and relative value of all definitions in general, which can never embrace all the concatenations of a phenomenon in its full development, we must give a definition of imperialism that will include the following five of its basic features:

- The concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life.
- The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this <finance capital>, of a financial oligarchy.

- **The export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance.**
- **The formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves.**
- **The territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed.**

Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.»¹

Thus, in distinguishing an imperialist nation from an oppressed one, we must look at these five basic features of the economics of imperialism. An imperialist country must, firstly, have an economy dominated by monopolies, secondly, be ruled by an oligarchy of finance capitalists, thirdly, export mainly capital as opposed to commodities, fourthly, have monopolies which take part in the economic division and redivision of the globe, and fifthly, take part in the territorial division and redivision of the globe.

In the case of Italian imperialism, we will find that these five fundamental features of imperialism are all present.

1. MONOPOLY CAPITALISM

The Italian economy is highly monopolized. Moreover, State-monopoly capitalism plays a dominant role in the Italian economy.

During the Great Polemic between the Chinese communists and the revisionists headed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the late 1950s and early '60s, a polemic was issued against the revisionist views of Italian revisionist leader Palmiro Togliatti. In this polemic, the Communist Party of China detailed the following statistics regarding non-State-monopoly and State-monopoly capitalism in Italy:

«Concentration of capital results in monopoly. From the 1st World War onward, world capitalism has not only taken a step further towards monopoly in general, but also taken a step further away from monopoly in general to State monopoly. After the 1st World War, and particularly after the economic crisis broke out in the capitalist world in 1929, State-monopoly capitalism further developed in all the imperialist countries. During the 2nd World War, the monopoly capitalists in the imperialist countries on both sides utilized State-monopoly capital to the fullest possible extent in order to make high profits out of the war. And since the War, State-monopoly capital has actually become the more or less dominant force in economic life in some imperialist countries.

Compared with the other main imperialist countries, the foundations of capitalism in Italy are relatively weak. From an early date, therefore, Italy embarked upon State capitalism for the purpose of concentrating the forces of capital so as to grab the highest profits, compete with international monopoly capital, expand her markets and redivide the colonies. In 1914, the Consorzio per Sovvenzione su Valore Industria was established by the Italian government to provide the big banks and industrial firms with loans and subsidies. There was a further integration of the State organs with monopoly capitalist organizations during Mussolini's fascist regime. In particular, during the great crisis of 1929-33, the Italian government bought up at pre-crisis prices large blocks of shares of many failing banks and other enterprises, brought many banks and enterprises under state control, and organized the Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale, thus forming a gigantic State-monopoly capitalist organization. After the 2nd World War, Italian monopoly capital, including State-monopoly capital, which had been the foundation of the fascist regime, was left intact and developed at still greater speed. At present, the enterprises run by State-monopoly capital or jointly by State and private monopoly capital constitute about 30% of Italy's economy.

What conclusions should marxist-leninists draw from the development of State-monopoly capital? In Italy, can nationalized enterprise, that is, State-monopoly capital, stand in opposition to the monopolies', can it be the expression of the people's masses', and can it become a more effective instrument for opposing monopolistic development', as stated by Togliatti and certain other comrades of the Communist Party of Italy?

No marxist-leninist can possibly draw such conclusions.

State-monopoly capitalism is monopoly capitalism in which monopoly capital has merged with the political power of the State. Taking full advantage of State power, it accelerates the concentration and aggregation of capital intensifies the exploitation of the working people, the devouring of small and medium enterprises, and the annexation of some monopoly capitalist groups by others, and strengthens monopoly capital for international competition and expansion. Under the cover of 'State intervention in economic life' and 'opposition to monopoly', and using the name of the State to deceive, it cleverly transfers huge profits into the pockets of the monopoly groups by underhand methods.

The chief means by which State-monopoly capital serves the monopoly capitalists are as follows:

- It uses the funds of the State treasury, and the taxes paid by the people, to protect the capitalists against risk to their investments, thus guaranteeing large profits to the monopoly groups. For example, on all the bonds issued to raise funds for the Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale, the biggest State-monopoly organization of Italy, the State both pays interest and guarantees the principal. The bond-holders generally receive a high rate of interest, as high as 4.5 to 8% per annum. In addition, they draw dividends when the enterprises make a profit.*

- *Through legislation and the State budget a substantial proportion of the national income is redistributed in ways favourable to the monopoly capitalist organizations, ensuring that the various monopoly groups get huge profits. For example, in 1955 about 1/3 of the total State budget was allocated by the Italian government for purchasing and ordering goods from private monopoly groups.*
- *Through the alternative forms of purchase and sale, the State on certain occasions takes over those enterprises which are losing money or going bankrupt or whose nationalization will benefit particular monopoly groups, and on other occasions sells to the private monopoly groups those enterprises which are profitable. For example, according to statistics compiled by the Italian economist Gino Longo, between 1920 and 1955, successive Italian governments paid a total of 1,647,000,000,000 lire (in terms of 1953 prices) to purchase the shares of failing banks and enterprises, a sum equal to more than 50% of the total nominal capital in 1955 of all the Italian joint-stock companies with a capital of 50,000,000 lire or more. On the other hand, from its establishment to 1958, the Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale alone sold back to private monopoly organizations shares in profitable enterprises amounting to a total value of 491,000,000,000 lire (in terms of 1953 prices), according to incomplete statistics.*
- *By making use of State authority, State-monopoly capital intensifies the concentration and aggregation of capital, and accelerates the annexation of small and medium enterprises by monopoly capital. For example, from 1948 to 1958, the total nominal capital of the ten biggest monopoly groups, which control the lifelines of the Italian economy, multiplied 15 times. The Fiat Company multiplied its nominal capital 25 times and the Italcemento 40 times. Although the ten biggest companies in Italy constituted only 0.04% of the total number of joint-stock companies, they directly held or controlled 64% of the total private share-holding capital in Italy. During the same period, the number of small and medium enterprises which went bankrupt constantly increased.*
- *Internationally, State-monopoly capital battles fiercely for markets, utilizing the name of the State and its diplomatic measures, and thus serves Italian monopoly capital as a useful tool for extending its neo-colonialist penetration. For example, in the period of 1956-61 alone, the Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi obtained the right to explore and exploit oil resources, to sell oil or to build pipe-lines and refineries in the United Arab Republic, Iran, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Jordan, India, Yugoslavia, Austria, Switzerland, and so on. In this way, it has secured for the Italian monopoly-capitalists a place in the world oil market.*

The facts given above make it clear that State monopoly and private monopoly are in fact two mutually supporting forms used by the monopoly capitalists for the extraction of huge profits. The development of State-monopoly capital aggravates the inherent contradictions of the imperialist system and can never, as Togliatti and the other

comrades assert, ,limit and break up the power of the leading big monopoly groups' or change the contradictions inherent in imperialism.»ⁱⁱ

Since the 1960s, the tendency toward monopolization in Italy has only been strengthened, not weakened. In his supplement to Volume Three of «Capital», Friedrich Engels pointed out:

«[...] gradual conversion of industry into stock companies. One branch after another suffers this fate. First iron, where giant plants are now necessary (before that, mines, where not already organised on shares). Then the chemical industry, likewise machinery plants. On the continent, the textile industry; in England, only in a few areas in Lancashire (Oldham Spinning Mill, Burnley Weaving Mill, and so on, tailor cooperatives, but this is only a preliminary stage which will again fall into the masters' hands at the next crisis), breweries (the American ones sold a few years ago to English capital, then Guinness, Bass, Allsopp). Then the trusts, which create gigantic enterprises under common management (such as United Alkali). The ordinary individual firm is more and more only a preliminary stage to bring the business to the point where it is big enough to be <founded>.

[...]

The same in the field of agriculture. The enormously expanded banks, especially in Germany under all sorts of bureaucratic names, more and more the holders of mortgages; with their shares the actual higher ownership of landed property is transferred to the stock exchange, and this is even more true when the farms fall into the creditors' hands. Here the agricultural revolution of prairie cultivation is very impressive; if it continues, the time can be foreseen when England's and France's land will also be in the hands of the stock exchange.»ⁱⁱⁱ

Engels pointed out, based on Marx, that capital's tendency is toward monopolization. Just as the law of entropy in physics demands that the Universe becomes more and more complex as contradictions are solved, the laws of political economy demand an ever-increasing monopolization under capitalism. Lenin pointed out:

«The enormous growth of industry and the remarkably rapid concentration of production in ever-larger enterprises are one of the most characteristic features of capitalism.

[...] Marx, who by a theoretical and historical analysis of capitalism had proved that free competition gives rise to the concentration of production, which, in turn, at a certain stage of development, leads to monopoly. Today, monopoly has become a fact.»^{iv}

Both Portugal, Spain and Greece, however, also have monopoly capitalism, since bureaucratic-comprador capitalism is also a form of monopoly capitalism, although a form different from that of imperialism. The presence of monopoly organization of capital in itself is not sufficient to declare a country imperialist. We must look at the other aspects of imperialism as well.

2. FINANCE CAPITAL

Finance capital, or the merger of industrial and bank capital, is the second characteristic economic feature of imperialism. Engels pointed out:

«In 1865 the stock exchange was still a secondary element in the capitalist system. Government bonds represented the bulk of exchange securities, and even their sum-total was still relatively small. Besides, there were joint-stock banks, predominant on the continent and in the USA, and just beginning to absorb the aristocratic private banks in England, but still relatively insignificant *en masse*. Railway shares were still comparatively weak compared to the present time. There were still only few directly productive establishments in stock company form – and, like the banks, most of all in the poorer countries: Germany, Austria, the USA, and so on. The <minister's eye> was still an unconquered superstition.

[...] Now it is otherwise. Since the crisis of 1866 accumulation has proceeded with ever-increasing rapidity, so that in no industrial country, least of all in England, could the expansion of production keep up with that of accumulation [...]

Lenin established:

«It is particularly important to examine the part which the export of capital plays in creating the international network of dependence on and connections of finance capital.»

This is distinct from bureaucratic-comprador capitalism, which, while being monopolistic, is not financial capital, but rather, as Mao Zedong pointed out, «comprador, feudal, State-monopoly capitalism». Thus, since financial capital cannot exist in the third world, and what exists is bureaucratic-comprador capital, which is comprador in nature and based on the backward economic basis of the country in question, taking on both non-State-monopolistic (comprador) and State-monopolistic (bureaucratic) forms, we can use this point to distinguish an imperialist nation from an oppressed one.

In imperialist nations, the financial capital of that nation owns everything and the financial oligarchy of that nation rules everything; in oppressed nations, it is the financial capital of other nations which owns everything, the financial oligarchies of other nations which rule everything. This makes up the main difference in terms of financial capital between the imperialist and the oppressed nations.

In Italy, the banks play a completely dominant role in the economic life of the country. Simply look at the following table, which lists the ten largest Italian banks by assets; we have calculated their portion of the entire Italian economy:

Name of bank	Total capital	% of Italian economy controlled
UniCredit	833,405,000,000 EUR	7.9%
Intesa Sanpaolo	789,104,000,000 EUR	7.5%
Cassa Depositi e Prestiti	367,253,385,000 EUR	3.5%
Banco BPM	159,909,605,000 EUR	1.5%
Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena	138,870,957,000 EUR	1.3%
UBI Banca	125,647,466,000 EUR	1.2%
Banca Nazionale del Lavoro	78,771,699,000 EUR	0.7%
BPER Banca	70,832,180,000 EUR	0.6%
Mediobanca	69,893,356,000 EUR	0.6%
Crédit Agricole Italia	64,753,301,000 EUR	0.6%

This is an extremely high degree of concentration of financial capital. Compare this with Greece. Due to the financial crisis of 2008, which has not ended in Greece, all banks were put under the control of the Hellenic Financial Stability Fund in 2010. This Fund, nominally a State-owned vehicle, is in fact completely controlled by the imperialist Eurozone countries. The European Financial Stability Facility completely dominates the HFSF, having seeded it with 50,000,000,000 EUR in order to control its activities – and thus controls all of Greece’s banking. There is clearly no such thing as «Greek finance capital» – only a proxy for much more powerful German and other imperialist finance capital.

3. CAPITAL EXPORT

Export of capital as opposed to export of commodities is key to understanding imperialism. In bourgeois political economy, capital export is referred to as «foreign direct investment» (FDI). Lenin points out:

«Typical of the old capitalism, when free competition held undivided sway, was the export of goods. Typical of the latest stage of capitalism, when monopolies rule, is the export of capital.

[...]

As long as capitalism remains what it is, surplus capital will be utilised not for the purpose of raising the standard of living of the masses in a given country, for this would mean a decline in profits for the capitalists, but for the purpose of increasing

profits by exporting capital abroad to the backward countries. In these backward countries profits are usually high, for capital is scarce, the price of land is relatively low, wages are low, raw materials are cheap. The export of capital is made possible by a number of backward countries having already been drawn into world capitalist intercourse; main railways have either been or are being built in those countries, elementary conditions for industrial development have been created, and so on. The need to export capital arises from the fact that in a few countries capitalism has become <overripe> and (owing to the backward state of agriculture and the poverty of the masses) capital cannot find a field for <profitable> investment.»^{viii}

Usually, finding the balance of a country's outward FDI stock (its assets abroad) and its inward FDI stock (other countries' assets in it) can point toward the status of the country in question – is it imperialist or oppressed? Let us compare the FDI stock balance of Italy to that of the three countries with which we dealt in the first article. I have put together the following table showing the statistics:

Country	Inward FDI stock	Outward FDI stock	FDI stock balance
Italy	495,200,000,000 USD	607,800,000,000 USD	112,600,000,000 USD
Portugal	158,900,000,000 USD	89,060,000,000 USD	-69,840,000,000 USD
Spain	772,100,000,000 USD	752,400,000,000 USD	-19,700,000,000 USD
Greece	34,180,000,000 USD	33,790,000,000 USD	-390,000,000 USD

Here, I have subtracted the inward FDI from the outward FDI, giving a balance of total FDI stock of a particular country. Generally speaking, a negative balance will imply that the country is imperialist, while a positive balance will imply that the country is oppressed. I call this the country's capital balance, or, in the case of an oppressed nation, its capital deficit.

But while capital exports can be a useful tool to pinpoint the economic status of a country, it may also reflect certain other, superficial trends in the fluctuation of imperialist investment. One needs to look at the trends of capital export and import over a long period of time in order to find out what the tendency is, as well as the reasons for it.

There are also other exceptions to this method. Ireland, for instance, would show a capital surplus, not deficit, due to the very deepened nature of bureaucratic-

comprador capital there. A tax shelter country, while still semi-colonial, would also show as «imperialist», having a positive capital balance. On the other hand, an imperialist country in crisis may show a capital deficit. Thus, this method can only be used as an initial reference point in investigating the political economy of a country – the main aspect, however, will always be the following two characteristics, the economic and territorial division and redivision of the world. They are by far the qualitatively most useful method to investigate the status of a country.

4. ECONOMIC DIVISION OF THE WORLD

Lenin points out:

«Monopolist capitalist associations, cartels, syndicates and trusts first divided the home market among themselves and obtained more or less complete possession of the industry of their own country. But under capitalism the home market is inevitably bound up with the foreign market. Capitalism long ago created a world market. As the export of capital increased, and as the foreign and colonial connections and <spheres of influence> of the big monopolist associations expanded in all ways, things <naturally> gravitated towards an international agreement among these associations, and towards the formation of international cartels.»^{ix}

Here, it is important to point out that the economic division of the world is the result of capital export from the imperialist nations to the oppressed nations. Furthermore, the imperialist nations make use of bureaucratic-comprador capital in the oppressed nations as a «nexus» to invest further in the third world, which gives some third-world countries, such as South Korea, India, Brazil, Turkey/North Kurdistan and Spain, the appearance of being imperialist, while not actually being so, as no democratic revolution has taken place in these countries to abolish colonialism/semi-colonialism, bureaucratic-comprador capitalism and the backward economic basis – these countries are not investing their own capital, but instead reinvesting the capital of the imperialist nations. This is why theories such as the «new imperialist countries» promoted by Stefan Engel's Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany are revisionist theories, which deny Lenin's fundamental thesis that imperialism represents **«political reaction all along the line»^x**, that imperialism cannot create any socio-economic progress. Bureaucratic-comprador capitalism does not represent a «development» of the third world – it represents a deepening of imperialist super-exploitation and an evolution of semi-feudalism and semi-slavery under the conditions of colonialism/semi-colonialism.

Lenin also points out that imperialism is distinct from colonialism as such. Colonialism and semi-colonialism is a feature of capitalism, already present in the 15th century when Spain and Portugal rounded the Cape and «discovered» America. Pre-imperialist colonialism served the primitive accumulation required to establish capitalism as the dominant mode of production in the «metropole». Imperialist colonialism serves to guarantee capital exports, and it takes on a thousand and one different forms, which can generally be reduced to colonialism (the complete domination of an oppressed nation by military, political, economic and cultural means) and semi-colonialism (the non-military domination of an oppressed nation).

If we return to outward FDI, that is, capital export, we will be able to see which countries Italian imperialism dominates economically. According to the report «Outward FDI from Italy and Its Policy Context» from 2011:

«Italian companies started to invest abroad in the 1960s in search of new markets. However, Italy's outward foreign direct investment (OFDI) performance is quite modest compared with that of other European Union (EU) countries, mainly due to structural characteristics like the low number of large firms, the specialization in traditional low- and medium-technology manufacturing industries and the almost negligible activity in advanced services. The global economic and financial crisis seriously affected the Italian economy. However, the positive trend of Italian OFDI was not interrupted, and in 2009 OFDI flows remained stable compared to 2008. Habitually silent on this policy area in earlier decades, the Italian Government has recently shown a more favorable stance toward OFDI, introducing specific policy measures addressed to small and medium-sized enterprises, which have started to expand strongly abroad; these now constitute almost 90% of Italian multinational enterprises (MNEs).»^{x1}

By June 2010, Italy had signed 92 bilateral investment treaties. These include treaties with India, Colombia, Chad and Turkmenistan. They are mostly oppressed nations, which shows the imperialist character of the Italian economy – an oppressed nation would, contrarily, sign such treaties mainly with imperialist superpowers and powers.

Compare this with Spain. In *Spanish Economic and Financial Outlook* in 2015, one could read the following:

«Globalization has helped accelerate the growth of FDI, allowing it to become one of the key factors of the global economy. Developed countries, and the E.U. in particular, have always been the leading players in FDI, although developing countries are assuming an ever-increasing role. In the case of Spain, since the mid-2000s, the country has become not only an important destination for FDI, but also a source, making Spain today Europe's 3rd economy for outward FDI as a share of GDP and 2nd for inward FDI. Most of Spain's inward FDI has been channeled into the services sector with outward FDI mainly driven by large, productive companies. As regards geographic distribution, Europe and the U.S. (albeit to a lesser degree) continue to be main investors in Spain, even though developing countries are increasing penetration. Most outward investment is destined towards Europe and Latin America. Foreign investment in Spain, as well as Spanish investment abroad, has proven to be profitable, with positive spillover effects in terms of GDP growth, employment, exports, and efficiency gains for Spanish firms. Investment abroad by Spanish companies has also been beneficial, often accompanied by greater investment in human capital and R&D. Taking these factors into consideration, policy should aim to attract more FDI into Spain, while fostering the continued outward expansion and diversification of Spanish foreign investment.»^{xii}

While Italian imperialism dominates the economies of foreign nations, such as Poland, Turkey and India, Spain is being dominated through its inward FDI by imperialist countries, mainly Germany. Spain provides tourism-related services and agricultural exports to Germany, the U.K. and other imperialists, while its own outward FDI

generally serves as a proxy for investment by these very same imperialists – Spanish-registered multinationals mainly being simply comprador in character, receiving their capital from inward FDI in the first place. There can be no comparison – Italy participates in the imperialist economic partition of the world on its own behalf, whereas Spain only does so on behalf of the imperialist superpowers and powers.

5. TERRITORIAL REDIVISION OF THE WORLD

Lenin points out:

«As there are no unoccupied territories – that is, territories that do not belong to any State in Asia and America, it is necessary to amplify Supan's conclusion and say that the characteristic feature of the period under review is the final partitioning of the globe – final, not in the sense that repartition is impossible; on the contrary, repartitions are possible and inevitable – but in the sense that the colonial policy of the capitalist countries has completed the seizure of the unoccupied territories on our planet. For the first time the world is completely divided up, so that in the future only redivision is possible, that is, territories can only pass from one 'owner' to another, instead of passing as ownerless territory to an owner.

Hence, we are living in a peculiar epoch of world colonial policy, which is most closely connected with the *<latest stage in the development of capitalism>*, with finance capital.»^{xiii}

Italian imperialism has participated in the colonial and semi-colonial repartition of the world ever since it appeared on the world stage. When it became imperialist, Italy became a «rising star» on the world stage, seeking «a place in the Sun» in much the same way as German or Japanese imperialism did. Spain and Portugal, on the other hand, were old-style colonial powers, powers on the decline.

As Italy emerged on the world scene as an imperialist power, it immediately began to rob and strangle the peoples of the world for the sake of super-profits. In 1882-85, Italian imperialism seized control of what is today known as Eritrea, which had been a port region of the Empire of Ethiopia. Throughout the 1880s, Italian imperialism seized control of modern-day Somalia (minus Somaliland) through a series of unequal treaties with the indigenous sultanates. In 1898, Italian imperialism participated in the predatory war of eight imperialist powers against China, which saw the establishment of the Italian concession in Tianjin. In 1911, Italian imperialism took control of Libya. And in 1935, Italian imperialism began its war of aggression to subjugate Ethiopia. During the 2nd World War, Italian imperialism allied itself with German and Japanese imperialism and subjugated Albania. Since the 2nd World War, Italian imperialism has participated actively in the European Union, which bleeds the oppressed nations of Europe dry to the benefit of the alliance of imperialist powers which heads it, mainly German imperialism.

Let us contrast this to Spain and Portugal. Both countries had conquered big colonial empires during the period of merchant capitalism, in which the nascent bourgeoisie

operated within the feudal-monarchical States of Spain and Portugal in order to achieve its ambition of accumulating enough money-wealth to seize political power. But the other colonial powers, in particular the U.K. and the USA, outmaneuvered them, and a long period of decline of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism began. Lenin pointed out:

«Beginning of the struggle with Spain. The Dutch <war of liberation> and the <secession of the Netherlands from Spain>. The Armada 1588. Result of the struggle: <Rise of France, Britain and the Netherlands. Decline of Spain.>»^{xiv}

Every attempt at a bourgeois-democratic revolution in Iberia failed during this period. Spain was marked by a series of revolutionary attempts in the 1830s, 1850s, 1860s and the 1st Spanish Republic in the 1870s, all of which failed or gave rise to feudalist restorations. Portugal formally carried out a bourgeois-democratic revolution in 1820, which however failed to carry out land reform and to abolish the unequal treaties with the U.K., leading to the continued semi-colonial status of Portugal.

At the same time, the colonial empires of these two countries continued to fall apart. Spain and Portugal lost their South American dominions in the early 19th century. In 1898, U.S. imperialism seized Cuba and the Philippines from Spain, crushing the national-democratic movements in those two colonies. While Spain managed to receive some African concessions in the Berlin Conference of 1884, these were to be lost in the course of the early 20th century, with the exception of Equatorial Guinea, which became a semi-colony in 1968, Western Sahara, which became a Moroccan colony in 1975, and some cities and islands in Northern Africa, which remain Spanish to this day. Meanwhile, Portugal lost control of one African colony after another throughout the 20th century. In 1961, India annexed the Portuguese outpost of Goa, and in 1999, China took control of Macau. Today, Portugal retains no colonies except for the Azores and Madeira.

Spain and Portugal are living corpses. They are former colonial empires which never managed to carry out a bourgeois-democratic revolution. As a result, they have been rotting alive ever since their neighbors progressed to the stage of capitalism. In the stage of imperialism, it was no longer possible for them to retain their colonial possessions, which were transferred either to the joint, semi-colonial «community of nations» under imperialist, mainly U.S. imperialist, rule, or were handed over to one or another imperialist power as a colony. Spain and Portugal remain what they themselves subjected other nations to – being degraded to the status of semi-colonies. Italy has managed to gain greatly from the establishment of the European Union, at the expense of countries such as Spain and Portugal, which have been turned into the hotels, brothels and fruit plantations of the *guiris*. They participate in the NATO in the same way the lowest medieval barons participated in the King's grand army – as peasant troop levies, which will never get the lion's share of the loot, which is destined for Washington, London, Berlin, Rome and Paris.

Lenin pointed out that the Spanish-American War of 1898 marked the end of the bourgeois-democratic period and the beginning of the imperialist period. He said:

«In the United States, the imperialist war waged against Spain in 1898 stirred up the opposition of the <anti-imperialists>, the last of the Mohicans of bourgeois democracy who declared this war to be <criminal>, regarded the annexation of foreign territories as a violation of the Constitution, declared that the treatment of Aguinaldo, leader of the Filipinos (the Americans promised him the independence of his country, but later landed troops and annexed it), was <jingo treachery>, and quoted the words of Lincoln: <When the White man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs others, it is no longer self-government; it is despotism.> But as long, as all this criticism shrank from recognising the inseverable bond between imperialism and the trusts, and, therefore, between imperialism and the foundations of capitalism, while it shrank from joining the forces engendered by large-scale capitalism and its development – it remained a <pious wish>.»^{xv}

The inseverable bond between imperialism and finance capitalism must be recognized if the chains binding the peoples of Spain, Portugal and Greece are to be broken. It is the duty of the communists and revolutionaries of those countries to recognize that the atrocities committed by their own rulers against the third world are only a mirror image of the atrocious domination of their own countries by the imperialist superpowers and powers, supporting themselves on their entrenched local comprador-feudal puppets. The justified indignation of the Galician worker, of the Greek patriot, of the Canarian nationalist and of the Portuguese small peasant must not be rejected, but harnessed, as a source of strength for the revolutionary movement. By comparing your situation to the situation of your class siblings in the imperialist countries, such as Italy, you will be able to realize this truth.

I will end this note with the words of J. C. Mariátegui, the great Peruvian communist leader and a theoretician of the national and colonial question:

«To what degree is the situation of the Latin American republics similar to that of the semi-colonial countries? The economic condition of these republics is undoubtedly semi-colonial, and this characteristic of their economies tends to be accentuated as capitalism, and therefore imperialist penetration, develops. But the national bourgeoisies, who see cooperation with imperialism as their best source of profits, feel themselves secure enough as mistresses of power not to be too greatly preoccupied with national sovereignty. The South American bourgeoisies, not yet facing Yankee military occupation (with the exception of Panama), are not disposed to admit the necessity of struggling for their second independence, as APRA-ist propaganda naively supposes. The State, or better yet the ruling class, does not seem to feel the need for a greater or more secure degree of national autonomy. The revolution for independence is relatively too near, its myths and symbols too alive in the consciousness of the bourgeoisie and small bourgeoisie. The illusion of national sovereignty still lives on. It would be a serious mistake to claim that this social layer still has a sense of revolutionary nationalism, as in those places where it does represent a factor for anti-imperialist struggle in semi-colonial countries enslaved by imperialism, for example, in Asia in recent decades.

[...]

In these countries with Spanish-style poverty, we repeat, the situation of the middle classes is not the same as in those countries where these classes have gone through a period of free competition and of capitalist development favorable to individual initiative and success and to oppression by the giant monopolies.

In conclusion, we are anti-imperialists because we are marxists, because we are revolutionaries, because we oppose capitalism with socialism, an antagonistic system called upon to transcend it, and because in our struggle against foreign imperialism we are fulfilling our duty of solidarity with the revolutionary masses of Europe.»^{xvi}

[i](#) V. I. Lenin: «Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism» (January-June 1916)

[ii](#) Editorial Department of *The Red Flag*: «More on the Differences Between Togliatti and Us» (04.03.1963)

[iii](#) Friedrich Engels: «Supplement to Volume Three of ‚Capital‘ by Karl Marx» (1894)

[iv](#) V. I. Lenin: «Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism» (January-June 1916)

[v](#) Friedrich Engels: «Supplement to Volume Three of ‚Capital‘ by Karl Marx» (1894)

[vi](#) V. I. Lenin: «Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism» (January-June 1916)

[vii](#) Mao Zedong: «The Present Situation and Our Tasks» (25.12.1947)

[viii](#) V. I. Lenin: «Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism» (January-June 1916)

[ix](#) Ibid.

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[xi](#) <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8W09DVP>

[xii](#) https://www.spainglobal.com/files/spain_fdi_funcas.pdf

[xiii](#) V. I. Lenin: «Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism» (January-June 1916)

[xiv](#) V. I. Lenin: *Notebooks on Imperialism*

[xv](#) V. I. Lenin: «Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism» (January-June 1916)

[xvi](#)J. C. Mariátegui: «Anti-Imperialist Viewpoint», June 1929.