

In this article, we will try to broadly explain the most important features of socialism. We will in all future articles, have to continue to try and explain how socialism works in its different aspects.

our struggle

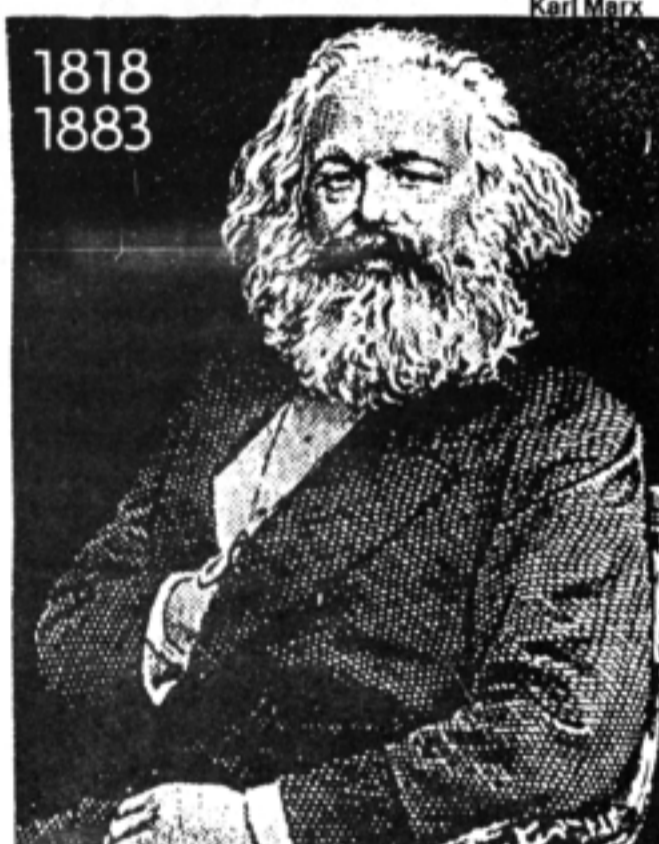
We all know from bitter experience that the system under which we live causes enormous hardships, poverty, unemployment, famine, disease, ignorance, homelessness, etc. In our country, racism together with capitalism ensures the most effective and rapid way of making enormous profits through the super-exploitation of black workers. Out of the intense struggles that have arisen from this unjust and unequal system, oppressed people are considering what system should replace the present racist-capitalist one.

Socialism is being put forward as an alternative. In trade unions, in our community organisations, in our programmes and publications, people are all talking about socialism. So what is socialism and how will it solve the problems faced by the majority of people in this country?



review

In previous issues of Vukani, we have seen how capitalism is the system that ensures enormous wealth, power and privilege for a few, while the working class, the vast majority, are forced to live lives of misery, poverty and insecurity. In other words, the main conflict in our society arises from the division of human society into **classes** whose interests clash in production, i.e., where one class lives off the labour of another.



All of us need clothes to wear, food to eat, housing to survive and hundreds of other things which we consume and use in our daily lives. These are created through the labour of workers. The land, factories, mines, machinery, tools etc., are also needed to ensure the production of commodities. We refer to all of this as the *means of production*.

Under capitalism, the capitalist class rules economically, and thus politically. It controls the state, an instrument of power that maintains this unequal system.

To put an end to this inequality, *the working class must become the leading class in society, and must create the conditions for the ending of class divisions, exploitation and oppression.*

BOSSSES AND WORKERS HAVE OPPOSING INTERESTS!

ONLY THE EXPLOITED CAN FIGHT THEIR OWN OPPRESSION



socialism

Modern day understanding of socialism is based on the writings of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Mao Tse Tung, Leon Trotsky, and other socialist revolutionaries. It is also based on an analysis of the experiences of existing countries claiming to be socialist. **By socialism we mean a system whereby society is controlled by workers in the interest of workers for the equal benefit of all in society.**

workers' state

Once power is seized by the working class, the previous state and its machinery is smashed, and is replaced by a workers' state.

The working class state has to ensure the defence of the revolution against the old ruling class, as well as the ruling classes of other countries who will gather together armed forces to carry on open warfare against the socialist revolution. This is what imperialist countries and South Africa (via Renamo) are busy with against the Mozambican revolution, and the United States (via the Contras) against the Nicaraguan revolution.

classless society

When the working class takes power, it does not do so to exploit another class or group of people; instead it does so to bring about a classless society. Socialism is the process through which a classless society can be established.

WHAT IS SOCIALISM

PART 1

ending poverty

In comparison to previous societies, enormous development and expansion of the productive forces in capitalist society has taken place. However, it is limited and distorted by the capitalist goal of profits. So while a small group of people live lives of luxury, we still find millions of people threatened by starvation, living in appalling conditions and unable to obtain the most basic necessities of life.



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society is to expand the levels of production as rapidly as possible, and create an abundance of goods for all.

democracy

Under socialism, **workers' participation** is required at **every** level. The army will be made up of armed workers, the judges will be elected by the people, the production in the factories will be determined in every aspect by the workers themselves. In this way, democracy is part and parcel of the socialist system and is extended far beyond capitalism.

planned control

By placing the means of production, their distribution and the process under which goods are exchanged under workers' planned control, an enormous expansion of production can occur. For instance, the dumping of food to ensure high prices under the capitalist system would not occur under socialism.

One of the aims of socialism is to raise the standard of living of all people, thereby putting an end to poverty and misery.

expansion

Thus the first objective of socialist

° In our next issue, we will examine those countries which claim to be socialist.

