

CAPITALISM

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Part 1. The world before Capitalism

1. The people of South Africa live under an economic system known as Capitalism. America, England, France, Italy, Germany, India, Kenya, Nigeria etc. are all living under the Capitalist system.
2. The rest of the world, including Russia, China, the Peoples Democracies of Eastern Europe, live under an economic system known as Socialism, or are rapidly building Socialism under the leadership of the workers.
3. There is no thire system in the world today.
4. Capitalism is dying fast. The world has known this system since about the year 1600 A.D., that is for 350 years. Before the world knew different economic systems which grew and died, much like a human being grows and dies. The earlier economic systems were tribalism, then slavery, feudalism, and when feudalism died, Capitalism ruled the world. Now Capitalism id dying,
5. Each of these earlier systems only lasted as long as they were efficient and suited the group which ruled the country. When they were no longer efficient they were overthrown and a new economic system under a different ruling class was born.
6. It is important to realise that no economic system lasts forever. This is shown by a study of the history of the world.
7. All these systems were made by men to rule men. Similarly, Capitalism is a system used by men who wish to rule and oppress the people. All the unhappiness in the world today, the starvation, the bad housing, the pass laws, the police terror, the lack of education - all these things result from the Capitalist system. It is all the work of men, not of any mysterious gods or spirits. Further, it can be changed by men for the good of all mankind.

Part 2. What is Capitraism?

1. How did Capitalist start? Capitalism developed in England about 350 years ago. Big trading companies sent their ships and soldiers accross the seas to India, Africa and South America. There they conquered the "natives" by means of their better armies and guns. They robbed the people of their gold, silver and precious metals, silks and raw materials. The English missionaries were then sent to tell the "natives" about Christ and the Bible - to keep their minds enslaved.

In England itself, the big landowners began to enclose the communal lands in the village. These communal lands had been used by the people for hundreds of years but now they lost that right. Many others were forced to sell their own grazing lands to the landowners. No longer being able to farm, they had to go and seek work in the towns, much as do our own people from the Reserves. At the same time machines were invented for use in the factories. With these machines, with the workers who had come to the towns from the countryside, with the money stolen from other countries by their soldiers, these rich men were able to build big factories and make goods for sale. Their factories poured out shirts, shoes and many other goods which were sold to those who could pay for them. Capitalism had been born.

2. Bosses and workers. All over England workers were forced to work for bosses in factories to earn money to live. These workers owned nothing but their labour power. But the bosses owned everything

The bosses owned everything. The bosses owned the factories, the machines, the raw materials from which the goods were made, the goods the workers produced, AND the profit they made from the sale of the goods. All the bosses were owners and they had the same economic interest. Their only aim was to make as much profit as possible. These bosses form a class of people. We call them the boss class, or the employing class, or the capitalist class. They own all the Capital, all the wealth. The workers we call the working class. They too have one economic interest. They all want higher wages from the boss because the boss pays them badly, exploits their labour power, oppresses them. These two classes, bosses and workers, are always against one another. The Capitalist system, the system of high profits for the boss, of low wages for the workers means that there must always be a struggle between the two classes.

3. Profits and wages. The boss normally only pays his workers enough to keep them alive, and to reproduce. A boss never pays higher wages than he has to. He might pay a few of his workers more in order to keep them split from their fellow workers. Thus the bosses in South Africa pay the white workers more in order to win their support against the African workers. Only a strongly organised trade union of workers will be able to win higher wages from the boss and then only by strikes and threats to strike. The amount of wages a boss pays has nothing to do with how much profit he makes. Last year Anglo American mines in Johannesburg made £12½ million profit. But they pay their African workers 3/- a day on the gold mines. The white workers, who earn about £50 a month are paid more to keep them from uniting with their fellow African workers. One copper mine in Rhodesia made £11 million profit last year and paid its African workers 4/- a day. In Nigeria many workers earn only £5 a month, in Japan £2 a month, and in India. The bosses make colossal profits but pay starvation wages. The workers never get the benefit of their labour under capitalism.

4. Where does profit come from? The bosses say that the profit comes from them because they organise the factories and give work to the workers. But let us look at it this way. Say a worker produces £10 worth of shirts a day. A boss pays him £1 a day. The remaining £9 goes to the boss as profit and to cover the cost of materials and machinery. Thus if he is working a ten hour day, the worker gets paid for only one hour. For the other nine hours he works unpaid and all the profit resulting from his labour goes to the boss. This is where the boss gets his big profits. To make his profits even bigger, the boss makes the workers work longer hours and thus make more goods. Or he tries to make him work faster for the same wages to produce more goods, and thus get more profit when he sells these goods.

5. Can this system go on working for ever? No, it cannot. After a few years the workers have produced so much goods that the boss cannot find people to buy them. The workers can't buy the goods they make because they are too badly paid. So because he is producing "too much" the boss closes his factory and dismisses his workers who starve without work. More and more factories close because people can't buy the goods. The whole system breaks down and stops working. Millions are without work and food. Farmers burn their corn because they can't get the prices they want. They plough their fruit into the ground. All this is done while the people are starving, like in the Transkei today. At times like this it becomes clearer to the people that Capitalism cannot work, cannot offer them work and security. They realise that if they can get rid of the boss and the profit system, that there can be enough of everything for every person in the world.

Part 3. Capitalism in South Africa

1. How did capitalism come to South Africa? The English capitalists had made millions of pounds profit through the work of their workers. But a Capitalist makes profit in two ways. First by exploiting workers who make goods for sale. This brings him profits. Secondly by lending these profits to other countries which pay him back more than he lent them. With this money more mines and factories are opened up and part of their profit comes back to him. Thus the discovery of diamonds and gold in South Africa one hundred years ago brought English money into our country to build mines railways and harbours. Further, the South African Government borrowed money from English capitalists to build roads, dams etc. and to build up the country. Thus capital and capitalism came to South Africa.

2. Up til 1910 the white Governments which rules South Africa fought against the non-white people of this country. They defeated them in battle because their guns were better than the assegais of the African tribes. Then they stole their lands and cattle and undermined their resistance through the missionaries who taught the African people to pray rather than to organise and oppose the white men. After 1870 the white bosses through their white government began to develop their policy of "cheap labour". Africans living in the reserves had to pay hut-taxes, poll-taxes, and other taxes in cash. To earn this money they went to work in the towns, on the mines and on the farms of the white bosses. Many too were forced to leave the reserves which were overcrowded and could not support the people living there. The Government made no attempt to build dams for the people but increased their poverty by stealing their cattle (as at Witziesshoek) and preventing Africans from buying land on which to farm and grow food. The Land Acts of 1913 and 1937 force nine-tenths of our people to live on one-tenth of the land of this country. We see the same thing happening in Kenya today where the white farmers have stolen the land of the kikuyu and other tribes.

Part 4. The people will win

1. In 1917; the workers and peasants of Russia overthrew the reactionary Government of their country and shook the world system of Capitalism to its roots. For the first time in the long and troubled history of the world, the ordinary people of a country through their own organisation and courage had changed their Capitalist Government into a workers and peasants state. Despite the efforts of Britain and toerh countries to overthrow them by armed attacks from 14 foreign armies, the people of Russia held on to their victory and today, 40 years later, they have become the most powerful nation in the world.

2. Not only have they become the most powerful people in the world, but they are leading the world in the struggle for Peace and Liberation, for better living conditions, for life itself. Since the Second World war which America, Germany and England hoped would destroy the Soviet Union, the people of Russia have been joined by those of China and the Peoples Democracies of Eastern Europe. In addition the people of India, Indonesia and Burma, Egypt and many other countries are uniting against the Capitalist powers, England, America, France and Germany who wish to start a third world war, a Hydrogen and Atom Bomb war.

3. Every day the Capitalist powers are getting weaker. The fight for peace and National Liberation is uniting millions of ordinary people of different beliefs against the horrors of Capitalism. With these millions of allies we are going forward to win freedom, as expressed in the Freedom Charter, to get rid of those who want racialism, war and capitalist oppression. With our allies in South Africa and throughout the world we are moving towards a better life for all. The bosses and the Nats are few. WE ARE MANY. WE, THE PEOPLE, WILL WIN.

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