

II. Settler Colonialism and the Uneven Development of Capitalism

In the classical and recent Marxist theoretical writings on the development of capitalism and modern colonial policy there is very little explicit reference to settler colonialism. These writings focus mainly on two other capitalist forms of foreign domination, specifically, colonialism and neo-colonialism.¹

In Lenin's Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism, one finds only indirect hints to the settler colonial phenomenon as peculiar to a transitional phase in the development of capitalism.² It is probably owing to its transitionality that this phenomenon is given very little attention in the Marxist theoretical literature. These indirect hints, however, provide sufficient guidance for constructing a theory of settler colonialism.

As in the cases of modern colonial and neo-colonial policy, the historical material origins of settler colonialism lie in contradictions generated by the internal laws of capitalist accumulation. Put differently, is to say that the denominator of all three forms of modern colonialism mentioned above is the essentially uneven development of capitalism; this is by no means to say that colonialism is a phenomenon peculiar to the capitalist mode of production. As Lenin puts it in 1919:

"Colonial policy and imperialism existed before this latest stage of capitalism and even before capitalism. Rome, founded on slavery, pursued a colonial policy and achieved imperialism... Even the colonial policy of capitalism in previous stages is essentially different from the colonial policy of finance capital." 3

This is to emphasize the specificity, not only of capitalist colonialism, but also of the colonial form peculiar to each stage in the development of capitalism. Both the colonial phenomenon as well as the stages