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Critical Theory and the Critique of Anti-Imperialism

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The rejection of 'anti-imperialism' marks one of the most visible and significant differences between 'Frankfurt School' Critical Theory and most other tendencies of the Marxist left. The dispute on the meaning and relevance of 'imperialism' and 'anti-imperialism' is implicated in related discussions on the critique of nation and state, colonialism and post-coloniality, racism and race, and anti-semitism. 'Frankfurt School' Critical Theory deliberately aims to formulate a critique of the capitalist mode of production that includes the phenomena typically addressed as 'imperialism' without recourse to the concept of 'anti-imperialism'. It takes the perspective that 'imperialism' is an intrinsic aspect of the capitalist mode of production rather than an object in its own right that is to be distinguished from the latter and to be fought 'as such': the concept of 'anti-imperialism' presupposes the reification and fetishization of 'imperialism'.

The present chapter firstly aims to establish the ways in which the concept of 'imperialism' is used in the writings of Marx as well as in the texts of some of the canonical writers of 'Frankfurt School' Critical Theory. It is argued that the Critical Theorists' Marxian usage of the term prevented the emergence of a concept of 'anti-imperialism' in their writings: 'imperialism' was for them simply an aspect of the more general concept of capitalism. The remainder of the chapter engages with some positions formulated in the tradition or under the influence of Critical Theory since the 1960s, broadly conceived, that directly engage with 'anti-imperialism': the latter had in the meantime become a key issue in some of the social movements of the time due to the role played within post-WWII decolonization by Leninism/Stalinism as well as bourgeois-liberal anti-imperialist ideology (Hobson) that had already been one of the sources of the former.

The word 'imperialism' came to be used in the twentieth century in two principal fields: military aggression (imperialist wars, conquests and occupations), and a more general

usage that in fact denotes the global spreading of the capitalist mode of production in all its economic, societal, political and cultural aspects albeit often assumed chiefly to operate through institutions of 'finance capital'. This second meaning resembles the more recent term 'globalization' that has supplanted it in some contexts. The way these two concepts differ in their connotations is illuminating; throughout the twentieth century and still in the present, use of the word 'imperialism' almost without exception signalled rejection and enmity, often moral outrage, as the word evokes images of military and other state-driven violence, while 'globalization' tends to carry more strongly a sense of ambiguity. While both words in fact describe the same process, 'globalization' is more strongly imagined as something inevitable that more often than not invites efforts to shape and reform, rather than oppose it – as in 'alter-globalization' as opposed to 'anti-globalization'. The concept of 'globalization' functions in contemporary mainstream discourses in a manner more resembling the dialectical manner in which Marx thought of capitalist modernity than the term 'imperialism' – a key term of twentieth-century (Leninist) Marxism – used to do.

As Marx took account of the global character and increasing globalization of the capitalist mode of production as one of its defining and *inherent* aspects, he did not need a concept that would specifically address the latter phenomena. At the same time, his theory was more discriminating: while Marx was scathing in his attacks on colonial violence, oppression and exploitation, he generally saw the process of capitalist modernization *as a whole* as the precondition of a historical situation in which humanity would be able to form an emancipated and humane form of society (although not every human group or society had to go through all the same processes). This defining characteristic of the Marxian position also underpinned the Critical Theory of the 'Frankfurt School': capitalism is attacked as a highly intensified mode of exploitation but welcomed as the destroyer of pre-capitalist (for example feudal and patriarchal) oppression and exploitation and, as its own grave-digger, celebrated for creating the preconditions of the future emancipation of a humanity liberated from the monomaniac compulsion to subject and dominate inner and outer nature in the name of economic self-preservation (labour). The phenomena that many throughout the twentieth century used to address as 'imperialism' need, in the Marxian perspective, to be discussed with this dialectic in mind.

THE MEANING OF THE TERM 'IMPERIALISM' IN MARX

Marx used the word 'imperialism' rarely and only in what was then its conventional sense, namely as a near-synonym of 'Caesarism' or 'Bonapartism' (Fisch et al., 1982: 181). 'Imperialism' meant in these contexts rule on the basis of alliances of the elites with the lower classes against the liberal bourgeoisie, or indeed against parliament, and governance above particular political parties, modelled on the imperial Roman example (176) and based on centralized state agencies and monopolies (177; Koebner and Schmidt, 1964: chapter 1; on the various usages of the term 'empire', see Leonhard, 2013). The necessity to address the 'social question' and to react to economic crises is also sometimes implied in the term 'imperialism'. On occasion, it meant 'neo-mercantilism' (Fisch et al., 1982: 207). In the English context, the term was typically used for those who wanted to maintain colonialism (178). The aspect of colonialism was not necessarily the dominant one, though, as 'imperialism' referred to a whole range of aspects of governance of empires; its anti-liberal impetus sits uneasily with the fact that colonialism was a key item on the agenda of nineteenth-century liberalism itself (Mehta, 1999; Mantena, 2010).

In an often-quoted passage in *The Civil War in France* Marx describes 'imperialism', discussed by Marx here in the context of the regime of Napoleon III, as 'the ultimate form' of bourgeois 'state power', whereby the state is understood to have emerged initially as a means of bourgeois society's emancipation from feudalism and then, in the course of the consolidation of bourgeois society, turned into 'a means for the enslavement of labour by capital' (Marx, 1971: 72). Imperialism is the end result of this process whereby the state becomes also 'the most prostitute', which seems to mean the most subject to arbitrary and violent (ab-)use.[1] Leon Trotsky remarked that 'this definition has a wider significance than for the French Empire alone, and includes the latest form of imperialism, born of the world-conflict between the national capitalisms of the great powers' (from *The Defence of Terrorism*, quoted in Winslow, 1931: 717). Trotsky pointed thereby to the connection between Marx's use of the term and its twentieth-century meaning. The implication here is that the internal and external aspects of the exercise of state power are closely interrelated, and that there is a 'world-conflict' between 'national capitalisms' that brings forth 'imperialism'. This perspective differs from what arguably would have been Marx's position, namely that 'imperialism', i.e. the dynamic of industrial capitalism, brings forth conflict between what merely *appear* to be 'national capitalisms': in the Marxian perspective, state and nation are dimensions, not instigators of the capitalist dynamic.

Although Marx did not have the concepts of 'imperialism' and 'colonialism' in their twentieth-century meanings, he did address the phenomena that subsequently these concepts referred to.[2] The combination of two characteristics distinguishes the position taken by Marx and Engels from that of other socialists of the time: first, a visceral, revolutionary hatred of any form of 'the old regime'; and second, a continuing effort to figure out how the 'free association' can slowly, painfully emerge out of the antagonistic but interdependent struggles that the bourgeoisie and the proletariat conduct against the 'old regime' in its various forms, in Europe as elsewhere. The defenders of the 'old regime' are presented as builders of walls: ghetto walls, Chinese walls, culture walls, state border walls. The historical negation of walls, borders, boundaries and identities old and new emerges from within social movements that are antagonistic to aspects of bourgeois society but still constituted by as well as constitutive of that society itself (cf. Horkheimer, 1937). Marx's complex position on British domination of India for example was shaped by his view of the change in the relation between Britain and India that came with the Industrial Revolution: 'While merchant capital and its allies exploit and destroy without transforming, industrial capital destroys but at the same time transforms' because (in Marx's words) '[y]ou cannot continue to inundate a country with your manufactures, unless you enable it to give some produce in return' (Brewer, 1980: 54). Brewer summarizes Marx's position thus: 'British rule in India (a) causes misery, (b) creates the preconditions for massive advance and (c) must be overthrown before the benefits can be enjoyed' (1980: 58). As in the famously 'panegyric' first section of the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx uses in his journalistic writings on India a style that includes 'deliberate juxtaposition of the most exalted praise for material achievements and the shocking images used to bring home the concomitant human misery' (59). The insistence on the dialectical nature of modern, bourgeois 'so-called civilization' (*Manifesto*) as bringing intense misery and exploitation but also the possibility of general human emancipation is key to understanding Marx's comments on anti-colonial struggles. While his view of capitalist modernity was ambivalent, Marx's hatred for 'the old regime' and any form of patrimonialism, caste-thinking, slavery, and authoritarianism (including the modified forms in which they continue to exist *within*

capitalism) was unequivocal. Marx, ever remaining an unreconstructed '1848' revolutionary, responded enthusiastically to any struggle against exploitation and domination that occurred (such as in China, India, the United States, Ireland, Poland, Russia) but also moderated (sometimes throttled) his enthusiasm when dialectical analysis led him to think a struggle failed to further the promise of universal emancipation that he saw could emerge only from within capitalist modernity.[3]

'IMPERIALISM' AND 'ANTI-IMPERIALISM' AFTER 1900

The significantly different meaning that the term 'imperialism' took on in the twentieth century was first clearly expressed by the liberal writer Hobson (1902) and then most prominently by Lenin (1917), in whose writings 'imperialism' became the name of a historical period, or a 'stage' in the evolution of capitalism. Lenin adopted Hilferding's description of *Finance Capital* (1906), in which financial and industrial capital are effectively fused as the dominant political agent in the 'imperialist' period (Fisch et al., 1982: 217). All modern conceptions of 'imperialism', liberal as well as socialist, describe versions of what could be addressed summarily as 'organized capitalism', i.e. the capitalism after the eclipse (since the Great Depression) of 'classical' liberalism. At the same time, capitalism continued to expand in the (long-standing but accelerating) process of what is now referred to as 'globalization', of which colonialism was a principal means. The French 'Bonapartist' state that Marx addressed with the term 'imperialism' was indeed a pioneer of this wider constellation.

Its crucial domestic implications were pointed out by Anton Pannekoek, a leading theoretician of the European labour movement in the years immediately preceding WWI, who argued in 1916 that imperialist capitalism escalates and generalizes exploitation of various groups in society beyond the proletariat, provoking also a generalization and radicalization of socialist struggles, and renders the perspective of parliamentary struggle for socialist reform all the more anachronistic and implausible as state policy is increasingly decided in institutions other than parliament (Pannekoek, 2012; see also Bricianer, 1978).

'Anti-imperialism' entered the lexicon very soon after 'imperialism' itself, primarily in Britain where it was propagated by a faction of the Liberal party (involving Hobson) and in the United States. An 'Anti-Imperialist League' was founded in 1898 in Boston to defend republican principles and oppose militarism, in particular, at the time of its foundation, the US annexation of the Philippines; it was dissolved in 1920 (Fisch et al., 1982: 189). A key figure was the feminist Jane Addams. Bourgeois anti-imperialism had precedents: in contrast to the three hundred years before the eighteenth century and much of the nineteenth, key thinkers of the Enlightenment movement, including Diderot, Kant and Herder, at least in parts of their work, 'attacked imperialism … [by] challenging the idea that Europeans had any right to subjugate, colonize, and "civilize" the rest of the world' (Muthu, 2003: 1).

Apart from the publication of Lenin's pamphlet on imperialism of 1917, the most decisive date in the development of socialist anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism was the Sixth Congress of the Communist International of 1928 that adopted the position that imperialism retarded the industrial development of the colonies. Up to this point, many in the communist movement and parties had stuck to the older, Marxian position that expected colonialism in the long run to result in industrialization which in turn it considered a necessary precondition for general human emancipation. Warren describes the 1928 Comintern position as one of the first statements of 'the underdevelopment outlook that was to become the stock

in trade of liberal development-economists after the Second World War' (Warren, 1980: 85). The Comintern position reflects a contradiction that is central to Marxist theory, namely the dialectic between capitalism (and its principal modern political form, the nation state) and emancipation. On the one hand, it strongly affirmed the Marxian notion of the progressiveness of capitalism to the extent that the intense and rapid development of the capitalist mode of production under the name of 'socialism' was promoted, while the worldwide spread of capitalism, under the name of 'imperialism', was blamed for retarding and blocking in the colonies the modernization process that would finally result in general human emancipation. In a de-dialecticizing move, the *benign* side of capitalism that brings development (and therewith the potential of emancipation to be ushered in by a socialist – meaning, in this context, state-capitalist – regime that will at some point in the process turn communist) is split from its *malign* destructive and exploitative side that must be fought as 'imperialism'. The latter (capitalism that refuses to spread evenly) is to be fought by national liberation movements that in the process establish modern nation states, which are the natural environments for the development of capitalism in its progressive guise. This conception reflects but also misconstrues the Marxian dialectic between capitalism and progress, robbing it of its dialectical character: it is a big step from advocating that the labour movement should *exploit* a presently unfolding contradictory historical process (Marx's position) to attempting, by way of political revolution and party dictatorship, to *organize and promote* such a process (the Bolshevik position).[4]

Lenin stated in his 1920 'Draft Theses on National and Colonial Questions', written for the second congress of the Communist International, that in 'the more backward states and nations, in which feudal or patriarchal and patriarchal-peasant relations predominate', 'all Communist parties must assist the bourgeois-democratic liberation movement', but also 'struggle against the clergy and other influential reactionary and medieval elements' including 'Pan-Islamism and similar trends, which strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with an attempt to strengthen the positions of the khans, landowners, mullahs, etc.' (Lenin, 1920). Apart from the mechanical conception of historical evolution that undergirds this position, it wrongly presupposes that bourgeois nationalists in such countries are genuinely happy to forfeit alliances with clergy, pan-Islamists and other reactionary elements in order to enjoy socialist support. The shift towards support for 'bourgeois-democratic liberation movements' coincided with the Soviet government's 'rapprochement with bourgeois regimes (above all, Turkey and Persia), while communist militants in those countries were shot and imprisoned' (Goldner, 2010: 661).[5]

Another important aspect of the context in which the critique of anti-imperialist ideology gradually emerged is the fact that anti-imperialism was also articulated by the far right. The idea of a struggle between 'proletarian', or 'young', versus 'plutocratic nations' emerged in proto-fascist milieus in Germany, France and Italy during WWI and became a hallmark of the rhetoric of Mussolini and Gregor Strasser among others (Guerin, 2013: 107–108). Their fight against a decadent 'West' was evoked by 'conservative revolutionaries' like Arthur Moeller van den Bruck and Ernst Niekisch in the 1920s; their fascist anti-imperialism was 'nothing but the "foreign-policy version" of fascist anti-capitalism' (Fringeli, 2016: 42). On the opposite shores of the Mediterranean, beginning in Egypt as a response to the abolition of the last Ottoman caliphate by the modernizing Turkish state in 1924, modern Islamism including its jihadist offshoots developed in parallel with, and drew inspiration from the same 'conservative revolution' impulses, including the ultra-conservative version of resistance to 'cultural imperialism', i.e.

liberal modernity. When after the dissolution of the Soviet Union the bourgeois-nationalist regimes of the Near East that had – with Soviet support – combined anti-imperialist ideology with a pretence to some form of socialism disintegrated, the pan-Islamism that Lenin had warned against finally became a prominent phenomenon. German 'conservative revolution' and fascist ideas influenced the development of anti-imperialist thought also in Bolivia in the 1930s and 1940s and spread from there to other Latin American countries (Goldner, 2016: chapter 4). By circa 1935 the leaders of the Soviet Union had realized that support for the 'right of nations to self-determination' more often than not helped fascists rather than themselves, so they abandoned the notion for almost two decades (Gerber, 2010: 271). It returned in the 1950s to dominate Soviet foreign policy.

HORKHEIMER, ADORNO AND MARCUSE ON 'IMPERIALISM'

The 'Frankfurt School' theorists used the term 'imperialism' casually and infrequently, and although the term is never explicitly defined, contextual reading indicates that they used the term in its generic Marxist meaning as exemplified for example by Rosa Luxemburg who saw imperialism as a 'tendency' that is inherent to any capitalist society and not specifically related to the emergence of 'finance capital' in the sense first described by Hilferding and then made canonical by Lenin (Luxemburg, 1969: 445–6, quoted in Kistenmacher, 2015: 130). Imperialism is one aspect of the capitalist mode of production among others, not the defining essence of its 'most recent stage'. To put this the other way round, there is no reason to assume that other key descriptors such as the commodity form, the law of value or wage labour are less central in the 'most recent stage' of capitalism than before that 'stage'. In the 'Frankfurt School'context, the word 'imperialism' is most often used in connection with the period beginning in the last third of the nineteenth century, in particular the French, British and German polities, as well as with German fascism. In either context it refers to colonialism and military aggression as much as to changes in the domestic structure of imperialistic societies, broadly conceived, in line with the usage of the word in Marx's writings in the context of French imperialism ('Bonapartism'). The word also occurs in contexts of classical, in particular Roman, history and early modern colonialism.

The key publication of the Institute of Social Research, the *Journal for Social Research* (1932–1941, in 1939 renamed *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*) contains numerous references to 'imperialism', mostly in its very comprehensive book review sections but also in articles dealing with political-economical issues, such as as in K. A. Wittfogel's article (4(1): 26–60) on Chinese economic history or Gerhard Mayer's article (4(3): 398–436) on crisis pol-icy and planned economy (both 1935). Franz Neumann referred to Locke's liberalism as imperialistic in his essay 'The Change in the Function of Law in Modern Society' (1937: 6(3): 542–96; here 544). The last volume of the journal (1941) contains a review essay by Josef Soudek (9: 189–94) of a series of books dealing with international political economy and political relations that includes the third edition of Hobson's influential book *Imperialism*.

One particularly interesting occurrence is in Herbert Marcuse's (1936) philosophical essay 'On the Concept of Essence' (in vol. 5). Marcuse discusses here a fundamental aspect of Marxian and Critical Theory, the conceptual distinction between essence and appearance. He asserts that the truth content of this distinction depends on the ability of the concept of essence respectively to help explain 'a given constellation of phenomena or appearances' (Marcuse, 1936: 27; Marcuse 1968: 74, trans. amended). Marcuse continues:

> If the concept that is deemed to be 'essential' to the explanation of such a constellation (e.g. the political power constellation of states in any one particular period, their alliances and antagonisms), such as 'imperialism', makes it possible to comprehend causally the situation both in its individual phases as well as in terms of the tendencies effective within it, then it is really the essential in that manifold of appearances.

Marcuse goes on to argue that a concept of essence that is theoretically true (in the sense just described) then also needs to prove itself to be 'objectively' true in practice: the theory is itself 'a factor in the historical struggles that it aims to comprehend', and only in these struggles 'can the essential theoretical truths be ultimately verified'. It is in this sense that the objectivity of dialectical concepts stems from their historicity. Marcuse does not explicitly state here whether he thinks that 'imperialism' is in fact a concept that is 'true' in this twofold sense, but the fact that he chooses it as an example for his theoretical argument indicates that he holds it to be contentious enough to serve as an illustration of his point: he would not have chosen it if he had thought it to be self-evidently valid.

More than 30 years later, 'imperialism' is similarly used as an example in a related theoretical–methodological argument in a lecture by Adorno, 'Late capitalism or industrial society?'. Adorno remarks sarcastically that those who like to talk about 'reification' are not thereby immune to suffering from 'reified consciousness': 'giving big speeches about concepts such as "imperialism" or "monopoly" with no regard to what these words actually refer to and to which contexts they are pertinent, is as wrong, that is to say irrational, as' its opposite, namely the 'blindly nominalistic' refusal to consider that 'concepts … might have their objectivity, revealing the fact that the generic exerts compulsion over the individual matters' (Adorno, 2003: 357). Adorno warns his students and colleagues in this lecture that the fetishism of abstract concepts is as detrimental as the ('positivistic') fetishism of facts that is hostile to theory. Like Marcuse before him, Adorno chose with 'imperialism' and 'monopoly' examples that were widely used at the time as shibboleths, rather than critical concepts richly saturated with sociological and historical knowledge. It can be inferred that Adorno, like Marcuse, did not reject the concept of 'imperialism' nor the critique of the phenomena it refers to, but he clearly saw a danger that the concept becomes a kind of fetish, i.e. an obstacle to rather than an instrument of critique.

One of the classic texts of the 'Frankfurt School' analysis of fascism and antisemitism, Adorno's (1939) 'Fragments on [Richard] Wagner' (in vol. 8 of the *Journal*) refers repeatedly to 'imperialism', using the word in rather unusual ways. 'Imperialism' is here chiefly an aspect of fascism. In this essay, Adorno interprets the gist of Wagner's operatic work as an expression of what he would later diagnose as 'conformist rebellion'. He observes that in Wagner, the god Wotan – identified by Adorno as a 'bourgeois terrorist' – defends (and then betrays) Siegfried's rebellion but only in order to safeguard his 'imperialist world plan' (Adorno, 1939: 4). Also, though, Siegfried is described as an imperialist: 'The antagonists to the [world] order are isolated individuals lacking true empathy and any form of solidarity: Siegfried, man of the future, is a ruffian of stubborn naivety, thoroughly imperialistic' (35). In Wagner's thinking, 'imperial idealism' has done away with the illusion – still maintained by classical, liberal, pre-imperialist idealism – that the fundamental antagonisms of bourgeois society could be reconciled: the bourgeoisie in its imperial shape accepts them as ontological facts and 'fate' (37). Adorno concludes that 'Wagner's work is therefore not merely the willing prophet and keen enforcer of imperialism and late-bourgeois terror', but also contains an element of insight in their own weakness: 'Wagner the irrationalist who plunges from one dream into the next gains consciousness of himself in the process of plunging. … The imperialist dreams the catastrophic character of imperialism; the bourgeois nihilist comprehends the machinery of

the bourgeois drive to destruction that will mark the epoch following his own' (46–7).

A similarly intriguing comment on imperialism is contained in 'Juliette, or Enlightenment and Morality', the third chapter of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002). Horkheimer and Adorno quote a passage from de Sade's book *Histoire de Juliette* (1797) in which 'the Prince' argues that 'the government itself must control the population. It must possess the means to exterminate the people, should it fear them, or to increase their numbers, should it consider that necessary' (2002: 70). Horkheimer and Adorno comment: 'The Prince points the path which imperialism, [i.e.] rationality [Ratio] in its most terrible form, has always followed', and continue with another quote from the same text by de Sade: 'Take away its god from the people you wish to subjugate and you will demoralize it'. De Sade's comments (as they predate modern, nineteenth-century nationalism) do not distinguish between a government's treatment of 'its own' or any other people; the brutally modern governmental mentality described by de Sade at the end of the eighteenth century can therefore be related to domestic as well as international politics. The fact that Horkheimer and Adorno identify it with 'imperialism', resonates with the original Marxian understanding of the concept in the sense of 'Caesarism'. Apart from 'cultural imperialism', the recipe recommended by 'the Prince' also anticipates the concept of 'biopolitics' as formulated a few decades later by Foucault (who surely knew de Sade). Further down in the same chapter Horkheimer and Adorno use the word 'imperialist' in a more narrow and conventional sense, referring to the 'imperialist raids' (2002: 79) of German fascism.

Some of the short pieces that constitute Horkheimer's *Notes* from the 1950s and 1960s (Horkheimer, 1974) touch on the issue of imperialism and anti-imperialism, without using these words, though. The text 'One World' from 1956 reflects on the concept of 'civilization' in a way reminiscent of some of Marx's reflections on colonialism. Horkheimer links here decolonization with the state of things in post-fascist Europe, suggesting that together with colonialism also the progressive aspects of European civilization have been abandoned. His example is the liberal regime of punishment. He writes that in nineteenth-century Europe people came to believe that 'even the most evil murderer needs to be healed' rather than executed (Horkheimer, 1974: 48). 'Barbaric' punishments were thought of as something barbarians did, elsewhere, outside civilization. 'Today the bourgeois fly to Saudi Arabia in a few hours, write magazine reports about the hacking off of a burglar's hand, and continue to negotiate business deals on an equal footing. This feeds back onto their own mentality that has already been made pliable by Hitler and Franco' (48–9). Horkheimer's sarcasm is directed at the dialectic of liberal progress: colonialism exported cruelty abroad and savoured civilization domestically, while its abolition was linked to giving up not only 'the ideology of white man's mission but also the little it had been ahead of the coloured people'. 'This civilization pays for its injustice with its disappearance, it perishes through the horror it once allowed to happen'. Europeans railed about 'barbaric' cruelty only while it suited imperialism, and with direct colonial domination also abandoned even their hypocritical critique of cruelty. The humane essence of civilization had been 'the disgust with the horror' that it had unleashed on those others whom it had claimed to be educating into civilization. A critical stance would regret the loss of the emancipatory aspects of liberal civilization, but be aware that its own imperialism has brought about this loss. The 'barbarism' to be witnessed, for example in Saudi Arabia (that is in fact dependent on Western support) is therefore 'symbolic of what is now dominant in Europe' itself (48): the civilization that was only able to be liberal as a means of distinguishing itself from its colonial victims, was

overcome the wrong way: backwards rather than forwards. The destruction of the precarious liberalism of Western, bourgeois civilization is due to fascism as much as to the kind of society that emerged victorious from the struggle with fascism. It is an indication of Horkheimer's extreme post-war bitterness – as a participant observer of restoration West Germany – at this point that Hitler and Franco are mentioned as if they merely 'made pliable' the bourgeois mind, and as if the post-fascist bourgeoisie's friendly cooperation with Saudi sheikhs was the actual scandal. (Also Horkheimer's implicit suggestion that European civilization as a whole was in the nineteenth century at least somewhat 'ahead of the coloured people' is unconvincing.)

MARCUSE'S POST-WAR DISCUSSIONS OF IMPERIALISM AND ANTI-IMPERIALISM

Different from Horkheimer and Adorno, Marcuse explicitly discussed the concept of imperialism in the first two chapters of his book *Soviet Marxism* (1971 [1958]), and also commented on imperialism in the last chapter of *An Essay on Liberation* (1969). He notes that discussions of 'finance capital' and 'imperialism' were part of a revisionist tendency in Marxist theory to deal with 'countertrends' to the principal patterns of capitalist dynamics as described by Marx. These were discussed in volumes two and three of *Capital* but were perceived as having remained undertheorized in Marx's writings (Marcuse, 1971: 29). It was widely agreed around 1900 that capitalism had entered a new, 'organized' stage that saw a better paid and more integrated working class, but this observation was interpreted in a variety of ways. A 'reformist' tendency expected 'organized' and more integrative capitalism to provide an improved vantage point from which an increasingly confident working class would be able to build socialism, whereas an 'orthodox' tendency, especially in its Leninist form, saw in the same processes the reinvigoration of capitalism by a 'labour aristocracy' that was 'corrupted' by 'high wages paid out of monopolistic surplus profits' (1971: 30) and concluded that not the organized industrial working class but 'workers and peasants' in countries not yet developed and 'corrupted' by industrial capitalism would make the revolution (31). Marcuse points out that the Leninist revision of Marxism was based on the assumption that Marxian theory was contradicted, if not falsified by the failure of the capitalist mode of production to have collapsed by the turn of the century. The thesis that Marx underestimated 'the economic and political potentialities of capitalism' (31), which Marcuse rejects, underlies the ideology of 'anti-imperialism'. The critique of Leninist revisionism is therefore at the basis of Critical Theory's rejection of (Leninist) 'anti-imperialism'. The idea that the industrial working class was 'corrupted' and bribed by 'surplus profits' gained in the colonies was based on a narrow and dogmatic conception of what an 'uncorrupted' working class could be expected to do, as opposed to a critical analysis of what its role in evolving capitalist society actually was. Marcuse asserts that 'even prior to the First World War it became clear that the "collaborationist" part of the proletariat was quantitatively and qualitatively different from' a small 'labour aristocracy' and trade unionist 'traitors'. The fact that Leninism nominally retained the idea of the centrality of the working class but considered the latter largely 'corrupted' led to the notion that the party as carrier of 'true' proletarian consciousness needed to impose it onto the former (32). As the Leninist conception adopts from Hilferding the idea that 'imperialism' is the name of a stage in the development of capitalism (although Hilferding's conception of what characterizes this 'stage' is far more open and nuanced than Lenin's), the acceptance of the concept of 'imperialism' in its Leninist sense implies

also acceptance of the underlying idea that capitalism is now *forced* to bribe the working class in the advanced industrial countries lest it collapse: to put this the other way round, successful anti-imperialism (led or coordinated by Bolshevik parties as avant-gardes) would cut off capitalism from this means of last resort and open the way for proletarian revolution. This entire conception rests on uncritical acceptance of the implausible notion of the centrality of those 'bribes', the 'corruption' they allegedly produce, and the necessity of colonialism and imperial military aggression for producing the funds that pay for these 'bribes'. In addition, anti-imperialism (Leninist or otherwise) cannot but endorse, explicitly or implicitly, the notions of 'self-determination of nations' and anti-colonial nationalism. Most forms of Marxism, including Social Democratic 'orthodoxy' in the vein of Kautsky and Hilferding, credit capitalism with much more flexibility, inventiveness and openness to deal with its problems and to extend its lifespan.

After WWI and the failure of socialist revolutions in the industrialized countries, Lenin argued that capitalism – in its developed form as imperialism – survived by splitting the world (minus Soviet Russia) into two camps, namely the victorious countries (chiefly Britain and the United States) that exploit the 'vanquished countries' (chiefly Germany) and 'the East' (Marcuse, 1970: 42–4). Anti-colonial nationalism was vital to this conflict. While colonial imperialism allowed the Western countries to continue to 'bribe' their working classes (preventing the gradual ripening of socialism in these countries that would have been expected otherwise), the conflicts this situation involves also grant the Soviet Union the necessary 'breathing space' to industrialize and to prepare the transition to socialism, basically by developing 'state capitalism'.[6] Marcuse's presentation makes clear that the entire theoretical construction had little if anything in common with Marxian theory, certainly not in the perspective of Critical Theory.

In 'Solidarity', the last chapter of *An Essay on Liberation*, Marcuse describes contemporary US society in terms that are continuous with but also modify the Social Democratic and Leninist analyses that were discussed in the first decades of the twentieth century: it is an industrial, 'advanced capitalist countr[y]' (Marcuse, 1969: 79) where 'the integration of the working class is the result of structural economic-political processes (sustained high productivity; large markets; neo-colonialism; administered democracy) and where the masses themselves are forces of conservatism and stabilization' (80). Such a society cannot anymore 'grow on its own resources, its own market, and on normal trade with other areas. It has grown into an imperialist power which, through economic and technical penetration and outright military intervention, has transformed large parts of the Third World into dependencies'. Marcuse writes that 'its policy' differs 'from classical imperialism' because of the Cold War context that supersedes the requirements 'of profitable investments' (80). By implication, 'classical' imperialism would have been simply about the search for profitable investments. Different from Leninist 'anti-imperialism', Marcuse does not take on board the notion that 'finance capital' plays a particularly important role. A second key difference lies in Marcuse's class analysis: on the one hand, he argues that in the advanced industrial countries the working class cannot be seen as 'the revolutionary subject' as such a subject can only *emerge* in the process of struggle. As no class, or more generally, no category of the population in advanced capitalist society, is anymore located outside society at all, there is no revolutionary subject waiting, as it were, to rebel, being temporarily 'corrupted' or betrayed by trade unionist or any other presumably treacherous elements. On the other hand, he also (by implication) rules out nationalist 'popular front' politics in the 'Third World' countries when he emphasizes that 'a liberal bourgeoisie which would ally itself with the poor and lead their struggle

does not exist' there: the Third World proletariat which is 'predominantly agrarian' is oppressed both by 'the indigenous ruling classes and those of the foreign metropoles'. His main point at this step of the argument is that advanced imperialism (very much like what we would today call 'globalization') has created the necessity to think of the world as one unit:

> In any case, by virtue of the evolution of imperialism, the developments in the Third World pertain to the dynamic of the First World, and the forces of change in the former are not extraneous to the latter; the 'external proletariat' is a basic factor of potential change within the dominion of corporate capitalism. (Marcuse, 1969: 80)

Likewise, 'indigenous dictatorships' are ever more supported by 'the imperialist metropoles' (81). Therefore, 'the preconditions for the liberation and development of the Third World must emerge in the advanced capitalist countries': the latter must be weakened from within so much that they abandon their support for the Third World dictatorships. Marcuse asserts, against the notion that the global revolution that would end the capitalist system could be started in the periphery, that '[t]he chain of exploitation must break at its strongest link' (82), namely in the advanced countries. Marcuse takes here the classical Marxian against the Leninist position. However, he appreciates that the Third World guerrilla struggles have a huge *ideological* impact on the New Left in the United States:

> The Cuban revolution and the Viet Cong have demonstrated: it can be done; there is a morality, a humanity, a will, and a faith which can resist and deter the gigantic technical and economic force of capitalist expansion. More than the 'socialist humanism' of the early Marx, this violent solidarity in defense, this elemental socialism in action, has given form and substance to the radicalism of the New Left; in this ideological respect too, the external revolution has become an essential part of the opposition within the capitalist metropoles. However, the exemplary force, the ideological power of the external revolution, can come to fruition only if the internal structure and cohesion of the capitalist system begin to disintegrate. (81–2)

Marcuse's references to the Cuban revolution and the Viet Cong as representing 'elemental socialism', morality and faith seem rather odd and are probably unique in the context of 'Frankfurt School' Critical Theory.[7] His assertion of the unity of the capitalist world-system sits uneasily, too, with his argument on the fundamentally different conditions in the advanced and the Third World countries: the Viet Cong and the New Left in the United States could hardly be more different kinds of organizations, so that supporting the former as appropriate to Vietnam (but not at all to the United States) has a patronizing and 'Eurocentric' undertone.[8]

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE EMERGENCE OF ANTI-IMPERIALIST IDEOLOGY AFTER WWII

Two aspects of the world-historical context are chiefly responsible for the enormous spread of anti-imperialist ideology in the post-WWII era: the expansion and consolidation of the Stalinist sphere of power, and the perceived continuity between the anti-fascism of the WWII period and the decolonization in the immediate aftermath of the war. These two tendencies were initially mostly separate phenomena.

In a discussion of the question why anti-imperialism assumed an increasingly central role in the thinking of the journalist Ulrike Meinhof, who developed from a Christian-inspired pacifist to being a founding member of the 'urban guerrilla' group Red Army Faction, Peter Brückner argues that in the immediate post-WWII period there was a widely shared perception of continuity between the fight against fascism and National Socialism, and that against colonialism and imperialism. As a much discussed example he points to the massacre by French troops of thousands of participants in a demonstration for independence in Sétif, Algeria, that took place on the occasion of the celebrations of

the capitulation of the Third Reich on May 8, 1945 (Brückner, 2006: 106; Gerber, 2010: 259). During the independence war (1954–62) the Algerian FLN continuously referred to this highly symbolic event. Similarly, the independence of Vietnam was declared shortly after the capitulation of Japan in September 1945. Subjects from the colonies fought on most fronts during WWII, especially in the French military; Frantz Fanon is an example (Gerber, 2010: 260). Brückner mentions the case of the Algerian communist Jean Farrugia who had been an inmate of Dachau as well as of French prisons in Algeria, and more generally the 'massive racist terror against Algerian workers' especially in Paris (Brückner, 2006: 107). The fact that the spread of universalist, anti-fascist ideology raised expectations for independence that were quickly disappointed arguably contributed to the transfer of the prestige of anti-fascist onto anti-imperialist ideology, but also its undermining in the minds of both, the anti-colonial movements in what then came to be called the 'Third World' and among left-wing intellectuals in Europe.[9] Another link was the fact that the anti-colonial struggle in Angola was fought against the fascist Salazar dictatorship in Portugal that was supported by West Germany, Spain (under Franco) and France (Brückner, 2006: 116). West Germany was also strongly engaged in South Africa, Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia, among others.

Given these facts, it is unsurprising, and indeed perfectly legitimate, that protest movements emphasized the continuities between fascism, the continental imperialism of Nazi Germany, the economic international policy of post-fascist West Germany and other Western European states, and colonialism in general. What was a reasonable interpretation of international political economy at the time gradually turned into an increasingly irrational discourse, though, when it was overdetermined by a fetishized, dogmatic concept of 'imperialism' that was further enriched by elements of ultra-conservative and fascist anti-Western 'critique of civilization' ('Kulturkritik') in terms of greed, decadence, moral decay, societal corrosion, consumerism, individualism, Mammonism, effemination etc.[10] This transformation might have been helped by the increasing importance of the United States in the defence of 'imperialism' in Vietnam and elsewhere: the fact that the former bourgeois-democratic utopia of the New World was perceived to be propping up the most reactionary forces of the Old World allowed elements of traditional European anti-Americanism, an anti-democratic ideology with roots in nationalist liberalism as well as conservatism and fascism and antisemitic undertones, to enter the picture (Croquembouches, 2002; Fried, 2012, 2014; Fischer, 2015).

Brückner points to another important shift that resulted circa 1968 in a 'de-dialecticization' that was expressed in slogans like 'Vietnam is everywhere'. In critical discussions of the time it was clearly stated that equating conditions in – for example – Berlin with those in Saigon was insulting to the Vietnamese (Brückner, 2006: 140). Marcuse had stated in a widely read publication of 1967 that the anti-colonial struggles needed to be supported by 'the reactivation of the labour movement' in the capitalist states of Europe (Brückner, 2006: 137): he understood solidarity with the anti-colonial struggles to be mutually beneficial, because the universalization of struggles would allow the social struggles in the industrialized countries to shed their national limitations. Marcuse did *not* suggest, though, that these struggles were identical: he suggested them to be different but complementary. Likewise, Brückner rejects the notion of the proletariat, conceived as 'the subject of revolution', as the 'embodiment [*Inbegriff*] of *all* the exploited' globally that can be found in the writings of Ulrike Meinhof and others. He states that such an 'embodiment', or essential concept, is a 'bad abstraction' and idealistic delusion, and asserts that 'political identity (who are we? how can we *actually* become what

we *potentially* are? … where do we learn?)' must be derived from 'concrete historical reality', not from 'principles' and 'theories' (Brückner, 2006: 161, italics in the original).

Proponents of 'nationalist-populist development programmes' to be headed by the supposedly 'productive national bourgeoisie threatened by global financial capitalism' often invoke the idea, common in post-1991 anti-neoliberal discourses, of 'a financialization of global capitalism politically imposed by the rent-seeking and parasitic dominant interests of the US' (Bonnet, 2002: 115), which carries echoes of both the Leninist imperialism thesis and cruder antisemitic notions of bankers as blood-sucking parasites. In a related argument, Moishe Postone referred to the 'neo-anti-imperialism' of the period after 1991. He argues that the reduction or fetishization of anti-imperialism to anti-Americanism obscures what used to be called 'imperialist rivalries' such as those that led to the two world wars of the twentieth century, just at the time when these may be in the process of re-emerging after the ending of the Cold War (Postone, 2006: 97, 110).

ANTI-IMPERIALISM, NATIONALISM AND STATEHOOD

At the most fundamental level, the concept of 'imperialism' is rejected by 'Frankfurt School' critical theory as inherently nationalist and statist. Braunmühl points out that 'current definitions represent imperialism as a "spill-over" problem', meaning that 'a national capital which was once essentially internal in scope reproduces itself externally to a growing extent and thus produces imperialism' (Braunmühl, 1978: 160). The concept of 'imperialism' logically presupposes 'the specific partition of the world market into national states'. Politically this means that the 'accumulation of national capitals suddenly acquires its own legitimacy in the face of the intervention of external capitals'. She rejects the 'traditional point of view that sees the state as determined in the first instance by internal processes to which external determinants are, as it were, appended' secondarily (161). This perspective has been termed (methodological) 'statism' and critiqued more recently by Song (2011) following Braunmühl. Instead of 'statism', a dialectical view of the relationship between individual nation states and 'the imperialist system' (Braunmühl) or the 'world system' (Wallerstein) is needed as modern states – most of which understand themselves to be 'nations' – and the modern capitalist world market (including the phenomena generally addressed as 'imperialism') historically and logically emerged together.

Proponents of 'anti-imperialism' are forced by the logic of their argument to distinguish 'good' peripheral from 'bad' metropolitan nationalism (ISF, 1990: 128). The logical presuppositions of this type of argument were probably not perceptible to the original authors, chiefly Lenin, but they tend to assert themselves in the historical unfolding of the concept. 'The right of nations to self-determination is based on the idealist notion that the state … could be the real expression of the will of its constituents. This discourse united the democratic bourgeois Wilson and the revolutionary Jacobin Lenin' as well as many other classic-liberal nationalists such as Theodor Herzl (ISF, 1990: 129). Critiques of the Bolshevik concepts of the socialist state as the 'state of the entire people' and 'the right of nations to self-determination' as formulated in the years before, during and after WWI by Rosa Luxemburg, Anton Pannekoek, Hermann Gorter and others had been rediscovered by that part of the movement of the late 1960s in Germany that was influenced by the Critical Theory of the 'Frankfurt School'. This was hardly coincidental as these critiques had been part of the historical constellation out of which the latter had emerged in the 1920s. They had not shaped the political consciousness of most constituents of the movement sufficiently,

though, to prevent the revival of Leninist 'anti-imperialism' in the 1970s.

All three elements of the notion of the right of nations to form an independent state lean towards mystification: 'the state' is imagined as being expressive of 'its' people (rather than being the political form of social relations of exploitation and oppression); 'nations' are imagined as pre-existing their constitution as states; and the idea that they have 'rights' forces one to imagine them as subjects with some kind of personality. The notion of 'the nation' that underlies this concept has of course compelling common-sense plausibility for individuals who are members of already established nation states (as they will have forgotten the fact that the nation was 'made' or 'invented' at some point in history) but creates rather than solves problems in practice, especially when different nationality groups claim the same territory. This is inevitably so in all cases of secessionism, irredentism and with diasporic nationalities – i.e. in most cases by far as human history has produced only few territories large enough to form a sustainable modern state that are inhabited by one single ethnic or nationality group. Those defending and aiming, as state officials, to manage and adjudicate claims based on 'the right of nations to self-determination' are forced continuously to discuss and determine 'what is a nation'.

For a variety of historical reasons, one of the most conspicuous instances (in Europe) of a diasporic nation that, in the context of a period of generalized nation-state building, was interrogated in such terms, is that of the Jews. As Jews formed – at least in Eastern Europe – a strong element of the labour movement, the controversy over Jewish nationality became a crucial issue as soon as the labour movement discussed the national question. The question whether Jews constituted a nation was answered in a variety of ways. This is relevant to the discussion of 'anti-imperialism' because in its Leninist version, the chief criterion for determining the legitimacy of a nation's claim to self-determination is whether it fell into the category of peripheral or metropolitan nationalisms. Zionism has been put in either category, depending on context. The form of anti-Zionism that gained great influence in the 1970s saw it as metropolitan and imperialist. (Other forms of anti-Zionism whose rejection of a 'Jewish state' was not based on its supposedly being 'imperialist' but on principled Marxian anti-nationalism, liberal ideas of cultural pluralism or specific religious or cultural ideas on the nature of Judaism have become increasingly marginal correspondingly, at least outside Israel.)

Although the principle of 'the right of nations to self-determination' can in principle be the basis for the search for a 'multicultural' politics of compromise in the context of liberal-democratic politics, in its anti-imperialist articulation it tends towards ethnic absolutism: when 'imperialism' is 'the latest *stage of*' capitalism (as opposed to one *aspect of* capitalism among others) then the antagonism between metropolitan centre and exploited periphery becomes the decisive criterion for determining policy. Perhaps the most fundamental problem of Leninist anti-imperialism is its state-centric focus: as states, or countries, are the basic unit of analysis, any one state or nation is considered either imperialist or not. This differs from less nationalistic approaches, such as Wallersteinian 'world system analysis' that acknowledges the existence of core-type as well as periphery-type *production processes* within the same country, implying that statehood is but one structuring element among many others within a capitalist system that is first of all global. This perspective resonates with the anti-Leninism that is characteristic of contemporary forms of Marxism derived from the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School (such as 'Open Marxism').

One-dimensional anti-imperialism creates a discursive field that forces its proponents to find reasons why one set of nationalist claims is more valid than a competing one. Acceptance of the irrational premise of

positing 'imperialism' instead of the much broader concept of 'capitalism' at the centre of political analysis invites the acceptance of further, even more irrational additional arguments. The anti-imperialist perspective on Israel is probably the best-documented example for this discursive slippery slope. Anti-imperialist support for Palestinian nationalism argues that it is to be supported against Israeli nationalism because Israel engages in imperialist exploitation of non-Israeli Palestinians. This could simply mean that of two otherwise analogous state-building projects one is more successfully engaged in capitalist exploitation than the other, creating inequality that needs to be redressed. Solidarity movements elsewhere could make a contribution to this in the expectation, typically held by socialists, that more equal development of capitalist national economies creates better conditions for emancipatory movements including labour and women's movements that would finally be able to overcome capitalist social relations. Such a proposition could be made subject to rational analysis and discussion. This is not, though, the basic structure of the anti-imperialist discourse on Israel which seems to be characterized by two things: one, the anti-imperialist discourse homogenizes and essentializes the nationalism that has been approved as 'peripheral', and tends to embrace all cultural, religious, and political elements including some that are explicitly anti-emancipatory and anti-socialist; two, it accepts lines of fetishizing and ontologizing reasoning that further undermine the claims of the 'metropolitan' nationalism beyond challenging its specifically 'imperialist' traits: its imperialism turns into an essential characteristic rather than a historically contingent one that could be challenged and changed. This is the point where, in the case of Israel, various bits of antisemitic ideology enter the anti-imperialist discourse that would have horrified Lenin. Classical Marxian reasoning rejects claims, for example by the Israeli state to be the expression of 'the Jewish nation' simply by rejecting the 'politically romantic' concept of the state as anything other than a power structure. On the Leninist platform this classical line of reasoning loses much of its power as it does not *categorically* reject romantic nationalism which it supports in 'peripheral' nations.[11]

The logical structure of the anti-imperialist position makes it receptive to all kinds of mystical and racial irrationalities, including, in the effort to prove why 'the Jews' cannot be a nation, antisemitism. The concept that drives these irrationalities is, however, in itself idealist: 'States seem to have the beautiful task of realising the rights of … the people' (ISF, 1990: 130), as long as 'the people' demonstrably have the quality of being 'a subject', which makes them a nation. This notion shares the naivety of other forms of bourgeois 'social contract' theory: 'neither Lenin's right to self-determination nor its bourgeois predecessors mention at all the *violence* that has always been necessary to found sovereign states' (130–1, italics in the original). The position of Critical Theory (as developed here by the group ISF) is in this regard similar to that of 'political realism': against all idealist theorizing of the state, 'the question *whether Israel has a right to exist* has been decided by the fact of its foundation, and is therewith irrelevant' as 'no-one has a right to statehood who cannot mobilise the violence needed to found one' (131). Any state's 'right to exist' derives from the fact that it exists; state sovereignty is not constituted other than by violence. This puts state sovereignty into a different category from the rights of the individual as theorized by classical idealism or in 'natural right' philosophy: rights reside in individuals only, not in states or any other collectivities. The rights of individuals – fiercely attacked by Comtean positivism as 'metaphysical' – were defended by Horkheimer and Adorno as part of the attempt to 'rescue' metaphysics from positivist attacks (not, though, 'group rights').

The Leninist take on the concept of the right of nations to self-determination historically

is rooted in the nineteenth-century idea, then shared by liberals and democrats, that nation-building overcomes late-feudal atomization and creates with a unified national society the conditions for emancipatory movements. Arguably there is an element of orientalism in the Leninist assertion that the 'peoples of the East' need nation-building as the first stage of emancipation, whereas those in 'the West' have passed this 'stage' and are ready for class struggle unencumbered by nationality and ethnicity. (The realpolitics of 'socialism in one country' quickly replaced even this geographically limited anti-nationalist stance.)

Stalin's insistence in his 1913 article on the national question that territoriality is a required part of the definition of a nation anticipates his antisemitic campaign against 'rootless cosmopolitans' (i.e. Jews) as non-national: they lack a territory. This perspective could, and later briefly did, lead to support for Zionism as the attempt of Jews to catch up with the majority of the world's nations who have already formed modern states, but predominantly went the other way: Jews who *claim* to form a nation-state – rootless and non-national as they allegedly are – cannot but have a secret agenda.

CAPITALISM AND DOMINATION

Critical Theory, as Marxian theory in general, is anti-militarist, i.e. opposed to military aggression for whatever purpose. A form of specifically *motivated* anti-militarism is an important dimension of anti-imperialism, too. In the context of bourgeois anti-imperialism, whose classic paradigm is the American Anti-Imperialist League (1898–1920), the driving motivation is the republican notion of the self-determination of nations: the US annexation of the Philippines for example was (unsuccessfully) rejected as contradicting this principle that anti-imperialists argued was, or should be, fundamental to American policy. The Leninist version of anti-imperialism is based on a theory of the development of capitalism that, from the perspective of Critical Theory, is non-Marxist. Like bourgeois, republican anti-imperialism, also the rejection of imperialism in the context of Critical Theory and non-Leninist Marxism broadly conceived must make theoretical judgements as to why government and military of a leading capitalist country would come to use military force to further imperialist purposes in contradiction to its own professed political principles (such as the right to self-determination of nations). Bourgeois anti-imperialism does not seem to provide a general theory on this – explanations tend to be ad hoc – while in the case of Critical Theory, imperialism would simply count as a 'normal' aspect of the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production. The explicit rejection of the concept of 'anti-imperialism' by Critical Theory refers thus to the fact that since roughly 1920, the Leninist conception has become so hegemonic on 'the Left' broadly speaking that 'anti-imperialism' automatically carries the theoretical assumptions of Hilferding's notion of 'finance capital' and its political implications. Importantly, these elements of anti-imperialism typically remain implicit and fail to be discussed critically. This is why Critical Theory generally rejects references to 'anti-imperialism' while rejecting imperialism as one aspect among others of the capitalist mode of production whose relationship to modernity's promise of general human emancipation is theorized dialectically: it is neither to be ignored nor to be isolated and fetishized.

Central to the Leninist concept of imperialism is the notion that ambiguous capitalism that brings intensified exploitation together with the possibility of emancipation (as described by Marx and Engels) has turned circa 1900 into entirely negative capitalism: the latter is 'monopoly capitalism' characterized by finance capital, a corrupt workers' aristocracy and imperialism and needs to be

fought and destroyed by any means necessary. Entirely bad as opposed to ambiguous capitalism is complemented by the notion of bad, perverted nationalism (imperialism) versus good, benign nationalism (as in 'healthy patriotism' etc.). While this is explicit in Hobson, it remains implicit in Lenin. From a Critical Theory perspective, imperialism is objectionable not because it is 'foreign rule' but because it is *rule*. Beyond that, it needs to be asked *what kind of* rule it is and what its ruling actually *does*. In a similar vein, the nation state is objectionable most fundamentally not because it is national but because it is a state, i.e. as an element of the modern state system, the political form of capitalist society. In this perspective, the reasoning of those advocating or challenging either imperialist rule or rule by a nation state needs to be examined in terms of whether it is motivated by expanding or restricting 'good life' and general human emancipation which involves the replacement of anything like a state (a coercive power structure that is to an extent separate from and controlling of 'civil', i.e. the non-state areas of society) by the democratic and consensual administration of (social) 'things'.

Notes

1 Like the twentieth-century concept of 'imperialism', also that of 'colonialism' was not available to Marx. 'Marx did not have a generic term to describe the rule of a more advanced nation state over a more backward area', such as the twentieth-century concept of colonialism. He used the term 'colonialism' more narrowly to refer to 'the settlement of uninhabited areas or areas from which the indigenous inhabitants have been driven out (such as Australia and America)' (Brewer, 1980: 27–8).

2 On Marx and imperialism, see Stoetzler (2016). Most recent detailed accounts of the complexities of Marx's position can be found in Anderson (2010) and Pradella (2013); also Sutton (2013). For critical comments on Anderson, see Stoetzler (2013). Critical contributions on the Leninist legacy of anti-imperialism include Goldner (2010 and 2016) and Bassi (2010). Useful older accounts include Owen and Sutcliffe (1972), Kiernan (1974) and Mommsen (1981).

3 There is also a biographical reason why Marx would not have become a nationalist anti-imperialist in the twentieth-century sense: Marx's father, a lawyer, was a moderate liberal who had converted from Judaism to Protestantism only a short time before Karl Marx was born. Perhaps not insignificantly, Marx's home town Trier (a town in the Western German Rhineland founded by the Romans and one of the oldest cities in Germany) had been conquered by Napoleon in 1794, and French imperial government acted to reinforce the liberal traditions of the town that fell to Prussia in 1815. The Prussian monarchy, which contemporary German nationalists saw as an anti-imperialist liberator *avant la lettre*, reversed Jewish emancipation, which forced Marx's father to convert lest he lose his career and livelihood (Blumenberg, 1962; Nimtz, 2000; Rühle, 1928).

4 On Lenin's advocacy of state-capitalism whose 'transition to full socialism would be easy and certain', see Marcuse (1971: 42) and endnote 6 of the present chapter. The notion that the Bolshevik revolution developed the capitalist mode of production structurally, not merely out of the necessities of warfare, was formulated in the 1930s by a variety of individuals in the context of the left-Marxist ('council-communist') opposition to Bolshevism (see Mattick, 1978). An overview of (left-communist as well as Trotskyist and Maoist) discussions of the Soviet Union as 'state-capitalist' is contained in van der Linden (2007).

5 The Soviet Union concluded trade and 'friendship' agreements in 1921 with the newly emerging 'authoritarian development regimes in Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan, whereby those regimes' repression, imprisonment or massacre of their respective communist or left oppositions were brushed over for Soviet national interests' (Goldner, 2010: 633).

6 Lenin had written in 1917 that 'state-monopolistic capitalism is the complete material preparation for socialism' (quoted in Marcuse, 1971: 42). In the affirmation of 'state capitalism' Lenin basically imported, through the back door, the notion developed by 'reformist' Social Democrats that increasingly 'organized' and state-directed capitalism lends itself to socialist transformation.

7 Marcuse (1969) adds similar comments on pages 85, 86 and 88, including also friendly remarks on the Chinese 'cultural revolution'. Further down he formulates again his principal position that is difficult to reconcile with sympathies for the Viet Cong: '[T]he economic, political, and cultural features of a classless society must have become the basic needs of those who fight for

it. This ingression of the future into the present, this depth dimension of the rebellion accounts, in the last analysis, for the incompatibility with the traditional forms of the political struggle. The new radicalism militates against the centralized bureaucratic communist as well as against the semi-democratic liberal organization' (Marcuse, 1969: 88–9).

8 A key source on Vietnamese history from a perspective in step with Critical Theory is Ngo Van (2010).

9 The 1952 article by Alfred Sauvy that inaugurated the term 'Third World' explicitly referred to the role of the Third Estate in the French Revolution, and resonated with the important role played by representatives of the Third World within the United Nations, for example, already at the time (initially very much in contradistinction to the Soviet Union). It denoted in this sense a specific claim to be providing a progressive perspective beyond Western liberalism and Soviet Stalinism, rather than simply 'underdevelopment' (Prashad, 2007). Also this was part of the background that gave internationalism and then 'anti-imperialism' such a central role in the thinking of the metropolitan left.

10 Even Lenin's discourse, though, already contained (unintended) antisemitic undertones that in a changed context could turn into audible, manifest meaning: Lenin wrote that the amalgamation of financial and industrial capital to 'finance capital' created 'a few hundred kings of finance' and a conflict between 'an immense number of debtor states' and 'a few usurer states' (quoted in Gerber, 2010: 265).

11 Commenting on the Leninist slogan 'Workers and oppressed peoples and nations of the world, unite!', inaugurated at the Comintern's 'Congress of the Peoples of the East' in Baku in 1920, Fringeli states that 'workers are members of a class and at the same time individual human beings. In *oppressed peoples and nations*, the individuals are absent' (Fringeli, 2016: 41).

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