

THE ADVENT OF CAPITALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

1. INTRODUCTION

South African society belongs to the socio-economic formation known as capitalism. In order to understand the nature of capitalism in South Africa, one should examine how the global capitalist system influenced the transformation of the South African society from primitive communalism to capitalism, the role of the various social forces in this process, and to determine whether each socio-economic formation followed one another in a regular and fixed sequence in the concrete conditions of South Africa.

2. THE ADVENT OF CAPITALISM GLOBALLY

Rudimentary elements of capitalism emerged sporadically as early as the fourteenth (14th) century and fifteenth (15th) century in Italy. However, the capitalist era dates from the sixteenth (16th) century. The early days of its development are known as the epoch of primitive accumulation.

This epoch is known as primitive accumulation because it marks the moment when the economic structure of capital grew from the feudal economic structure, when the producer becomes divorced from the means of production and private property exists as the antithesis of social and collective property. In concrete terms it means that the great masses of men are suddenly and forcibly torn from their means of subsistence and held as free and unattached proletarians in the labour market. The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant from the soil is the basis of the whole process. There is further socialisation of labour and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited.

During the process of primitive accumulation all political revolutions act as levers for the capitalist class in the course of formation.

As soon as the process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, the further expropriation of private proprietors takes a new form.

3. SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Early Societies

The indigenous population of South Africa settled in the land they occupied many centuries before ^{THE ARRIVAL OF WHITE SETTLEMENT}. Each of the regions of South Africa was inhabited. In the north, present day Transvaal and the Orange Free State, were the Tswanas, Sothos and Pedis; including some tribes of the Tsonga and Venda groups. In the east and the south was the Nguni group composed mainly of Zulus and Xhosas. The Khoi Khoi and Khoi San people were found along the south western part of the country.

3.2 Primitive Communalism

Before the arrival of the Dutch, the indigenous South African people were living in the primitive communalism stage of historical development. This is the first system in the social organisation's history. However, it is said that the forms of primitive communalism existing in Africa before European conquest were in many ways far superior to those of the

representatives of capitalism who invaded Africa.

In the communalism's stage of development the means of production were commonly owned and distribution was on an equal basis. This society employed primitive tools. Hunting with bows and arrows, made out of iron was the main economy of the Khoi San. The Khoi Khoi were pastoralists. The people of the Bantu group had developed far more complex economic and political institutions, involving themselves in agriculture and stock breeding.

There is testimony that as far back as the twelfth (12th) century ancient trading contacts with eastern countries had existed. These economic relations established with China, India and the Arab lands contributed in the natural development of the indigineous African societies.

The level of development had reached a stage that brought about some form of division of labour. Specialised workers, such as miners and smiths had emerged and these were paid in kind.

It is worth noting however, that the productive forces, in spite of its relative development had not advanced to a level in which they could sustain any invasion from capitalist countries.

3.3. Dutch Settlers In South Africa

WHO

People migrate from one country of an advanced socio-economic formation introduce this advancement to countries less developed.

The same process began in South Africa as of 1652, when the Dutch settlers arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. The objective of the Dutch East India Company to send this entourage of ninety, led by Jan Van Riebeeck, to the Cape was to establish a refreshment station for its ships trafficking in Asia. The Cape was not seen as a potentially profitable colony. Besides the settlers were afraid to enter into any conflict with the Khoi Khoi and therefore, preferred to remain within their jurisdiction.

Previously in 1609-10 the Dutch had made an attempt to capture Mozambique but failed. On finding the Cape they restrained themselves from any adventure and embarked on the sole object of finding a stopping place for their ships where they could rest and replenish their stocks.

In defiance of the indigineous peoples whose land was being invaded, the settlers extended beyond their limits towards the eastern direction. This process of what can be termed "the imposition of capitalist culture" and morals began from the Cape Peninsula to Stellenbosch (1682) to Worcester and the Great Blak River (1743), the Gamtoos (1770), the Fish River (1780); North East from Bruintjies Hoogte (1774) and Colesberg (1778).

Another penetration of the interior of a qualitatively superior nature took place between the years 1836-1854. It involved Boers called Voortrekkers, who had as their principal objectives the conquer, domination and occupation of African lands. In spite of the fierce resistance of the African people, the Boer farmers were decided on abolishing all previously existing socio-economic formations and replace them with capitalist relations of production.

When slavery which had existed between 1711 and 1833 was abolished, it was not product of capitalist humanitarianism but of the need to have an unlimited supply of workers free to sell their labour power.

3.4. The British And The Advent of Capitalism In South Africa

In the eighteenth (18th) century Britain had developed to produce more than its population could consume. The level of the development of science and technology enabled Britain and the other European countries to reach non-industrialised countries in Asia, Africa and the Americas. These undeveloped continents constituted profitable markets for the European countries. Holland and its vast empire the Dutch East India Company controlled by the wealthiest merchant bourgeoisie were going down the drain.

In 1795, the Dutch East India Company lost the Cape to the British who kept it until 1803. The Batavian rule in the Cape was ended by the second attack in 1806 and the Cape was confirmed in British hands in 1815. Slave ownership was completely abolished by 1834. A bi-annual trade fair was introduced at Grahamstown in 1824. By 1832 there were white traders inside the Xhosa territory as far deep as Umtata. Included in this campaign were missionaries who started transforming the Xhosa into Christians. Village schools and a seminar for training teachers at Lovedale were built. By 1830, Natal also had white missionaries working among the Zulu people. This form of penetration in ideology is called the traditional form with which the minds of people are changed at educational institutions.

The strategic objective of Britain to create a new dominion which could extend from Cape to Limpopo was partially completed when the Tranvaal was annexed in 1877. The British reign lasted for only two years. For in 1881 through the armed resistance of the Boers the British were forced into the Pretoria convention. The unification of South Africa could only take place in 1910 for the relatively smooth development of capitalism in the stage of imperialism.

CONCLUSION

1. South African capitalism was imposed by the Dutch settlers and British invasions.
2. Slavery in the Cape is a parasitic characteristic of the Dutch settlers, In present day South Africa, the descendants of these settlers, the racists, still expropriate profits from the indigeneous people of the country.

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