

The External Expansion Factor: the Theoretical Position that South Africa is Advanced Capitalist Country

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Our work provides a critical analysis of the theoretical position that South Africa is advanced capitalist or imperialist country. This long-standing position, defended and maintained particularly during the struggle against settler colonialism in South Africa by, among other writers, Giovanni Arrighi, Ruth First, Jonathan Steele and Christabel Gurney, Duncan Innes, Joe Slovo, Samir Amin, V.M. Nyathi, Mai Palmberg, Patrick J. McGowan, Hillel Ticktin, Nzongola Ntalaja and the South African Communist Party, is dominated by the external expansion factor of South Africa. Almost all writers who maintain this incorrect position cite South Africa's external expansion factor as the evidence of this position. This position is informed by, and based on, the external expansion of South Africa. Almost all writers who this position maintain that South Africa is imperialist country because it is characterised by the external expansion or because it has penetrated the internal markets of imperialist countries and dependent capitalist countries. South Africa's investment in the centre and the periphery of capitalism is one of the aspects of this external expansion process. The Anglo American Group, which plays a leading role within this process, is regarded as a force which depends neither on British nor South African capitalism but is rather an independent super-state, an economic empire centred in Southern and Central Africa. The evidence of this position is not provided. It is maintained that it is probably right to assume that this position on the Anglo American Group is correct.

Some of the other writers who maintain the position that South Africa is imperialist country theoretically eliminate imperialist powers' economic domination of Southern Africa (including South Africa) and replace it with the so-called South Africa's economic domination of Southern Africa. Their theoretical elimination of imperialist powers' economic domination of Southern Africa and their replacement of this process with the so-called South Africa's economic domination of Southern Africa is one of the key factors characterising their position.

We maintain in our work that South Africa is characterised by the external expansion or the penetration of the internal markets of the links of the imperialist chain. The reality of South Africa's external expansion does not mean that South Africa is an imperialist country. This reality is not limited to South Africa and imperialist countries; it applies also to other dependent capitalist countries. If South Africa is imperialist country because it is characterised by the external expansion, it means that other dependent capitalist countries, which are also characterised by external expansion, are imperialist countries.