

No. 22 December 1986

Price 75c

# inqaba YA BASEBENZI

Journal of the Marxist Workers' Tendency  
of the African National Congress



**Workers and youth, defend the Mozambican Revolution!**

**Forward to the Southern African Revolution!**

***Special Issue: Zimbabwe perspectives***

# Unite to defend Mozambican mineworkers and the Mozambican revolution!



28 October 1986

The death of Samora Machel in a plane crash on South African soil on October 19 has occurred amidst heightened tensions between the apartheid regime and Mozambique.

This has aroused the fury of the youth and workers of Southern Africa who are demanding 'blood for blood'. From Harare to Gaborone and Maseru, from the Port Elizabeth townships to Soweto, black people have demonstrated their revulsion against the Pretoria regime by mass demonstrations and meetings, the banging of dustbin lids, and attacks on SA government offices.

Samora's death and the threats against Mozambique raise the

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whole question of decisive measures and an effective defence against SA aggression.

Military threats by the SA generals, and advances by the Pretoria-backed rebels of the MNR, have been accompanied by the SA government's blunt decision to end the jobs of the 70 000 Mozambican workers employed mainly on the mines. Through their families and dependents, this will affect up to half the population of Mozambique's southern provinces.

With utter hypocrisy, P.W. and Pik Botha expressed "shock" at the death of this "great African leader". Their "sympathy" did not extend to lifting the threat against Mozambican workers—who provide one third of the foreign exchange earnings of poverty-stricken Mozambique.

The SA regime claims it is responding to ANC guerilla activity through Mozambique. In reality it is determined to dominate the Southern African region politically and economically. It is also taking cowardly revenge, directed against the weak, for the token economic sanctions imposed by the Western powers.

In this light, the mass of black people throughout Southern Africa hold the apartheid regime guilty of Machel's death also—until proved otherwise.

These events underline more sharply than ever before that there can be no peace and stability for working people in Southern Africa until the power of South African imperialism is destroyed—by a working-class revolution uprooting apartheid and capitalism together.

They show the futility of relying on 'agreements' with the SA regime such as the Nkomati Accord. South Africa will violate these agreements without compunction when that suits it.

The decision to halt recruitment itself violates the labour agreement between SA and the FRELIMO government after 1975, which stated that numbers recruited could not be reduced unilaterally by more than 2 000 a year.

## Crisis in Mozambique

The terrible crisis in Mozambique also shows that genuine socialism cannot be built without the spread of workers' revolution internationally.

The break with capitalism and landlordism in Mozambique after liberation in 1974/5 was hailed as a great step forward by working people throughout the region. So it was. Imperialism and the white minority regimes suffered a blow; the struggle of oppressed people everywhere received a boost.

At the same time, advances have been made in Mozambique in the fields of health and education, despite the legacy of backwardness and continued sabotage and subversion by South Africa.

However, the economy has suffered terrible setbacks. Mozambique cannot be fundamentally transformed while the revolution remains within the framework of one country.

Production has declined by 40% since 1982. Production of sugar, a main export, has fallen from 177 000 tons in 1981 to 23 000 in 1985. The black market value of the meticaïs (the Mozambican currency) is one-fortieth of the official rate.

It is estimated that nearly 4 million in a population of 14-15 million are at risk of starvation. Official estimates are that in 1986-7 local cereals production will be only 54 000 tons—when the need is at least 623 000 tons.

Tragically, the FRELIMO leadership have consciously confined the struggle for social transformation within the boundaries of Mozambique, failing to link it with the struggle of the South African working class. Mozambican migrant workers were deliberately instructed to isolate themselves from the battles

being fought against the regime and the bosses inside South Africa.

Like the Nkomati Accord, this was supposed to be a 'realistic' policy, designed not to antagonise Pretoria or the Chamber of Mines. Now we see the results.

The predicament of Mozambique today underlines the need for building militant united organisation among workers, youth, and the masses as a whole throughout Southern Africa on a joint programme to carry through the socialist revolution in the entire region.

These are the lessons which need to be brought out clearly by the leadership of COSATU and the ANC in fighting back against SA imperialism and its decision to repatriate Mozambican workers.

## Conference decisions

NUM conference resolved to come to the defence of any foreign mineworkers threatened with repatriation by the SA regime. Now is the time for that decision to be implemented.

Already from a number of mines workers have raised their voice for action on the issue. At Blyvooruitzicht workers instructed their union representatives to take it up nationally. In the Secunda region, for example, there has been a big groundswell of opposition to the repatriation.

Mineworkers readily understand that the repatriation of the Mozambicans is the thin end of the wedge. If it takes place without resistance by the whole organised labour movement in SA, it will open the way to further attacks by the government or the mine bosses—on workers from Lesotho, or Botswana, or from the so-called 'independent' Bantustans. It is not only for the sake of the Mozambicans, but for the defence of every one of us, that we must fight now.

The founding congress of COSATU resolved, on a motion of the NUM, to "call for a national strike should the apartheid regime carry out its threat to repatriate any migrant workers."

The argument that this is not 'repatriation' but only(!) 'non-renewal of contracts' will not impress the trade union rank and file. Workers ought to be entitled to job security for the whole of their working lives. Short-term contracts are the basis of apartheid's migrant labour system, which is rightly denounced by the whole of COSATU and by every consistent democrat.

The Chamber of Mines has relied for generations on cheap migrant labour for its profits and on dividing workers by 'tribe' and nationality. While it tries to deny responsibility, it is fully implicated in the regime's attack, which it excuses on grounds of possible "security considerations" (*Financial Mail*, 17/10/86).

The NUM—with full support throughout COSATU—should launch an urgent drive to unionise Mozambican workers in SA, and link this with a united campaign for the abolition of the short-term contract system and permanent jobs for all mineworkers. On this question the Chamber of Mines must be challenged to defy the government, so we can expose the bosses' hypocrisy.

The demand should be that the Mozambicans' contracts should be extended without them having to return home, where they will be more vulnerable and can easily be barred from re-entering SA. The government has been clever in its tactics, using the device of non-renewal of contracts to avoid having to physically deport large groups of workers. Our tactics must be to frustrate this as far as possible.

It would not be too difficult to identify large concentrations of Mozambican mineworkers, approach them to join the union, and prepare a campaign to defend them.

The desperate conditions in southern Mozambique have compelled the Mozambican mineworkers to take jobs in the deepest, hottest, and most dangerous mines. East Rand Proprietary Mines, for example, has a Mozambican worker complement of 43%; Western Deep Levels and Elandsrand also have high proportions of Mozambican workers.

While the defence of the Mozambican workers will be very difficult, and may not succeed, it is the responsibility of our trade union and political leaders to take up the struggle in such a way that it cuts across existing prejudices and raises the level of consciousness of the whole working class.

It can be explained very easily now to Mozambican workers that, contrary to what they had been promised, agreements reached by their government with the SA regime have not protected them but have left them defenceless. There is no way forward except in joining with other sections of the working class to strengthen the NUM, COSATU, and the political struggle in SA under the banner of the ANC for workers' democracy and socialism.

The issue can be used to drive this message home among **all** workers. If that is done, the SA government will lose more than it gains by having attacked the Mozambican workers.

Our struggle is to take control of the wealth created by the labour of the working class to use it to serve the needs of **all** who have produced that wealth—regardless of tribe, race, or national boundaries.

In response to this attack on Mozambican workers, the Rand Mines national shop stewards council last Sunday demanded a uniform hostel system in place of the segregation of the hostels on national and tribal lines.

Any animosities that have been aroused by the past failures of Mozambican workers to support strike action or join the union could be rapidly overcome if handled correctly by the leadership. Once inside the union, Mozambican workers could publicly explain to their fellow-workers that they had been at fault, unfortunately encouraged in their mistake by the FRELIMO government.

The FRELIMO leadership itself—faced with the failure of its past attempts to pacify the apartheid regime—should now publicly encourage Mozambican workers to join unions in South Africa and participate fully in the struggle against the regime and the bosses. COSATU and the ANC should call on FRELIMO to do this.

## Enmity of ruling class

Because capitalism and landlordism were overthrown in Mozambique, it has earned the special enmity of the South African ruling class. Even though not a socialist society or a state under democratic working-class rule, the very existence of a state-owned economy is a challenge to the capitalist order in SA.

The question on the minds of many workers and youth today is whether the SA regime is attempting a complete counter-revolution to restore capitalist rule in Mozambique.

Pretoria would certainly want this—provided it could be done without incurring more serious difficulties for SA. But there lies the rub.

Despite sponsoring the MNR bandits, despite the sabre-rattling of the generals, it would in fact be very dangerous for SA imperialism to bring about the overthrow of the FRELIMO government.

While, technically, SA could invade Mozambique very easily and take Maputo, it could not afford to occupy that country, or indeed any of its neighbours, for any length of time.

Despite its extravagantly threatening rhetoric, SA is an imperialist power with the most vulnerable rear in history—with its forces already stretched by the revolutionary struggle of the black working-class.

Also technically feasible would be for Pretoria to step up assistance to the MNR to the point of imperilling the survival of the FRELIMO government. But this too would be a very dangerous course to pursue to the end. Mugabe has indicated that Zimbabwe intends to militarily reinforce FRELIMO rather than permit its overthrow—this because of the enormous difficulties that would be created for Zimbabwe by another hostile regime on its borders, further threatening its access to ports.

Moreover an MNR regime would quickly become the object of determined hostility by the broad masses of Mozambique, which would provide the basis for a renewal of revolutionary guerilla war. The SA ruling class would be dragged into propping up a reactionary puppet regime indefinitely.

SA capitalism needs all the resources at its disposal merely to try to contain the revolutionary struggle of the working-class at home.

While aid from SA would ease the economic crisis, at least temporarily, for an MNR government, SA capitalism could not lift Mozambique out of poverty. Thus the instability of the country would continue.

## Continued destabilisation

For these reasons, SA's aim is more probably the continued destabilisation of the FRELIMO government. South African military and economic power is used to undermine any regime in the region that shows the slightest inclination, even in words, to challenge the SA yoke. In Mozambique there is the additional aim of proving that its declared 'socialism' cannot work.

In Mozambique, Pretoria's preference would be for a coalition government of FRELIMO with the MNR, without South Africa becoming too directly involved itself. It is however very unlikely that FRELIMO would conclude a coalition agreement unless it was already in a state of collapse—in which case that would be merely a disguised form of its overthrow.

It is probable that the situation of stalemate will continue.

But it could not be altogether ruled out, with the continued collapse of the economy, sabotage and banditry by the MNR, that over time the FRELIMO government could be weakened to the point of collapse. This would not lead to a stable regime of counter-revolution, however, but to the nightmare of further disintegration and economic catastrophe.

There is only one absolute guarantee against this: the victory of the South African revolution.

Youth and workers demonstrating in Harare and other towns have expressed the feelings of frustration of working people throughout Southern Africa at their present defencelessness against SA imperialism. There is a desire to be armed in self-defence.

The instinctive rallying to the defence of the Mozambican revolution is, in reality, an indictment of the bureaucratic rulers of the Soviet Union. If the Soviet bureaucracy had provided the necessary military and material resources, FRELIMO could long ago have crushed the MNR and called the bluff of South African imperialism.

Despite the economic difficulties affecting the Soviet Union, it is a super-power with ample resources at its disposal to rescue a weak country like Mozambique if that was considered in the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy. But the Kremlin has held back out of its overwhelming desire to reach accommodation with the Western imperialist powers, which would be

jeopardised by such an 'intrusion' into a 'Western sphere of influence.'

If Mugabe and the other leaders of the front-line states were really serious in resisting SA aggression, they would respond to the call of the youth by establishing militias of the workers, peasants, and youth—arming the masses in every factory, mine, village, and school.

Zimbabwe urgently needs to assist Mozambique, not only by securing the Beira rail-line, but by providing its surplus maize to the millions of starving Mozambicans.

What is raised also is the need for a Socialist Federation of Zimbabwe and Mozambique to demonstrate that counter-revolution cannot succeed. Full support for Mozambique can be provided from Zimbabwe only when the productive forces can be directed to the tasks of self-defence and mutual assistance. Support can only be half-hearted when the capitalists still determine the economic priorities in Zimbabwe through their command of the main means of production. The banks and monopolies must be nationalised and directed by the workers according to the priorities of a national and regional plan.

Carrying forward the Zimbabwean revolution in this way would be a huge blow to the apartheid rulers and an enormous encouragement to the SA working class.

Events have shown that the Nkomati Accord, like all attempts to compromise with SA imperialism, can lead only to disaster.

At the time of Nkomati, Samora Machel said it would lead to Africa emerging "as a region of progress where reason prevails over hate and prejudice." (*Herald*, 17/3/84). Mugabe said the Accord would "bring maximum peace to the region" and was needed because "we have not got the necessary strength to withstand SA's incursions." (*Herald*, 27/3/84).

Now Samora Machel is dead. FRELIMO and Mugabe should openly acknowledge that their perspective was wrong, and that defence against SA imperialism lies with the working masses.

The working people of Southern Africa must link up with the magnificent struggle of organised workers and youth in South Africa for the defeat of the apartheid regime and the bosses it defends.

This needs to be done regardless of the policy of the respective governments, and in the face of government hostility if necessary. Front-line state leaders have banned strikes and brought trade unions under state control while South African companies in these countries are generally free to repatriate profits and pay poverty wages.

'*Build direct links!*' is not an abstract slogan. Not only do working people throughout Southern Africa live and work side by side; not only do they share the same aspirations for peace,

democratic freedoms and decent standards of living. In many cases they are working for the same monopoly bosses who dominate the economy of the region.

The NUM, for example, has taken an excellent initiative to organise Namibian mineworkers. But it is not only mineworkers who can link up with mineworkers. Metalworkers can link with metalworkers; transport workers with transport workers; youth with youth. This must be taken up at every level, from the rank and file to the leadership. Initiative is needed from the working-class in every country.

Through building such links, working people throughout the region can become united around a common programme for ending capitalism and establishing workers' democracy.

## Armed insurrection

In the end, it will require a mass armed insurrection led by the South African working class to overthrow the bloodthirsty SA apartheid regime.

The method of armed struggle put forward by the ANC leadership—of sabotage and bombings by small groups isolated from the mass movement—does not weaken the SA state or advance the struggle to defeat it. It only provides pretexts for the regime to step up its aggression in the region.

In the interests of the SA working class and the whole of the working class in Southern Africa, the COSATU leadership must come out against these bombings, which are completely counter-productive. The task for the ANC is to assist and prepare self-defence by the mass movement as a step to a future insurrection.

In South Africa the ANC needs to be built under the leadership of the working-class around a programme for the democratic and socialist revolution in South Africa and throughout the region. This is the basis, too, on which the masses in the ANC can unite in common struggle with workers and peasants in the surrounding countries against the capitalists and all those who defend them.

Along these lines, through the destruction of the monster of apartheid and capitalism in the heartland, a Federation of Southern African Socialist States can arise.

Issued by the Editorial Board of  
*Inqaba ya Basebenzi*  
BM Box 1719  
London WC1N 3XX  
Britain

# ZIMBABWE PERSPECTIVES

## Preface

This document, produced by Zimbabwean socialists a year ago, has recently come into our hands. We publish it to give it wider circulation, particularly among South African workers and youth.

Discussion on the way forward for Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwean revolution—and the tasks which flow from this for the South African movement—is made more urgent by developments of the recent period.

The apartheid regime's escalated economic and military aggression in Southern Africa, though directed particularly against Mozambique, in reality has Zimbabwe as its key target. With the MNR's "declaration of war" against Zimbabwe, it is South Africa that is engaged in a proxy war with the Mugabe regime.

The reasons for this are outlined in the accompanying document, especially in the introduction to it. Essentially, they are because Zimbabwe, with a stronger industrial base than any other Southern African country, is South African imperialism's immediate rival in the region.

What this means is that the future of the Zimbabwean and the South African revolution are increasingly linked together.

South African workers have the responsibility to give active support to Zimbabwean resistance to South African aggression.

This means struggling together with Zimbabwean workers, peasants and youth to weaken South African imperialism and defend the gains of the victory over the Smith regime.

It requires also the fullest encouragement of the struggle of workers and youth in Zimbabwe to end capitalism and achieve genuine democratic rule by the people on the basis of workers' power.

As this document explains, despite the achievement of political independence and of some reforms under the ZANU(PF) regime, the real power in Zimbabwe remains in the hands of the capitalist class which owns the big banks, factories, mines, and farms, and who dictate the policies of the government. The Zimbabwean state remains a capitalist state.

While vigorously defending Zimbabwe and its present government against threats or attacks by South Africa, youth and workers in South Africa ought also to make clear their criticism of a government in Zimbabwe which safeguards multinationals like Anglo-American, and which imprisons workers for striking.

The organised workers of South Africa have the

responsibility of giving assistance to the Zimbabwean workers struggling for independent trade unions under workers' control. Direct links should be built, particularly at the factory level, and Zimbabwean workers invited to visit South Africa and participate in union conferences, etc.

South African workers' leaders should not sit in hotels during visits to trade union and other conferences in Zimbabwe, but establish contact with the workers' committees and make clear they condemn anti-worker laws and the detention of trade unionists.

Dealings with the Zimbabwean workers' movement should not be confined—as is largely the case at present—to 'diplomatic' relations with the state-controlled ZCTU leadership. Most of these leaders have a very bad record of taking the bosses' side or failing to struggle for workers' interests.

Why should the enemies of the Southern African workers such as Lonrho and Anglo-American be protected in Zimbabwe? We need united action against these employers by the working class of the whole region.

When SA trade union leaders meet with the heads of Zimbabwean unions, the occasion should be used to appeal openly to the workers directly to join in a united struggle.

The Southern African revolution can only succeed finally with the overthrow of apartheid and capitalism in South Africa itself. But the further development of the Zimbabwean revolution is a vital component of this.

Not only in Zimbabwe, but throughout Southern Africa, a huge gulf is opening up between what capitalism can offer and what the masses demand—as revealed in the angry mass protests on the Zambian copperbelt against IMF-imposed food price rises of up to 100% which were violently repressed at the cost of at least ten lives. Governments carrying out these capitalist policies, whatever their pious "anti-apartheid" proclamations, are in no position to mobilise an effective fight against South African aggression.

The way forward in the struggle in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and throughout the region—depends on the socialist opposition growing among the working class in the trade unions and mass parties, around a programme to abolish capitalism.

South African workers must give these class brothers and sisters uncompromising support.

## INTRODUCTION

**DEFENDER A PATRIA,  
VENCER O SUBDESEN-  
VOLVIMENTO, CONS-  
TRUIR O SOCIALISMO**



*Goods traffic in the Beira corridor: Mugabe is putting the Zimbabwean army into Mozambique to protect the essential rail and road links to the port of Beira.*

Since the Lancaster House agreement in late 1979, the people of Zimbabwe have experienced many important changes. Most important has been the achievement of black majority rule, and the end of the war which cost the lives of 30 000 people.

In the period following, many peasants were able to build permanent houses for the first time in many years without fear that they would be pulled down again.

Families were reunited. Ex-combatants struggled to catch up with lost opportunities, particularly in education.

Under Mugabe's ZANU(PF) government, many social reforms were introduced, in the fields of education, health, etc.

Most of all, independence brought a feeling that the African people would at last have their people in government.

Yet the first elections since independence, held in July 1985, while producing an even bigger majority for ZANU(PF), at the same time revealed numerous signs of the growing disappointment among the masses that what they had expected from majority rule had not yet been achieved. The sore of tribal-national division between Shona and Ndebele was the most stark reflection that the Zimbabwean revolution had become stalled. What is the way forward?

The draft of this document was written at the time of those elections, to address that central question. Revisions were subsequently made to the draft, circulated in early 1986, to clarify its arguments, rather than to update it. In fact, judged against the broad sweep of subsequent events, its projection of likely developments in Zimbabwe, and the tasks for Zimbabwean workers, youth and peasants, has stood the test of time.

At the same time, in one respect at least, events have served to highlight more sharply a crucial determining factor in Zimbabwean perspectives. What has become clearer is that Zimbabwe forms the key target in the overall destabilisation strategy of the South African regime in Southern Africa.

## Zimbabwe and SA imperialism

Of South Africa's neighbours, Zimbabwe has the most developed industrial base. It is therefore more able to resist South African pressures, and to provide a potential counterweight around which other Southern African states can rally against the apartheid regime.

The elections early in March 1980 which brought Mugabe to power were followed within days by the formation of SADCC. These two events devastated the strategy of a 'Constellation of Southern African States' which Botha had put forward in 1979.

Despite Mugabe saying at that time that his government would not be directly involved in the struggle in South Africa, the ZANU(PF) victory and the relatively developed capitalist base placed Zimbabwe in the objective position of principal obstacle to South Africa's imperialist ambitions.

The utopian plans of SADCC for the economic disengagement of the Southern African states would appear absolutely ridiculous if it were not for Zimbabwe's participation. There is at least some limited scope for interlinking these economies around the axis of Zimbabwean industry, although that could not overcome the enormous preponderance of SA economic power.

Zimbabwean capitalism would like to take over domination of the Southern African market for itself. This (even to the limited extent it would proceed) is an objective basis of conflict between Zimbabwe and South Africa, despite the extensive penetration of Zimbabwe by South African capital.

Most of Zimbabwe's foreign trade passes through South Africa. But the Pretoria regime cannot use this leverage in quite the same way as it squeezes or threatens Lesotho, Mozambique or Botswana—because SA's own trade routes to Zambia and Malawi are heavily dependent on smooth passage through Zimbabwe.

There are features of an uneasy stand-off in relations between Zimbabwe and South Africa. There is a constant struggle—now more open, now more hidden—in which Harare strives to lessen South African pressure on it, especially in trying to develop or maintain alternative transport routes to those through the South African ports.

## Inevitable confrontation

The inevitable confrontation between Zimbabwe and South Africa has been partly concealed by secret negotiations between security officials, by Mugabe's outright support for the Nkomati Agreement, and by both sides realising how much damage they could inflict on each other.

For some time after Zimbabwe achieved independence it appeared that South Africa was forced to hold back from attempts to destabilise Zimbabwe. South African support for the 'dissidents' in Matabeleland was half-hearted; the Preferential Trade Agreement with Zimbabwe was renewed regularly; and the secret security talks continued.

At that time it was important to stress that the prospect of revolution at home would force the apartheid regime to lash out wildly and make "peaceful relations between the two countries impossible". (page 45)

It is now clear that a key element in the South African destabilisation strategy has been to undermine Zimbabwe's potential leadership role in the region by forcing its trade through South African ports.

Once this is clearly grasped it becomes easier to see why South Africa continued to give active support to MNR counter-revolutionary banditry in Mozambique despite all the concessions made to Botha by Samora Machel in the 1984 Nkomati Agreement.

Despite incidents such as the military attack on Harare in May this year and the provocation of holding up transport at the Beit Bridge border in August, the main direct thrust of South African aggression against Zimbabwe remains within Mozambique.

The Botha regime's policy of further weakening the FRELIMO government through maintaining or increasing the pressure of the MNR, has a central aim: to try and ensure that all Zimbabwean trade through Maputo will have to go via South Africa and that the Beira line to the sea will never be secure.

This policy has succeeded to the extent that Zimbabwean trade through Mozambique has been reduced from 54% in 1983 to 5% in 1986. This has occurred despite the higher freight charges through South Africa, and despite Zimbabwe's efforts in support of the FRELIMO government against the MNR.

South African destabilisation policies have succeeded in making SADCC states now more dependent on South Africa than in 1980.

Mugabe has responded to the process of slow strangulation by sending in troops to defend the Beira line and by launching a diplomatic offensive to raise funds for the 'Beira corridor'.

He and FRELIMO have succeeded in getting the British and US governments to support the rehabilitation of the

Beira and Nacala-Malawi railway lines. In the case of the Thatcher government this support includes important military assistance to FRELIMO.

On an issue such as the Beira line the policies of British and US imperialism and those of the Botha regime can diverge.

The Western imperialist powers are concerned to stabilise Southern Africa for capitalism; South African imperialism to destabilise and weaken Southern African resistance to its domination. London and Washington would like to see a capitalist counter-weight in Southern Africa to act as a pressure for reform on the Botha regime; Pretoria wants no obstacles to its freedom of manoeuvre and repression at home or in the region.

The Western powers are concerned lest SA pressure on the SADCC states induces them to turn towards the USSR and Eastern Europe. Last, and not least, the big capitalist powers are out to secure the Southern African markets for themselves.

The SADCC leaders base their whole strategy on trying to exploit these divergences in policy between the different imperialisms. But this cannot provide the way forward for the development of Southern Africa.

Already South Africa and Zimbabwe are engaged in a proxy war in Mozambique. Mugabe has announced after the death of Samora Machel that he will not tolerate the MNR coming to power; South Africa's puppet 'declared war' on Zimbabwe in response.

As a commentator recently wrote: "The MNR's declaration of war has effectively widened the range of options that Pretoria has at its disposal". (*Financial Times*, 30 October 1986.) This 'declaration of war' would be a joke were it not for South Africa's backing and the frequent MNR attacks on the Beira line.

## Facts of SA power

The South African generals have the power to cripple the Beira line at almost any time if they feel decisive action is needed. These are the facts of South African power, and Zimbabwean and Mozambican workers and peasants can put no trust in the tactical divisions between Western imperialism and the Botha regime.

An effective defence against South African aggression, which the workers and youth are striving towards, demands new methods.

Zimbabwean youth and workers in the townships, factories, schools, villages, mines, and farms, should be armed to repel any South African incursion. This would also free larger sections of the army to engage against the South African sponsored MNR and defend the Mozambican revolution.

But the ultimate guarantee of success against the counter-revolution is not by military means alone. What is needed is the elimination of the breeding grounds of support for, or passive submission to, the MNR—in the starvation and destitution of the Mozambican peasantry which has yet to experience the benefits of the state control of the economy.

Zimbabwe is in an excellent position to repay the debts of gratitude incurred during the liberation struggle. The

granaries are full to overflowing with maize which is desperately needed in Mozambique. Industry could be turned around to process raw materials from Mozambique. The textile industry in Zimbabwe, for example, has the capacity to clothe the whole population of Southern Africa apart from South Africa. Simple spare parts and consumer goods could be supplied on a cooperative basis.

But the productive forces in Zimbabwe can only be directed to the social and military tasks of defence against counter-revolution if the capitalist grip on the banks, monopolies, and farms is broken and industry reorganised by the workers and peasants on the basis of a national and regional plan.

A Socialist Federation of Zimbabwe and Mozambique, in short, is the only effective answer to counter-revolution.

## Political direction

These fundamental tasks of the Southern African revolution raise the question of which direction the Mugabe government is taking. As explained in the document, the most productive land is still in the hands of white capitalist farmers, and the ownership of the factories and mines by the monopolies remains unchanged.

Although there is a black government and civil service, this state fundamentally defends capitalist interests against the demands for change by the workers, peasants, and youth.

None of the tasks of the Zimbabwean revolution have been carried through to completion on the basis of capitalism. Although white minority rule has been ended, what democratic freedoms were achieved after independence are now under threat.

Yet the leadership does everything in its power to deny the reality that the capitalists dictate their policies. All the policies of the Mugabe government, including (for example) cuts in the state budget, are carried out in the name of socialism! But calling capitalist policies "socialist" does not solve the problems of the masses. Rather, it ends up discrediting socialism.

A large state bureaucracy is growing in Zimbabwe which extols the virtues of Stalinist regimes such as the USSR, China, Eastern Europe and North Korea. What in reality they admire in these regimes is the privileged life-style of the ruling bureaucracies, which have a basis of stability unmatched in the crisis-ridden capitalist countries especially of the 'Third World'. That 'stability' has been established on the advantages of state ownership and economic planning, and is maintained through so-called "Marxist-Leninist" party apparatuses—which rule by totalitarian methods.

In Zimbabwe, the 'socialist' bureaucracy models ZANU(PF) in this way in order to maintain its privilege, not on the basis of the state ownership and planning of the economy, but by defending capitalism!

This leads to bizarre contradictions. Thus, although both ZANU(PF) and ZAPU have declared their parties "Marxist-Leninist", one of the ZANU(PF) leaders, Nkala, recently admitted that "debate is in full blast within ZANU(PF) whether or not socialism is the best

ideological path for Zimbabwe". (*Prize Africa*, December 1985)

Because of the contradiction between 'socialist' policies and capitalist reality we have a "Marxist-Leninist" party which is not sure whether it is committed to socialism! This means that at least a section of the bureaucracy favours openly abandoning even the pretense of 'socialism', in order the better to get on with enriching itself.

These glaring contradictions produce doubts and scepticism in the minds of the masses and a growing political crisis within the leadership.

Developments on these lines are predicted in the document. However, it even understated the absurdity with which they are working themselves out.

## "Adopted capitalism"

In June this year, one of the top leaders of ZANU(PF), Maurice Nyagumbo, was forced to admit that Zimbabwe did not have a socialist government "as we now appear to have adopted capitalism, become property owners, and appear to be deceiving our people." (*Guardian*, 7 June 1986)

Admitting that he had bought a large farm after independence, but had recently sold it, he even proposed that there should be an emergency conference of ZANU(PF) at which the rank and file should decide whether to replace the leadership.

Nyagumbo did not, however, reveal what he had done with the proceeds from the sale of his farm. Moreover, such are the doubts about the leaders that the workers and youth were not at all surprised to hear nothing more about his astonishing proposal for a conference!

Rather than representing the emergence of a serious socialist left-wing, such outbursts have everything to do with bureaucratic rivalry. Hardly beneath the surface, as the document points out, are the struggles between the different Shona regional overlords in ZANU(PF).

Less than two months before the 'admission of guilt' by Mugabe's favourite, this was confirmed when the regional and tribal tensions within ZANU(PF) exploded in parliament.

Ushewokunze, then Minister of Transport and political commissar of ZANU(PF), responded to criticisms of his political and business dealings by launching a diatribe against his political enemies within the party.

In the past identified as a 'left' and calling for the formation of Marxist study circles, this leader now accused the Shona Karanga clan of plotting to "pounce on me and kill me", just as (he alleged) they had killed Chitepo, a leader of the guerilla struggle. The Karangas considered him "a spanner in the works in their jockeying for tribal political control" and had constantly plotted his downfall, he said.

The filth of nepotism, corruption, and mismanagement in the ZANU(PF) government revealed by both sides in the affair brought disgrace to the leadership as a whole. For a time the government was virtually paralysed by the sordid controversy.

Faced with this, Mugabe has sought to maintain his

reputation by levering himself above the daily cut and thrust of politics. He increasingly projects himself as a world statesman concerned with the leadership of the Third World and its diplomatic manoeuvres against apartheid South Africa.

## The ZANU(PF)-ZAPU deal

The crisis of leadership has raised continual questions over the fate of the protracted unity talks between the ZANU(PF) and ZAPU leaders.

If agreement depended on the desires and ideas of the leadership, no deal would have been possible. The attitude of the ZANU(PF) leadership was shown in the statement of Ushewokunze, "We believe that everything is right in ZANU(PF) and, therefore, we see no need for concessions, compromise, and accommodation." (*Sunday Mail*, 19 January 1986)

On the other side the ZAPU leaders, rather than fighting for socialist policies in a unified party, see the question as merely one of the 'rightful role' of Father Zimbabwe (Nkomo) and themselves in the privileged bureaucracy.

The deal has succeeded not because of what the politicians wanted, but because they have no alternative.

It is reported, for example, that Mnangagwa, the security minister in charge of the CIO, has been the leading advocate of the deal (behind closed doors, of course) after his eyes had been opened to the devastation of Mozambique by the South African-backed MNR.

As the *Guardian* correspondent commented: "A continuation of Zimbabwe's tragic divisions would only give South Africa on a silver platter a ready-made dissident group with an ethnic base." (17 April 1986)

It is this, and ZAPU's retention of support in Matabeleland in the 1985 elections, which has advanced the discussions. As the document argues, Zimbabwean military involvement in Mozambique will become ever more demanding, making military suppression of Matabeleland an unattractive option for Mugabe.

Yet the deal will have to be a very poor thing, based on the division of party and government positions, rather than a determination to unite. While the ZAPU leadership is trying to let 'bygones be bygones' as they seek positions, the evidence of joint ZANU(PF)/ZAPU rallies shows that the Ndebele peasants want a real change.

At a rally earlier this year, Nkala, the former tormentor of Nkomo, was interrupted by the audience of Ndebele peasants who demanded that troops should be withdrawn from their area. (*Prize Africa*, May 1986)

Problems such as these will surface again and again even after the details of the unity deal are spelt out. Thousands of Ndebele workers, youth, and peasants, have been killed during the military repression since 1982.

In the future both party leaders will try to draw a curtain over the terrible facts of repression. As in the case of the bloody military dictatorships of Latin America, the ZANU(PF) leaders will argue they had to fight a 'dirty war' against terrorism and that any methods were justified.

But they had to undertake the bloody repression of Matabeleland because they were not prepared to undertake a socialist campaign to transform Zimbabwean society which would have undercut the dissidents.

As the price for their positions in government, the ZAPU leaders will remain silent on the torture and murders.

If the facts were known to the Shona workers and peasants—and if the revolutionary socialist alternative were understood—the government's repression would be regarded as a national disgrace and a matter for deep shame.

But with the first flush of enthusiasm for the deal these issues will be side-stepped as both Shona and Ndebele workers and peasants welcome the easing of pressures to divide on tribal-national lines.

Previously Marxists had to argue that a deal was possible despite the lack of will by the petty bourgeois politicians. Now the opposite side of the coin will have to be stressed: that on the basis of capitalism the tribal-national divisions will open up with greater force in the future.

Genuine socialists will seize the opportunity of the pause in tribal-national chauvinism to raise the question of workers' unity against the capitalists. It is vital that both Shona and Ndebele workers use this opportunity to initiate steps to develop class unity across regional divisions in the workplace and township.

These tasks can only be carried out if the workers unite to build the trade unions, independent of state control, against the policies of compromise and collaboration with capitalism of the bureaucracy in the trade unions and party, and give voice to the ideas of genuine socialism in the party as well.

## Economic prospects

The document argues that the economic upturn of 1984-85 would peak in 1986 and then an economic decline would set in basically because of the shortage of foreign exchange.

This has now been confirmed. The most recent report of the Standard Bank (September 1986) talks of "formidable challenges over the next 18 months" during which adverse factors would predominate.

The 5-year development plan announced in April takes no account of the prevailing crisis in world capitalism, and the accumulating factors which will almost certainly produce a new recession or slump internationally, with serious consequences for Zimbabwe, in the period covered by the plan. Its targets, based on continued steady growth, cannot be taken seriously. The overall method of the plan is thoroughly dishonest—there is no balance sheet drawn up to compare what was targeted and what was achieved in the previous 3-year plan.

In all the key questions of economic and social life, in employment, housing, land resettlement, investment, etc, the targets of the first plan were sabotaged by the capitalists' command of the economy.

In agriculture, for example, between 1980-85 there has

been a decline of 27% in employment (100 000 jobs) despite the value of output rising by at least 50% over the same period. (*Zimbabwe News*, June 1985) While brick and other building material workers were retrenched, only 13 500 out of 115 000 houses targeted were built.

What progress was made was achieved at the expense of rising inflation and growing debts to local and international capitalists.

Increasingly Zimbabwe also faces the spillover effects of the general uncertainty of the capitalists in South Africa.

The economy is not only adversely affected by local factors, but increasingly hemmed in by the world market. Even in the course of the recent upturn in the US economy world commodity prices fell dramatically. With recession in the US, they will be likely to fall further.

In many countries of the under-developed world the costs of producing primary commodities are now well above the world prices particularly in sugar and tin, even though starvation wages are paid to the workers.

These factors apply equally to Zimbabwe and will tend to pull the economy into decline even if there is reasonable rainfall.

The coming of a world slump will devastate the economies of the former colonial countries and face the political leaders of these countries with the prospect either of watching whole industries disappearing or being forced to take emergency measures to bring the productive forces under state ownership.

The socialist opposition in the workers' committees, trade unions, and party, face the challenge of preparing the workers and youth for these developments. Faced by such a crisis the working class will have to fight against all the gains of the past being removed, and will have to win the support of the peasants.

But for the working class to succeed a clear program showing the way forward is necessary. The Marxists will have to show how the crisis can only be overcome by the completion of the revolution; by the working class placing itself at the head of the nation against imperialism; by overthrowing capitalism and securing a democratic workers' state.

This would then open the way to a plan of production, the expansion of manufacturing, and the real development of the country with an economy geared to the people's needs, not profit. But within the national boundaries of Zimbabwe the limits of even this achievement would soon be clear—the revolution would have to spread for the gains to be continued, and for a socialist society to be constructed.

Workers' power in Zimbabwe would be a beacon to the workers and peasants of Africa struggling under the one-party dictatorships of capitalism. It would hasten the workers' revolution in South Africa—the only sure defence of a democratic workers' state in Zimbabwe from counter-revolution.

Workers' democratic rule throughout Southern Africa would point the way forward to genuine regional cooperation, developing agriculture and industry, eliminating poverty, and laying the foundations for socialism.

# ZIMBABWE AND THE WORLD



*Students demonstrating in central Harare to demand an effective defence against South African aggression, after the death of Samora Machel.*

By 'perspectives' we mean an understanding of the most likely economic and political developments ahead, internationally and nationally. Without clear perspectives, the working class cannot be prepared for its historical task of taking power and making an end to dictatorship, poverty, and ignorance.

But the task of working out perspectives is not simple. Government 'experts' and the capitalists themselves do not understand the processes at work. They grope in the dark, making big mistakes.

We only have to think of the Zimbabwe government's 'expert', Riddell, who predicted in the Transitional National Plan for 1982-85 that the Zimbabwe economy would grow by 8% per year in this period—a total of over 24%. In fact, the economy declined by 2,5% in this period!

As a Ziana correspondent, Ruth Weiss, has admitted,

there is a "short-term view of everything, giving rise alternatively to euphoria and pessimism with bewildering rapidity". (*Guardian*, 23 August 1985)

Looking at developments in society without using the method of Marxism, events may seem completely confused and unpredictable.

For the working class, the method of Marxism is essential in developing the necessary understanding of events. Marxism is sometimes called the 'science of perspectives'. It gathers together the most conscious and disciplined strugglers, and equips them to mobilise the mass of the workers for the task of social transformation. (The essentials of the Marxist method are explained in *South Africa's Impending Socialist Revolution*, Chapter 1; *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, Supplement 11: 'Dialectical materialism'; and Supplement 12: 'Historical materialism')

Even the most thorough perspectives, of course, cannot predict every detail and every turn ahead. But perspectives can give us a grasp of the underlying processes at work in society. This can prepare the workers for sudden changes, and enable them to cope with new situations.

Through working out the perspectives, the conscious activists become able to explain correctly the tasks of the movement at every stage of the struggle. In this process they can win the confidence of the mass of workers, and make clear the shortcoming of every political current in the movement that opposes Marxism.

Only in this way can Marxism be built into a mass force to transform society.

The perspectives for every country today have to start from an understanding of the world situation.

A problem for Zimbabweans coming to an understanding of the perspectives for their country is the limited amount of information available about what is happening in the world. This leads to a widespread feeling of isolation from developments internationally, and difficulties in understanding how Zimbabwe is affected by these developments.

But there can be no escape from the need for a disciplined **internationalist** approach to the future of Zimbabwe and the struggles of the workers and youth.

The economy of every capitalist country has become integrated into a single world economy. It is now impossible for any country to withdraw from the world market—no country can possibly be self-sufficient.

This integration is most advanced in the developed capitalist countries, but also dominates political life in the former colonial world.

## Landlocked

That Zimbabwe is landlocked is frequently remarked on. What is the importance of this? That Zimbabwe needs access to the sea—in order to conduct overseas trade. Exports and imports in fact make up about one quarter of the total annual value of production in Zimbabwe. Almost all spheres of production rely on **some** imported components, and therefore depend on the foreign currency earnings provided by exports.

Zimbabwe's exports, presently passing through South Africa's ports, are bound for American steel mills or EEC factories—and in return Zimbabwe's imports of machinery, etc come from the same areas. Economically and politically it is locked into capitalist finance and trading relations as a former colony and an exploited subordinate.

Developments in world capitalism affect the Zimbabwean economy and, through that, the character of political developments. The present decline in world commodity prices, for example, cuts the country's export earnings and, through that, stifles economic growth. The government is involved in decisions about who will suffer the consequences—the capitalists or the working masses.

The present world market was developed very largely during the great upswing of world capitalism after the Second World War. In the advanced countries—though

not in the Third World—capitalism during this period seemed to have solved the crisis which had ravaged it during the 1920s and 1930s. Through the power of their organisations, workers were able to win concessions from the capitalists and to secure better wages and higher living standards than they had ever enjoyed before.

The world market is dominated by the giant multinational companies of the advanced capitalist countries, who after 1950 not only expanded production to a higher level than ever before in their rush for profits, but concentrated the ownership of production into fewer and fewer hands.

## The world crisis of capitalism

Today—as even the *Herald* and the *Chronicle* cannot hide from the workers—the international expansion of capitalism has clearly come to an end. In every country, the system has entered a period of small upturns and bigger downturns. Growth has slowed down to a snail's pace even in the advanced countries. In the underdeveloped countries, terrible burdens are being placed on the mass of the people.

The causes of the post-War upswing of world capitalism, and of its present terminal crisis, are explained more fully in other Marxist material. (See, for example, *South Africa's Impending Socialist Revolution*, Chapter 3 and *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, Supplement 14: "The Coming World Revolution").

But the fundamental reason lies in capitalism's inherent contradictions. Private ownership of the means of production, and the rise of the nation-state, played a progressive role historically in developing production far beyond the limits previously attainable. Now private ownership and the nation-state have become obstacles to the development of the productive forces (machinery, labour, etc) and to the development of science and technology.

The key to the development of the productive forces, in the modern world, is new investment. But today, even in the advanced capitalist countries, and even in times of 'boom', rather than **expansion** of productive capacity taking place, only 80% of existing productive capacity is being used.

Capitalist production is based on profit, derived from the value of goods produced by the working-class over and above what they are paid in wages—**surplus-value**, in short. The motor of production is not social need, but the competitive search for profit by private owners, through producing and selling more cheaply than their rivals. In the modern epoch the form this takes is the clash of the giant monopolies and rival imperialist powers to carve up and recarve the world market among themselves.

On the one hand, capitalism creates a tendency towards the absolute expansion of the capacity to produce commodities; but on the other hand this expansion is checked by the relative limit placed on the buying power of the working class in order to maximise profit.

The **ultimate** basis of the world market is the purchasing power in the hands of consumers—who, fundamentally, are the working class. But this is, of necessity, less than the total value of production. Capitalism, in other words, has an inherent tendency towards 'over-

production'—not production in excess of the desperate needs of people for more goods and services in order to survive, but in excess of their ability to pay.

## Post-war boom

In the post-war boom, through the freeing of trade between nations, the development of new methods of production, opening of new markets, the massive expansion of credit and state deficit-financing, super-exploitation of the Third World, etc, the advanced capitalist countries overcame these inherent limits for a period—but only to create bigger problems and contradictions which are now coming home to roost.

Because the limits are now again asserting themselves, and it is increasingly difficult for the capitalists to produce and sell at a profit, the spiral of expansion has begun to turn into its opposite. In trying to restore profitability, the capitalists close factories, throw workers out of jobs, and attack their living standards. Whatever the capitalists gain from this in preserved or restored profits, the system loses—because all this serves to cut the market and worsen the crisis.

'Austerity' policies by capitalists and their governments thus make matters worse—while attempts to restimulate the economy (which worked during the period of post-War boom) lead to rapidly rising prices of goods rather than sustained new development of the market.

On a capitalist basis, there is no way out of the crisis.

As the crisis bites, cut-throat rivalry among the big capitalist powers intensifies. In place of the former freeing of trade, each capitalist power looks for ways to 'protect' its home market against 'foreign competition' by putting up obstacles to imports—but this serves to cut the market further. Direct or disguised policies of this kind by the imperialist powers hit particularly at 'Third World' countries.

The capitalist class internationally is putting less and less investment into new production and therefore new jobs. Instead they are using their wealth to buy each other out, or to gamble for a quick profit in non-productive 'investment' such as property, stocks and shares, currency speculation, etc.

Third World commodity prices are driven down, at huge cost to their economies, by the monopoly power of capitalists wanting cheaper raw materials to increase their profits.

Everywhere, the capitalist class is becoming increasingly parasitic on society—while tens of millions are unemployed even in advanced capitalist countries, and hundreds of millions in the former colonial world face the threat of starvation.

It is clear that capitalism is ripe for being overthrown and replaced by a higher, more developed form of society, in which production is organised to serve the needs of the producers. We are living in the period of world revolution—of the international transition from capitalism to socialism; from the system of private ownership dominated by the multinational companies, to a system of planned production under the democratic ownership and control of the mass of working people.

In the advanced capitalist countries after the Second

World War the massive upswing of capitalism led to relative class peace. Today, the attacks of the capitalist class are pushing workers into struggle in defence of their jobs, wages, and rights. The capitalists, even in the 'democratic' countries, are resorting to harsher and harsher methods of control.

During the post-war boom in these countries a leadership arose in the workers' organisations which maintained, along with the capitalists themselves, that the contradictions of capitalism had been ironed out, and that it could provide better living standards for working people indefinitely into the future. These leaders made comfortable careers for themselves, living in privilege, and isolated from the mass of workers.

Today this reformist leadership is an increasing obstacle for the working class in solving its problems. Capitalism offers no way out. Elected to form a government, and failing to break with capitalism, these workers' leaders carry through not reforms, but counter-reforms. In opposition some preach 'socialism'—but when they come into government carry out the policies demanded by the capitalists, and abandon their promises to the workers. This is the inevitable consequence of their unwillingness to lead a struggle to break decisively the power of the monopolies and overthrow capitalism.

In every advanced capitalist country the workers' movement has enormous strength. But to solve the problems facing the masses what is required is a leadership armed with a programme for fighting back against the capitalist class, overturning capitalism, and placing the working class in power. For this, the perspectives and methods of Marxism are essential as a scientific guide to action.

Internationally, the forces of Marxism are still very weak. But in a number of advanced capitalist countries these small forces are already beginning to place their stamp on events—notably the supporters of the *Militant* newspaper in Britain. On the basis of workers' experience of the crisis, these forces will grow by leaps and bounds.

The perspectives for the advanced capitalist countries are shaped, on the one hand, by the remorseless unfolding of the crisis and, on the other, by the struggle of the working class to reclaim control of its trade union and political organisations and transform them, on the basis of Marxism, into instruments for taking power.

This would open the way to the socialist reorganisation of production, genuine democracy, and a society of plenty.

## The former colonial world

All the contradictions of capitalism are a hundred times more acute in the former colonial countries.

There is a cruel contradiction between the enormous natural resources that are available to improve the lives of the people, and the totally inadequate development of these resources. Plundered by the capitalists, these countries are developed just enough to allow them to make a contribution to capitalist wealth in Europe, Japan, and the United States, by exporting a few types of raw materials.

In the 1950s leaders such as Nkrumah preached the idea that once political power had been achieved, everything would be possible. "Seek first the political kingdom", he said.

But political independence has not brought about the economic and social development hoped for by the nationalist leaders. Instead, the peasant and worker masses have remained at the mercy of the world market dominated by the imperialist powers.

In fact, they are suffering even greater impoverishment in the present period of capitalist decline, as the prices of their exports are forced down by the imperialist monopolies, and the prices of their imports (mainly manufactured products) are pushed up.

In Africa, the capitalist system is at its most rotten. Africa is the only continent now facing a drop in food production. Throughout the 1980s it is predicted that, on average, there will be no economic growth at all, despite increasing population.

Millions of people live permanently on the brink of starvation. At the same time the capitalists and state officials line their pockets with aid and state funds, and with the wealth produced by the workers.

The only way to break out of colonial poverty is by developing modern industry. This alone can end the dependence of these countries on a few exports, whose prices are controlled by the capitalist giants.

But the ruling elites in these countries are completely parasitic. Under capitalism, in a world market controlled by imperialism, they cannot carve out new markets for the development of production on a national basis.

Within the limits of capitalism, they cannot carry out any of the basic democratic tasks that are necessary for the development of their countries: providing the peasant masses with land and state assistance; unifying the nation; developing industry; establishing political democracy, etc.

Africa and its peoples were split up by the colonial powers on purely arbitrary lines, leaving a terrible legacy of 'balkanisation' (the creation of small conflicting states). Because of the general lack of national development, tribal loyalties remain strong within these states. On a capitalist basis, there is no resolution to these problems.

## One-party dictatorships

Finding that reform is impossible within stagnant capitalist economies, leaders of African states defend themselves against the pressure of the masses by suppressing democratic rights. They have instituted one-party dictatorships, many of which in turn have been overthrown by military coups. These civilian or military dictatorships have used the most savage means to keep themselves in power. Yet so clear are the revolutionary demands of the masses that even dictators basing themselves on capitalism sometimes call themselves 'socialist'!

Often these regimes protest against the capitalist market system, because it is dominated by the imperialists and out of their control. But they are totally incapable of mobilising the mass of the workers and peasants to break the grip of imperialism over their countries.

The capitalist class of all countries has a vested interest in the continued exploitation and oppression of the colonial peoples. The multinational companies as well as the 'national' capitalist class in each country are united against the struggles of the masses. They are totally opposed to the struggle of the workers and peasants for genuine democracy, which would spell an end to their power.

This means that the struggle for democracy and social development must break out of national boundaries to succeed fully. It has to be linked to the struggles of working people in other countries, and particularly those of the advanced capitalist countries, which dominate the world economy.

## Tasks

This process was first outlined by Trotsky over 80 years ago, in explaining the tasks of the Russian Revolution. We can sum up his main conclusions as follows:

- \* In underdeveloped countries the capitalist class is incapable of carrying through the democratic tasks, but, against the struggle of the masses, will ally itself with all the reactionary forces.

- \* To carry out the tasks of national liberation and democracy the working class needs to lead the oppressed masses in a struggle to take state power into its own hands—and, in power, will be forced to tackle also the socialist tasks of overthrowing the capitalist system even while completing the democratic tasks.

- \* Because capitalism is an international system, the workers' struggle is of necessity an international struggle, and needs to be based on the united organisation of the workers in different countries.

In 1917, the Russian Revolution was a confirmation of Trotsky's perspectives. In a backward country, a 'weak link' in the capitalist chain, the Russian working class came to power and established a workers' state with control over the key sectors of the economy.

Following this, workers struggled to take power in the more developed countries in Europe. But, with the defeat of revolution after revolution, the Russian revolution was isolated. In the struggle over scarce economic resources, those who staffed the state machine had a crucial advantage. A state bureaucracy grew, headed by Stalin, carrying out a bloody political counter-revolution in which all elements of workers' control of society were destroyed.

Stalin, as the representative of the Russian bureaucracy, preached the false idea that socialism could be built in one country. This was the bureaucracy's way of making clear that they were not interested in world revolution. Instead, more and more, they have done everything possible to make peace with capitalism and to sabotage healthy revolutions.

In spite of this, economic development in the Soviet Union has been far more rapid than under capitalism. State ownership and central planning of production made it possible to develop industry and largely eliminate poverty in contrast with the limited possibility of reform under capitalism.

But the period of rapid growth in the Soviet Union is now at an end. Economic growth there is no longer a question of laying down basic infrastructure and industries, but of developing a complex modern economy.

With the complete absence of workers' democracy, corruption, mismanagement, abuse and incompetence among the middle and top officials has led to a general seize-up of the productive forces.

In the Soviet Union, the growth of industrial output during 1981-85 had slowed down to **less than half** the rate of 1971-75—in spite of lengthening queues for food, housing and many other essential goods.

The degeneration of the Russian Revolution, accompanied at first by the failure, and subsequently by conscious Stalinist derailing, of workers' revolution in other countries, delayed the world revolution for a whole epoch. The forces of Marxism were defeated by Stalinism, and reduced eventually to tiny handfuls of people.

In the advanced capitalist countries the post-War boom contributed further to the delay of revolution. But in the colonial and former colonial world the masses could not wait either on the re-emergence of Marxist leadership, or for the socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries. The terrible burdens imposed by parasitic capitalism and reactionary landlordism weighed them down too heavily.

## Huge Struggles

Since the Second World War huge struggles have erupted throughout the colonial world against imperialism, landlordism and capitalism, for national independence and democracy. Capitalism has been overthrown in a number of countries: in China, Cuba, Vietnam, for example—and in Africa in Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique.

The advantages of a planned and state-owned economy have allowed many of these countries to develop, when capitalism would have continued to strangle them. Breaking with capitalism only recently, with a greater legacy of backwardness, subjected to huge external pressure, the governments of Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique, however, find huge difficulties in uplifting the living standards of the masses.

But in none of these was the break with capitalism achieved by a working-class leadership committed to socialism and world revolution. In none has the working class secured control over its economy and state.

Instead power has been concentrated in the hands of state officials and military rulers, whose policies are aimed more and more at protecting their own privileged position. Without workers' democracy, and with rulers whose horizons are limited by the state machine on which they rest, these are not socialist regimes.

Nevertheless, even if in a distorted way, these revolutions have confirmed Trotsky's analysis of the colonial world. It has been possible in these countries to move forward in solving the **democratic** tasks (liberation from imperialism, abolition of landlordism, etc) only by **breaking with capitalism**. The working class does not directly

hold power; nevertheless these are deformed workers' states. (For a fuller discussion of these processes, see for example, *South Africa's Impending Socialist Revolution*, Chapters 2, 4 and 5.)

But today no country can escape from pressures to integrate further with the world market. The development of the forces of production is constrained by the limits of the nation-state, even in the most populous and developed economies, capitalist or Stalinist. The resolution of the contradictions, West and East, lies in the struggle for world socialism, based on workers' democratic rule.

## Bureaucratic elites

The slow-down in growth in the Soviet Union and other more developed Stalinist states is a serious warning to those in the 'Third world' who look to the Soviet Union or China for political and economic assistance. The bureaucratic elites which govern these countries do not support the workers overthrowing capitalism and building workers' democracy anywhere in the world.

Not only would this upset the deals made between them and the big capitalists, but a healthy workers' state would threaten their own rule. It would show to the working people under Stalinist rule that there is an alternative both to capitalism and to the bureaucratic dictatorship in their countries. Thus a move for the overthrow of the bureaucracy would gain an enormous stimulus.

All of the Stalinist bureaucracies would not only oppose a workers' revolution in Southern Africa, but even any strong measures by the existing leaders against capitalism.

As Mugabe has explained, after independence the Stalinist states told him: "Do not rush things—take your time". The conclusion he had drawn from this advice was never to disrupt the economy, and that "nationalisation would lead to that kind of disruption". (*Financial Gazette*, 1 February 1985)

In reality, the working class in the Stalinist states are facing the task of taking power from their bureaucratic rulers and building workers' democracy—the only basis for continuing the transition to socialism. The movement of ten million Polish workers and their families in 1980-81 provided a clear indication of the political revolution that is building up throughout Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union itself.

We are living in the period of world revolution—in the advanced capitalist countries, in the Stalinist countries and in the former colonial countries. The workers' struggle in Zimbabwe must be understood in this international framework, and led in close solidarity with the working class of other countries, who share the same socialist goals.

If the working class came to power in one of the major African countries—particularly South Africa, Nigeria or Egypt—and actively built up international support, this would open up the socialist revolution on a continental scale. It would open the way to a Pan-African Socialist Federation, linked to the socialist transformation of the world.

## Zimbabwe in Southern Africa

The history of capitalism in Southern Africa confirms Trotsky's analysis of the tasks of the working class in the colonial world (his theory of permanent or uninterrupted revolution). Arising under the shadow of British imperialism, capitalism both in South Africa and Rhodesia came late in the development of capitalism internationally. In a world market dominated by the monopolies, there was no possibility of carving out a secure market for its own regional development.

Capitalist development in South Africa had to be based on a remorseless cheap labour policy of national oppression and migrant labour, sustained by dictatorship viciously hostile to the rights of the majority, seeking to sustain and reinforce tribal division. In Rhodesia's early development this meant forced labour on the mines, farms and public works called 'Chibaro'.

Politically, these dictatorships were based on the support of white landowners and capitalists, as well as the white middle class and privileged workers, who also made up the state machinery.

Just as South African capitalism has been dominated by Western imperialism, so Rhodesian capitalism developed under the shadow of South Africa. Today the gross national product of South Africa is some 80% of the whole of Southern Africa. In every aspect of the economy and communications, South Africa is overwhelmingly dominant.

About 25% of present-day Zimbabwe's trade is with South Africa.

Historically, Rhodesia's political development mirrored that of South African white minority rule. In fact Rhodesia avoided being included as a fifth province of South Africa in 1922 only by a few thousand white votes.

After the Second World War, reinforced by white immigration from Britain, Rhodesia's tiny capitalist class grew in ambition, seeking, in collaboration with British imperialism, to loose the South African grip by seeking a market in the other countries of Central Africa. This was the main reason for the formation of the Central African Federation (1953-63).

But the break-up of the Federation thrust the ruling class in Rhodesia back into greater dependence on South Africa. In Malawi and Zambia, which did not have the same large numbers of white settlers, the nationalist movements pressurised British imperialism into granting them independence. In Rhodesia, however, far from accommodating black aspirations, the white ruling class followed the South African trend—towards increased racist dictatorship by the local whites. After UDI in 1965, South African domination of the economy intensified.

To end white minority rule in Zimbabwe, and with it to smash the cheap labour system, overcome tribal divisions, end the domination of South African imperialism, and guarantee genuine democracy—what would have been necessary was a struggle of the masses, led by the working class, linked with the struggle of the South African workers, around a socialist programme. But events did not take this course.

## THE INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE



*A bitter guerilla struggle ended with the overwhelming victory of ZANU(PF) in the March 1980 elections: the masses celebrate in expectation of a complete change in their lives.*

Political leadership of the black majority in Zimbabwe was historically in the hands of a black middle-class leadership, closely tied to the missionaries and liberals. These exhausted every possibility for negotiation and compromise before reluctantly concluding that they had to mobilise the masses in order to struggle for a position in government. But even the mass struggles that took place from the 1950s onwards were held back by leaders who never gave up hope of reaching a compromise with British imperialism.

This led to enormous frustrations and tensions in the movement and exposed it to serious defeats. Thus the dreary road of compromise was littered with splits, slanging matches, party violence, and a confusion of policies. Instead of bringing freedom quicker, these policies of compromise laid the basis for much of the bitterness of political life today.

In particular it brought about the ZANU-ZAPU split in 1963. At least in part this represented a revolt among ZAPU's rank and file against Nkomo's conservative leadership—but was increasingly steered onto lines of tribal division.

## UDI

Unable to win mass support by offering a clear way forward, the various leaders looked to home areas, and thus to tribalism, for continued support during times of factional struggle.

With the break-up of the Central African Federation, the Rhodesian Front came rapidly to government, representing right-wing farmers, small businessmen, and privileged workers, and reflecting a partial split in the ruling class.

The more liberal wing, basically representing finance capital and manufacturing, believed in maintaining their own rule by a process of gradual concessions towards the black majority, leading to a form of 'power sharing' between black and white. The Rhodesian Front, on the other hand, followed a policy of 'digging in'. They calculated that the disunity of the nationalist movement in Zimbabwe would enable them to stand up against the independence struggle. In 1965 the Smith regime issued its Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and looked to South Africa for support.

The black nationalist leadership still looked to British imperialism to hand over power to them. Their problem was that the reformist Labour Party government in Britain defended the interests of imperialism. This meant that the Labour government refused to struggle seriously against the Smith regime which defended capitalist interests in Rhodesia.

With the door to negotiations slammed in their faces, the nationalist leadership was forced to look for a new bargaining lever. With many of their rank and file completely disillusioned with the policies of moderation, the leaders now proclaimed armed struggle.

What they had in mind was a carefully controlled

guerilla struggle, under their own leadership, based on the peasantry and the youth. They had no intention of mobilising the working class on the basis of a socialist programme to overthrow the system.

The young guerilla fighters, battling against a ruthless enemy, showed the greatest courage and determination. Yet for over ten years they could not weaken the Smith regime into making significant concessions. The reason for these long years of frustration, and the many lives this cost, lay in the policies of the leadership.

Since the leadership rejected the task of mobilising the urban workers and youth for insurrection, it swung to and fro between attempts at negotiations and bursts of activity on the guerilla front.

The repeated failures of the negotiations, and the stubbornness of the Smith regime, brought about a radical ferment among the guerilla youth. This, in turn, brought about a radicalisation of the guerilla leadership, many of whom, to win support, began to use the rhetoric of 'socialism'.

The guerilla fighters were strongly radicalised by the experience of FRELIMO in Mozambique fighting a long struggle against the Portuguese, who were firmly backed by British and US imperialism.

These trends within the guerilla movement, both in ZANU and ZAPU, led to youthful revolts against nationalist leaderships committed to negotiation and compromise. But counter-action was swift and decisive. Some of the young guerillas were imprisoned, others shot.

To the shame of the leadership, some were even forced to walk over the Victoria Falls bridge to certain execution by the Smith regime.

With Nkomo very reluctant to commit his ZIPRA forces to struggle, the guerilla war was fought most strongly in the East where ZANU won the backing of FRELIMO. Providing more decisive military leadership, ZANU gained massive support from the peasants who suffered huge losses and atrocities at the hands of the regime.

## The end of white rule

After the Portuguese revolution in 1974-5 and the collapse of Portuguese colonialism in Angola and Mozambique, the imperialist powers became much more concerned about their interests in Southern Africa. They now began to worry that a defeat for Smith in the guerilla war would mean the end of capitalism, as in Angola and Mozambique.

The western governments now, for the first time, put firm pressure on Smith to compromise with the nationalist leaders.

This produced a sharp about-turn by Smith. In March 1976 he proclaimed that there would be no black majority rule for "1000 years". Within months, he was forced by the imperialists to publicly concede to "black majority rule within two years". By this they meant the installation of the puppet Prime Minister Muzorewa in 1979. But, no sooner was he in power, than the imperialist

powers were faced with the fact that the 'Muzorewa' government was unable to bring the war to an end.

They feared the growing regionalisation of the war would spread the virus of radicalism throughout the sub-continent, and lead to direct intervention by South Africa to support Muzorewa. The continuing exodus of the whites would undermine the social base of the Smith regime, and prepare the collapse of the Rhodesian state despite the support of South Africa.

If the war took this course it was inevitable that, with appalling bloodshed and sacrifice, the whole capitalist system would crumble, and the guerilla leadership would be driven to bring the economy under state ownership once they came to power.

## Independence

The Lancaster House talks were a gamble for imperialism. Their aim was to frustrate the democratic and socialist aspirations of the masses, by engineering a 'settlement' to end the war on the basis of a bourgeois coalition including ZANU(PF) and ZAPU but based on a bloc of Muzorewa and the whites.

Imperialism put strong pressures on the leaders of the 'front-line states' to threaten to close down the ZANU and ZAPU guerilla bases if a settlement was not reached immediately.

Major concessions were made by the nationalist leadership on the protection of privilege of the capitalists and the whites. The whites were guaranteed 20 seats in parliament. The land—the key question of the liberation struggle—was safeguarded against expropriation. Capitalist property generally was protected in the constitution. On the basis of these concessions an agreement was finally reached with imperialism.

The only alternative to this development would have been the mobilisation of the working class. Organised and armed, the working-class, supported by the peasant guerilla fighters, would have been able to bring the swift overthrow of the murderous regime, and capitalism along with it.

But ZANU and ZAPU leaders feared to awaken the power of the proletariat more than to compromise themselves with the capitalist class and the state.

After the Lancaster House agreement everything possible was done by the imperialists to frustrate ZANU(PF) and ZAPU campaigning freely. Nevertheless the election

result was a resounding victory for ZANU(PF).

The Mugabe government made promises of reforms to the masses, along with firm guarantees to the capitalists that private property would be respected. It hoped to solve this contradiction by reaping a harvest of aid and investment from the imperialist powers.

A consumer boom, based on the ending of the war, the lifting of sanctions, and the workers' achievements in raising wages, followed independence. This upturn made possible several important reforms in education, wages, and health services. It also meant the rapid promotion of an educated black elite to levels of wealth previously enjoyed only by the whites.

However, on the fundamental question of the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe, the land question, precious little progress was made. Also, the total number of jobs, far from increasing, actually declined, particularly in agriculture.

Because the working class did not come to power to transform society, many of the basic problems of Zimbabwe soon reappeared in an even more serious form.

The tribal-national division between Shona and Ndebele, partially overcome in the struggle against the Smith regime, reappeared. Even though Nkomo, while he was in government, said to the surprise of his audience in Matabeleland "there is no shortage of land for the people" (*Herald*, 24 November 1981), he—and other petty bourgeois politicians of both parties—exploited the grievances of the people for their own ends.

Instead of leading the people in the struggle against capitalism, Nkomo and the ZANU leaders both blamed the existence of the other party for the lack of social and political progress, recklessly whipping up tribal hostility in the process.

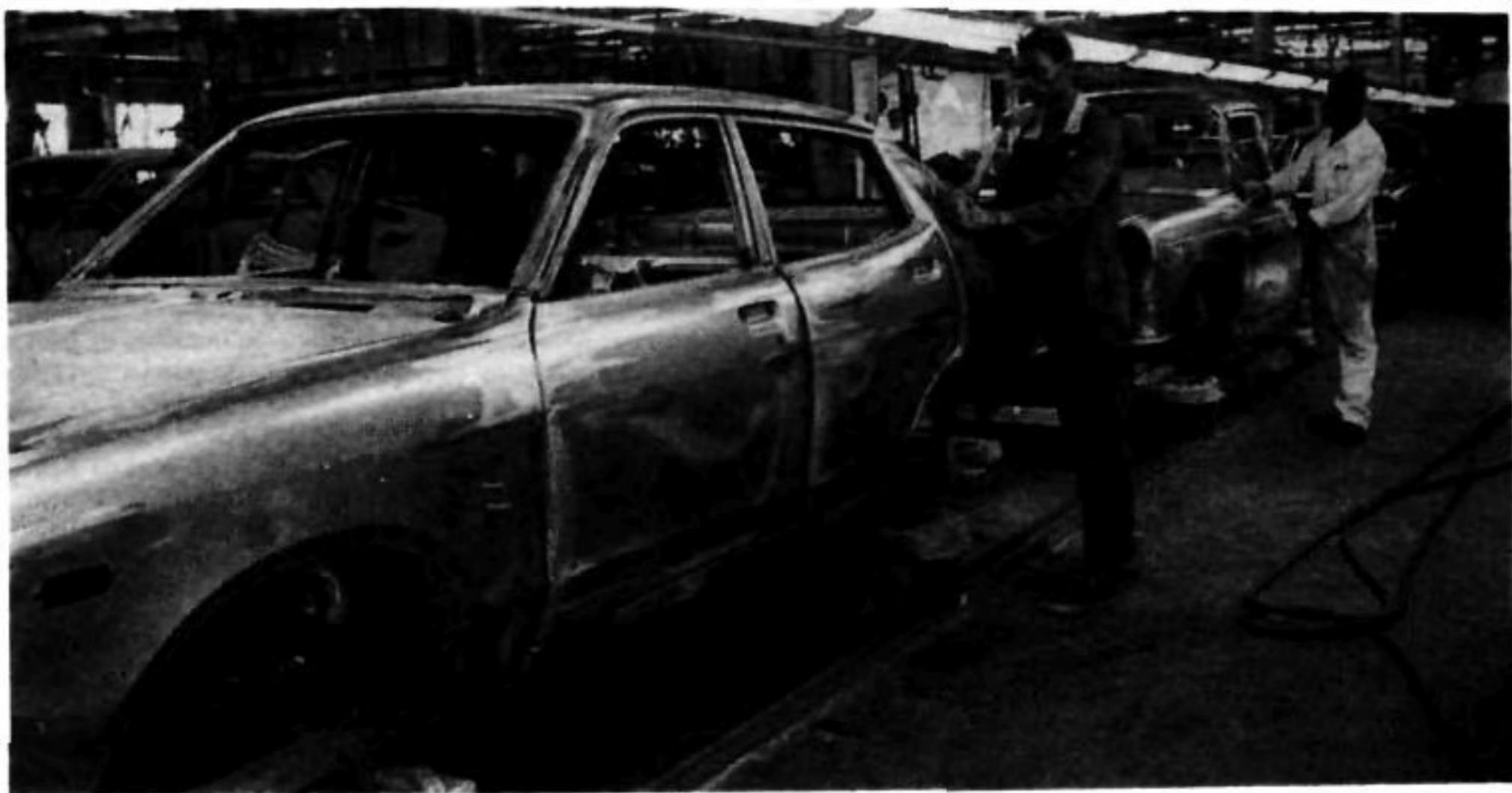
Negotiations between ZANU(PF) and ZAPU were opened to discuss the formation of a single party. But these broke down early in 1982 because of the jockeying for position of the politicians.

Only at this point were the arms caches on ZAPU-owned farms exposed, and most of the ZAPU leaders removed from government. This led to a crisis in the army. Whole battalions broke up and mass desertions weakened the army (although its backbone, the officers and NCOs trained by the old regime, remained).

The 'dissidents' became a serious problem, using the bankrupt methods of armed terrorism to fight back against the political defeats of ZAPU and against the growing isolation of the Ndebele people.

Only by understanding the incapacity of capitalism to solve the basic problems of the masses can we understand the bitterness of the national question, and why political 'solutions' within a capitalist framework will fail.

## The economy



*Zimbabwe has a relatively developed industrial base—but the crisis of capitalism is now beginning to strangle it.*

The significant manufacturing base of the Zimbabwean economy appears to be in contradiction with the general stagnation and lack of development in 'third world' countries. At the time of independence, because of this base, there were great hopes among the bourgeois that capitalism in Zimbabwe could show the way forward to the crisis-ridden and impoverished states to the north.

The relative development of the economy, however, cannot be seen independently from the South African economy which dominates the whole region.

The development of the manufacturing sector took place most rapidly during the war for independence, in reaction to international sanctions. But the consequence was that the economy became dominated by the South African monopolies. This advanced integration into the South African economy has meant that the Zimbabwean economy generally follows the lead set by the dominant partner.

Recently, this has appeared to be contradicted by the movement of the economy in a direction **opposite** to that in South Africa. While the South African economy has been in the midst of a sharp downward phase, in Zimbabwe there has been a burst of economic activity. This has given rise to renewed optimism about the prospects for 'independent' development in Zimbabwe—yet in reality this trend will be overtaken by the fundamental tendencies of capitalism in crisis.

The upturn in Zimbabwe was partly due to the effects of a devaluation of the Zimbabwean dollar, which has resulted in better earnings (in local currency) for the same volume of mining exports. But mostly it has been because of a good rainy season with a sharp increase in peasant production.

In Zimbabwe agriculture still makes the greatest contribution to the national economy and to exports. Despite the development of mining and manufacturing, tobacco is still the main single foreign exchange earner. In such a relatively underdeveloped economy, small economic changes, such as good rains or a new investment project, can have quite an important effect.

In 1985/6 the peasants delivered a record 900,000 tonnes of maize to the Grain Marketing Board—which is an increase 10 times greater than the best record prior to independence. Overall the 1985/86 crop delivered to the GMB is 1,8m tonnes, 80% higher than the poor figures of the previous year, a year of drought.

The fact that Zimbabwe is one of the few countries of Africa which are able to feed their own population, and the rapid increase in peasant production, is causing western journalists to bubble over with excitement at this capitalist miracle which is a 'model for Africa'.

The dramatic increase in peasant production has come after years of drought, during which production has been very low. The good crops have been the result of large-scale state intervention—the very policies which the IMF have brought to a halt in Africa in the drive to cut budget deficits.

The government provided the peasants with fertiliser, seeds, and the possibility of plugging into a state ploughing scheme. Most importantly, loans to peasants have been made by the state Agricultural Development Bank (some Z\$40m over the last season). The state Grain Marketing Board has expanded its depots into most peasant regions, thus eliminating the 'middle men', and ensuring a predictable income from the sale of grain in a reasonable time.

All this is an argument for **more** state intervention, not for less!

The crucial factor, however, has been the fact that, unlike most of black-governed Africa, Zimbabwe has a manufacturing industry capable of turning out stylish clothes, radios and batteries, bicycles, and most importantly, agricultural implements, seeds, and fertilisers. The availability of these goods locally (without eating into foreign exchange) is a tremendous incentive to the peasantry to expand production for the market.

Thus the upturn in the peasant areas in Zimbabwe results from: organised state support for peasants, and the possibility of peasants buying consumer goods with their earnings from the sale of their products.

In the same way, the prospects for continued agricultural growth are entirely bound up with the prospects for the development of industry. Yet it is here, on a capitalist basis, that the prospects are most limited.

The capitalists themselves acknowledge that Zimbabwe is undergoing only a 'moderate upturn' and that manufacturing—the key sector for development—is dragging behind agriculture. The transport equipment industry, for example, has not seen an increase in production at all!

Despite the general upturn in the economy there is, according to the Minister of Industry, Callistus Ndlovu, a crisis in manufacturing. This is not only caused by a lack of confidence in the future by the capitalists. Although by African standards Zimbabwe is relatively prosperous, there is a very limited market by world standards, and no good prospects for exports.

It is this, fundamentally, which limits the prospects for local or foreign capitalist investment in Zimbabwe. Even where decisions have been made to invest, the capitalists face the problem of a shortage of foreign exchange to pay for the imported machinery and raw materials needed for production.

Even at the beginning of the upturn, the more intelligent bourgeois commentators admitted that the boom could not last because of the shortage of foreign exchange. This shortage will inevitably lead to the recovery faltering, and will result in shortages both of intermediary and consumer goods.

## The problem of foreign exchange

The main cause of the cuts in foreign exchange allocations so vital to ensuring continued growth is the growing burden of foreign debt. With the stagnation and decline in world commodity prices, Zimbabwean exports have not been able to earn sufficient foreign exchange to pay off these debts.

Since independence, a surprising Z\$580m has been spent in repaying existing foreign debt. To meet the demands of the foreign bankers, the government has been forced to cut essential spending of foreign exchange on machinery and raw materials.

The Mugabe government strategy is to gamble everything on attracting foreign investment. After imposing a ban on profits and dividends leaving the country, a relaxation was announced, apparently at the insistence

of the IMF. The government now hopes that, having won the favour of the IMF, it can ask for further loans to finance the outflow of capital in the form of profits and dividends!

Wriggling in the grip of finance capital, the government is hoping that its demonstration of 'good faith' in allowing the export of profits will encourage a big inflow of foreign investment.

As a RAL economic review pointed out: "if the current economic upswing is not to be aborted...the active rather than the passive encouragement of foreign investment now seems to be about the only viable solution". This would ease the foreign exchange problem, as investment would be made in 'hard' currencies. Both the government and its capitalist advisors are grasping at a straw!

There has been no significant foreign investment since independence and there is no reason why the capitalists should start investing now.

Although in 1984 there was the first balance of payments surplus since 1979, this 'surplus' has been built up on devaluation, the temporary increase in raw materials exports (particularly to the US), and 'creative budgeting'. According to one bourgeois economist the current account balance is "very much the same as it was at the end of 1983 when a deficit of \$450 million was incurred". (*Herald*, 28 March 1985)

The shortage of foreign exchange, more than any other factor, is marking the limits to the development of manufacturing—the cutting edge of change from an undeveloped to a developed economy.

## Prospects for the economy

A recent article in the *Financial Times* (21 August 1985) exposes some of the reasons for the doubts of the capitalists about the economic future of the country. Bourgeois commentators are worried by the vulnerability of the Zimbabwean economy both in relation to South Africa and in its long-term prospects generally.

The possibility of counter-sanctions by a desperate South Africa with its back to the wall is raised as a question mark over Zimbabwe's future economic prospects. Undeniably there must be some thinking on these lines by the Botha regime. But what has held back the showdown at present is a recognition of mutual economic dependence. As well as the trade between them, South Africa has enormous investments in Zimbabwe, while Zimbabwe desperately needs secure trade routes through South Africa to world markets.

This recognition has led to a brittle but diplomatically 'correct' relationship between the two governments, although the growing Zimbabwean military intervention in Mozambique to secure the transport route to Beira against MNR attack shows Mugabe's desperation in trying to break free from the southern stranglehold.

All hopes in an alternative to economic links with South Africa through SADCC and the Preferential Trade Agreement of Southern and Eastern Africa are, however, illusory. The economies of Botswana, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, etc are either insignificant, or

devastated by war and low world commodity prices, and provide no realistic alternative market.

Mutual cooperation between them is also constantly threatened by trade barriers and a lack of foreign currency. The crash of the rand has, paradoxically, strengthened South Africa's grip over the region, as its exports are now much cheaper.

A country whose economy is so dependent and dwarfed by South Africa can hardly hope to grow steadily when the economic giant of Africa is a sick neighbour. Already key markets for Zimbabwean manufactured exports (which are encouraged by the Preferential Trade Agreement between Zimbabwe and South Africa) are being cut off by tariff barriers and by the higher value of the Zimbabwean dollar in comparison with the rand. This fall off in exports is not being compensated by significant opportunities on the world market, as the major capitalist powers are either experiencing economic decline or slow growth.

The fundamental weakness of capitalism in Zimbabwe in developing the economy is ironically shown during the present upturn. The basis of this upturn has been the sharp rise in agriculture, even though manufacturing responded by an increase of production of 11%. But key sectors of manufacturing such as metals and transport equipment have gone against this upward trend and **declined** in 1985.

As significantly, the crisis in world commodity prices is now paralysing the mining industry. The volume of output has declined since 1980. World metal prices have fallen by 13% in 1985 and profits have only been maintained by a corresponding 18% depreciation in the value of the Zimbabwean dollar.

Almost all expansion has been the result of using spare capacity—even though the bourgeois economists realise that investment-led growth is the "only means of achieving real economic growth in the long-term". (RAL, *Sunday Mail*, 29 September 1985)

A recent survey showed that over 60% of businesses were making no plans for investment—"an extraordinarily bleak picture" according to the University of Zimbabwe's Department of Business Studies. Overall investment from 1983 to July 1985 was little more than the entire investment made in 1981! (*Africa Now*, September 1985) By refusing to invest, the capitalists are making sure the upturn will not last.

Capitalism has been unable to provide more jobs and higher incomes for the people as is shown in startling figures on the lack of jobs; low incomes, etc, both before and after independence.

Since the mid-1970s more than 100,000 jobs have been lost in agriculture (mostly after independence), 10,000 in mining, 4,000 in furniture, 10,000 in clothing, and another 10,000 in engineering. (*Herald*, 2 April 1985) Only a thin layer of educated people have been able gain the privileges of civil service employment, mainly by taking over the jobs of departing whites, rather than in new jobs.

Over the past decade per capita incomes have not increased at all: in 1985 they were little different from when Smith declared unilateral independence 20 years ago, or when independence was conceded in 1979! Despite the enormous political struggles and achievements, the dead hand of capitalism has held back material progress for the mass of the people. The bourgeois economists blame

black families for having too many children, rather than pointing to the declining number of jobs.

Even if the most optimistic forecasts are accepted (and these are actually quite unrealistic), the masses would have to wait until the 1990s to get their living standards back to those of the historic peak of 1974. (*Financial Times*, London, 21 August 1985)

These limits of capitalism which are so clear on the general economic field are showing their effects in political decisions. The July 1985 budget showed that the state, **even in times of upturn**, is being forced to cut back on the advances made after independence.

## Cuts

Large real cuts in spending on agriculture, resettlement, construction, and housing have been made, with smaller reductions in education and health. The investment in the public sector, the keystone of the government's approach to 'gradually achieving socialism', dropped in real terms by 3% in the 1985 budget!

Despite these cuts there was a record budget deficit (excess of spending over income) of Z\$808m, and up to 20% of the budget is now allocated to paying back debts and loans. Increasingly, social programs are having to be financed by loans from capitalists at home and abroad.

To lessen state responsibility, local authorities are being given the task of financing new schools, and there have been calls for reducing or eliminating so-called 'non-essential' spending on such things as roads and community halls. All this means that the town councils will be under enormous pressure to increase township rents, rates, and charges generally.

As the politicians in the towns come under fire from the workers and their families so they in turn will be beating on the doors of the Ministers to get finance for local government to bail themselves out.

The present upturn is unable to last long. In the coming downturn, inflation will continue, and even increase. Shortages of foreign exchange can reduce supplies of raw materials, spare parts, etc, thus creating shortages of locally-made consumer goods. These are among the factors which will in due course blunt the improvement in peasant incomes and the peasants' desire to sell their products.

With the United States economy slowing down and Europe set to follow, the prospects for continued growth in Zimbabwe are not good. Even with a good rainy season in 1985-86, according to a recent RAL report, growth is unlikely to be much above zero, and a new downturn in 1987 seems certain.

The weak upturns of the diseased capitalist system provide no solution for the basic demands of the mass of either workers or peasants. To provide a decent life for all working people, the only way forward lies in the struggle to end capitalism—to bring the big factories, banks, mines and farms into state-ownership, under democratic workers' control and management. This would provide the basis on which peasants could obtain adequate land, and the inputs needed to develop it.

# THE POLITICAL SITUATION



*ZANU(PF) Congress in August 1984. The party leadership, which is defending capitalism in Zimbabwe, encourages a cult of personality around Mugabe. The party youth, however, faced with mass unemployment, need to demand the ending of capitalism.*

Political developments since independence have basically flowed along the channels laid down in the Lancaster House agreement, although there have been some new features.

Formally speaking, the Lancaster House agreement established in Zimbabwe a parliamentary democracy based on universal franchise (though with the concessions to the whites in terms of reserved white seats).

At the same time there was an 'Africanisation' of the state machinery, through the phasing out of the old white personnel—to be replaced basically by the educated black strata who sat out the guerilla war in overseas universities.

But in practice, the most important development that has taken place since independence is the diminishing role of parliament, and the increasing concentration of power in the hands of Ministers, etc, and above all in the hands of Mugabe.

This is a result of the gulf between the objective interests the regime serves and the political base it has to try to sustain among the workers and peasants.

The Lancaster House agreement laid the basis for the promotion of the black middle class to positions in the state as **junior** partners with imperialism. In exchange they agreed to preserve the productive foundations of private ownership: on the land and in the factories, mines, and banks.

The foreign ownership of the means of production which amounts to two-thirds of all capital was not to be tampered with.

These conditions were spelt out in the cold constitutional language of the Lancaster House agreement. But the only political force with the base of social support which could carry them out in practice was the radical

nationalist leadership, whose popularity rested on the fact that it had led the guerilla struggle for power, and had been invested by the peasants, youth and workers with their hopes for achieving a decent life.

The regime is buffeted on the one hand by foreign and local capitalists, determined to sustain their interests, and on the other hand by the uneasy conglomeration of petty-bourgeois, peasant, and working-class interests which are its base of support. In a relatively underdeveloped economy beset by the world capitalist crisis it can satisfy neither the capitalists nor the mass of working people.

It is this which explains both the zig-zagging course of policy and rhetoric, and the tendency for the regime to elevate itself above any democratic process and concentrate power in executive hands—a process which will be taken further with the establishment of a 'one-party state'. This kind of regime, zig-zagging, elevated above the masses, balancing between contending classes neither of which is able to establish its clear supremacy—but based on a capitalist state machine and defending capitalism—is what Marxism refers to as bourgeois Bonapartism.

When the middle-class leadership attacks imperialism—for example, protesting against low prices of raw materials, the growing foreign debts, the lack of real aid, the undermining of an indigenous black capitalist class, and imperialism's support for racism in South Africa—they pretend that they are 'at one' with the masses, and putting forward the position of the workers and rural poor.

But they do not explain that these problems cannot be solved within the framework of capitalism, or mobilise a struggle headed by the working class to **break with**

**capitalism.**

In reality, the middle-class leadership is engaged merely in a struggle with the imperialists over the spoils of the wealth produced by the working class. Without being able to satisfy the demands of the workers, youth, and peasants—or even of the whole of the middle class—they are trying to sustain the support of the masses in a battle over the surplus in order to enrich themselves first and foremost.

Thus they are forced on the one hand to turn to state control and suppression of the very classes to which they look for support. On the other hand, because of their impotence against imperialism, they fight among themselves for the crumbs which fall off the table of capitalism. The splits take place along regional and tribal lines, with a festering of corruption, favoritism, and patronage.

It is this volatile mixture of favouritism and repression which has forced tribal and regional factions to form among the Shona petty bourgeois leaders who head ZANU(PF). The growing disunity at the top has led Mugabe increasingly to take personal command of controversial issues and to take power into his own hands. The leadership increasingly preaches the virtues of a 'one-party state'—i.e. of increased dictatorship—as a means of suppressing tribalism and class antagonisms.

Already, the parliamentary formalities are increasingly being dropped and the government rules through emergency regulations.

A number of sympathetic studies of the Zimbabwean state have concluded that the executive and security apparatus enjoys enormous power and has progressively gained more autonomy from parliament, the courts, and the other apparatuses of state.

## Repressive powers

The *Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO)* which is part of the 'Prime Minister's Office' and directly controlled by Mugabe has been rapidly expanded. Its top intelligence officers are still the whites who organised the defence of Smith's regime against the guerilla war.

The security legislation used by Smith to attack the nationalist movement and unions has not been abolished but extended. More than 60 regulations made in terms of the notorious Emergency Powers Act and Law and Order Act of the 1960s have been issued on a wide variety of topics. Regulations in terms of the Indemnity and Compensation Act of 1975 which remove any legal constraints on the armed forces were revived in July 1982.

Cabinet Ministers dealing with security matters have exceptional powers to detain, to ban meetings, and use other legal means to suppress opposition. When persons accused of political crimes have been acquitted by the courts, redetentions are common.

The reports of Commissions of Enquiry into complaints against the security forces have not been made public.

These have been the means by which opposition parties, striking workers, squatters on unused land, and Marxists in ZANU(PF) and the unions etc have been repressed. Rarely has this security apparatus taken ac-

tion against the old reactionaries—its victims are basically the workers, peasants, and youth who are thought to be political opponents of the regime.

Through using the repressive powers of state, the ZANU(PF) leaders have cleared the way to a one-party dictatorship. But, without a break with capitalism, this will not solve the national-tribal divisions which are festering in Zimbabwe society—but only, after perhaps a temporary period, serve to intensify them.

## The national question

It is clear that in Zimbabwe the compromise with capitalism has resulted in painfully slow progress on the land question—the fundamental issue of the Zimbabwean revolution. The postponement of a thorough-going settlement of the land question has fuelled the distrust of the Ndebele peasantry in the Harare government which had also disarmed the ZIPRA guerillas and failed to provide jobs for the youth.

Such mistrust arose that some youth took up arms against the state. Of course, not all 'dissidents' came from this background. Many acts of terrorism have clearly been committed by bandits sent in from South Africa, and in some cases apparently even by state agents trying to create an excuse for police action.

Sabotage of government projects, the killing of ZANU officials etc, brought down the terrible wrath of the armed forces under the command of the ZANU(PF) leaders. Killings of peasants, torture, detentions and military rule over Matabeleland followed.

In short, the compromise with capitalism led to an enormous sharpening of national antagonism between Ndebele and Shona.

Matabeleland is now bitterly alienated after the deaths of hundreds or possibly thousands at the hands of the armed forces, particularly the 5th Brigade.

The Ndebele minority now interprets its hardships as the result of being a tribal-national minority—they feel nationally oppressed at the hands of the Shona-dominated Harare government. The lack of progress on the land and social questions (there has been no land resettlement in Matabeleland implemented yet) has made the problem much worse as politicians have sought petty advantage in tribal chauvinism. Both parties exploit their tribal base.

The worsening of the national question since independence reveals similar processes to those described by Trotsky in his *History of the Russian Revolution*. There, the overthrow of the oppressive Tsar's imperial regime, and the aspirations for democracy which this brought into the open, led oppressed national minorities to press towards greater autonomy and their own states.

In similar fashion, the relative unification of the black majority achieved in the struggle against the Smith regime has been reversed since the downfall of the regime. With no solution offered to the social problems through a break with capitalism, the aspirations of the Ndebele masses are channeled through their consciousness of oppression as a 'national group'. In the future, without a break with capitalism, this could even lead to mass

Ndebele support for a state of their own.

From the point of view of the development of the productive forces, Marxism favors the largest possible political units, overcoming the barriers which 'nation-states' have posed on economic development—but only through **voluntary** amalgamation and in no way through coercion. Thus the Russian Marxist Lenin explained that, in conditions of national oppression, Marxism must implacably defend the democratic right of nations to self-determination, including their right to secession and establishment of their own state.

This was not a matter of abstract or moral principle, but a vital part of the programme for working-class revolution. By championing the rights of the oppressed, the Marxists aimed to prevent bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalists from dividing the working-class, and peddling utopian capitalist solutions for their real material problems.

In reality, by defending the right of nations to self-determination, Marxism aims to **unite** the working-class of different nationalities in the struggle for democracy and socialism.

At the same time Lenin argued that there could be no concessions to separatism in the unions and working-class parties—the workers internationally have to build and protect their organised unity.

This basic standpoint of Marxism is not to be found in the leadership of either nationalist party in Zimbabwe. However, since ZANU(PF) is the party in power which has carried through the compromise with capitalism and deployed the armed forces against the Ndebele minority, its leaders have to take the main responsibility for the worsening national question.

It is this leadership which meted out brutal repression against the first stirrings of revolt, and which is now attempting to impose a one-party dictatorship on the Zimbabwean people.

Marxism has always strongly opposed the imposition of unity and the holding together of nations by the use of troops, which has the effect of bitterly dividing the workers and peasants.

The turn now by the ZANU(PF) leadership towards unity talks is not because of tender feelings for the Ndebele workers and peasants by Mugabe, but because the military-police methods have been exhausted. Nevertheless this turn opens up a new political situation which is likely to draw workers, peasants and youth into intense political discussion about the way forward.

## Elections

Since independence there have been a number of political crises and some reshuffling of the leadership—but none of these changes have defined a new course to solve the political and economic problems of Zimbabwe.

The July 1985 elections were designed by the Mugabe government to be a conclusive victory for ZANU(PF). But they have brought about changes not anticipated by the leadership. Taken as a whole, these changes amount to a turning-point in the post-independence politics of

Zimbabwe.

Both ZANU(PF) and ZAPU approached the elections with big illusions. The ZANU(PF) leadership had high expectations that the Ndebele masses would be persuaded or forced to vote for their candidates. Last minute efforts were made to establish an Ndebele-speaking leadership for the campaign in Matabeleland. They expected that ZAPU could be broken by the crushing weight of military occupation and detentions.

On the other hand, the ZAPU leadership had the illusion that the Shona masses would turn away from ZANU(PF) and give a 'protest vote' to ZAPU. They thought that the undoubted dissatisfaction of the Shona masses with the corruption, lack of housing, high prices, and fewer jobs would turn them to ZAPU. This, ZAPU members believed, would build a sufficient groundswell for ZAPU to win.

## Results

The election results of an overwhelming majority for ZANU(PF) but also of obstinate support for ZAPU in Matabeleland, were the outcome of several different processes taking place.

Before the elections there were signs that the economic upturn, based on the good rains, had brought particular benefits to the peasantry. An upper layer had benefitted most, but hope of a better life for all also affected the peasant mass.

The petty bourgeois politicians of ZANU(PF) constantly attacked the 'lazy workers', and praised the peasantry for their hard work. They know that the peasantry form their most reliable base of support.

In the towns, on the other hand, the social problems were much more obvious, and the situation was more difficult to control.

As was acknowledged in the *Financial Times* (11 June 1985), the real challenge to the government did not come from the fragmented opposition parties but from "the growing dissatisfaction among the urban population"—the working class in the cities and towns. The government showed its recognition of this fact by attacking the Marxists in the trade unions and ZANU(PF) in the run-up to the elections.

This discontent among the urban working class was shown in widespread criticism of economic policies, in questions raised in party meetings, and in the angry mass opposition to corrupt or unrepresentative ZANU(PF) councillors.

The potential strength of the working-class opposition was shown in the massive marches, especially by the women, against local party leaders in some towns.

The party leadership took this discontent seriously. In some cases ministers were sent to negotiate with demonstrators and promised to look into their grievances. At the same time thuggery and violence by the Youth Brigades was encouraged to intimidate urban people even in areas where the opposition parties had little support.

It was noticeable in the early stages of the election campaign that the urban masses felt voting would change

nothing. In the bigger towns, especially Harare, the turnout to register for the elections was very slow. "People seem to treat the vote with levity; and yet thousands of Zimbabweans died for it", complained the *Sunday Times* (20 January 1985).

This casual attitude towards the vote showed an awareness among the urban working class that power was not in their hands. Most could see there was no real alternative to ZANU(PF). Many felt its victory would lead to a one-party dictatorship which would have to be accepted.

The indifference among the urban people, particularly in Harare, produced a panicky response from the leadership. Every opposition statement, however feeble, produced a thundering reply from party leaders using their newspapers and radios to the full.

In an important tactical switch, Mugabe pulled back from making the one-party state the key question of the election. He also made concessions to persuade people to vote for the ruling party. The workers were given a wage increase of 15% and the government promised that the new Labour Act would operate in their interests.

In the rural areas, discontent threatened from older and traditional people over legal challenges to the lobola custom. To calm this down, Mugabe called the first gathering of chiefs since independence. He promised that fathers' traditional rights over their daughters would continue, and made concessions to the powers of the chiefs.

ZANU(PF) presented itself as the party of order and development and attacked ZAPU as the party of the dissidents.

To make his election victory more credible internationally, Mugabe allowed opposition parties some access to the press. ZANU's face towards the Ndebele minority, however, remained truculent and dictatorial. In his personal appearances in Matabeleland, Mugabe promised a tougher policy towards the Ndebele, hoping to force acceptance of ZANU(PF)'s power to rule 'forever'.

ZAPU approached the elections in a weak state of organisation. Virtually every party organiser had been detained. The reign of terror by the state after the Midlands riots of June 1984 broke ZAPU's organised support in Beitbridge, Chinoyi, and most of the Midlands.

ZAPU's electoral strategy was for a 'united front' of all 'progressives' to unite Zimbabwe, and the one-party state was opposed. But the leaders put forward no programme for unity so it would not exclude any group! At the same time as calling for a 'united front' of all 'progressives' it launched bitter attacks on the 'fascism' of ZANU, thus deliberately excluding ZANU from among the 'progressives'.

The 'united front' could thus be nothing more than a reactionary anti-Mugabe bloc of all pro-capitalist opposition parties and Smith. Such a mixed bag of sell-outs, racists, and opportunists had no chance of success. Not even the assassination of five leading members of UANC could bring ZAPU and UANC together in an electoral pact. All-in-all there were 258 candidates, mainly from the fragmented opposition parties, fighting for only 80 seats!

In the hysterical atmosphere of party violence, which was only a thin cover for tribalism, ZAPU's supporters outside Matabeleland retreated. In the elections to the district council in the Beitbridge area, formerly a ZAPU stronghold, it did not win a single seat.

But in the run-up to the parliamentary elections,

District Council results in Matabeleland showed a different picture. Here, with Ndebele in an overwhelming majority, there was a fierce loyalty to ZAPU.

ZAPU candidates were almost universally elected even when voters were threatened with violence if they voted for 'The Dissident'—that is, the ZAPU candidate. The government was so embarrassed that the District Council election results were not published for months.

## The white elections

The white elections were a victory for the die-hard elements among the whites: Smith's party candidates won 15 out of the 20 seats reserved for whites. The success of anti-Mugabe candidates in these elections revealed a trend which only Marxism—though it did not anticipate it entirely—could explain.

The compromise with the whites, enshrined in Lancaster House and in the policy of the ZANU(PF) leadership, is not a policy equally supported on both sides. There has been precious little 'change of heart' among the whites, only a recognition of the current relationship of power. Their acceptance of the policy of 'reconciliation' has not changed their attitude towards ordinary Zimbabwean workers and peasants, which remains one of contempt and racial arrogance.

The ZANU(PF) leadership was taken in by flattery, fawning, and offers of gifts to speed their corruption, as evidence of genuine co-operation at a political level. But the present situation is a graphic illustration of the results of class-collaboration. The white bourgeois and landowners have taken advantage of the 'historic compromise' of Lancaster House to secure their own position and preach the most reactionary monetarist doctrines. The results of these policies—higher prices, wage freezes, redundancies and factory closures—are then blamed on the 'socialism' of Mugabe!

But the election results have knocked a few potholes into the smooth road of collaboration.

Two political trends among the whites offered themselves to the white electorate: Smith's Conservative Alliance (CAZ) and the 'independents'.

Smith and his aging cronies launched a campaign blatantly defending capitalism and his past record in putting the interests of the whites first. Undoubtedly part of Smith's strategy was to form an anti-Mugabe bloc in the West, as he stood as a candidate for the first time in Bulawayo.

The 'independents', generally the direct representatives of the big capitalist interests, follow a policy of accepting the compromise in order more effectively to combat the socialist aspirations of the Zimbabwean masses. They were enthusiastically endorsed by the ZANU leadership as 'genuine non-racialists'.

Undoubtedly a factor in the anti-Mugabe vote among the whites was the fear of a one-party dictatorship, of Zimbabwe taking the path of so many African countries of tribal violence and civil war. The whites did not support the idea of genuine democratic rights, but they feared the growth of arbitrary state power would lead to a loss of their privileges.

There are thus some differences in approach to the one-

party state question. Big capital is cautiously in favour of a one-party dictatorship—if such a government could secure the peace by agreement or by the gun in Matabeleland. It is fairly confident of finding new ways of incorporating white privilege and capitalist interests into the framework of a one-party dictatorship under Mugabe.

The ZANU leadership has encouraged this approach by promising to include a number of white candidates on the ZANU ticket in a future one-party 'election'.

Faced with the challenge of the whites to his authority, Mugabe fumed but retreated. He said that the 20 white seats entrenched in the constitution "must go immediately." But he did not then seek the support of ZAPU's MPs to abolish the 20 white seats entrenched in the constitution.

With the agreement of ZAPU the 70% 'yes' vote in the House of Assembly necessary to abolish the white seats after April 1987 would be reached. This would open the way to forcing through a one-party state with a unanimous vote before April 1990. After this date only a 70% vote in the Assembly is needed to establish a one-party state.

Instead of seeking ZAPU's support, he escalated his political attack on ZAPU in a fresh attempt to solve the 'ZAPU problem'.

## A turning-point

Not only the white, but the other election results surprised both ZANU(PF) and ZAPU leaders, and set in motion a series of political events which have now resulted in the opening of negotiations between the leadership of both parties.

The underlying political process revealed by the elections has meant that the talks which are now taking place are qualitatively different from the many sessions of talks previously held between ZANU(PF) and ZAPU. The reasons for this change lie in the shattering of the illusions promoted by the respective leaders in the support they would each receive nation-wide.

Ironically, the election results confirmed the overwhelming support for ZANU(PF) among the Shona majority—but fell well short of being a conclusive victory. On the face of it, ZANU(PF) made major gains by increasing its vote from 1,7m to 2,2m between 1980 and 1985, out of an electorate of 2,9m. This support was based on the hope that Mugabe would implement measures in favour of the masses (socialism), if only the political obstacles in his way could be removed.

But the crushing majority won by ZANU(PF) nation-wide could not hide the fact that it could not make inroads into ZAPU's Matabeleland base. Despite a reign of terror in Matabeleland marked by forced attendance at ZANU(PF) meetings, forced buying of ZANU(PF) party cards, torture, massacres and blackmail (all of which served to warn the Ndebele of the dire consequences of continuing to support ZAPU), the vote for ZANU(PF) was only 12,9 per cent of the Matabeleland electorate.

Significantly, the firmest support for ZANU(PF) came

from the Bulawayo area, from Shona businessmen and civil servants attracted there.

The problems within ZANU(PF) were hidden under a barrage of attacks on ZAPU.

But the election results were also a body-blow for the ZAPU leadership. Despite considerable urban discontent, a protest vote in favour of the opposition parties did not develop outside Matabeleland as the workers could not see any advantage to them in anti-Mugabe party groupings.

For ZANU(PF) the results confirmed its predominance as the party representing the majority Shona. Muzorewa's UANC is to all intents and purposes dead. ZANU(Sithole) secured one seat; but, despite some support in the south-east, is also breaking up.

For ZAPU the results confirmed the fact the leadership had tried to avoid: that ZAPU is now a party of the Ndebele without the prospect of gaining even a protest vote in other areas of Zimbabwe. ZAPU's support in the eastern two-thirds of the country dominated by ZANU(PF) virtually collapsed, and in the Midlands the party vote was halved from 27 per cent in 1980 to 14 per cent in this election.

The shocks and tremors within the ZAPU leadership were shown when they did not seriously challenge the fairness of the elections. The leadership and activists were faced with the realisation that ZAPU is a tribal-national party of a minority. On this basis there were only two alternatives—either a deal with ZANU(PF) or a hardening regional line leading towards separatism.

Some ZANU(PF) leaders reported that some Ndebele were already talking of the 'Republic of Mthwakazi', and that Matabeleland already felt like a state within a state. But Nkomo calculated that it would be more to his advantage to seek a deal with Mugabe than to encourage separation. The majority of the Ndebele were still against such a direction.

Although fairly soon after the elections Nkomo made overtures to Mugabe, the reaction of the ZANU(PF) leadership was one of intensified repression. By making almost daily threats to ban ZAPU, Mugabe was prepared to take the inter-party struggle to the brink. Any further steps would have driven ZAPU underground and sparked off fresh explosions in Matabeleland.

These extreme policies were the inevitable result of the dilly-dallying on the land question and the lack of progress on all social questions. On the basis of compromise with capitalism no decisive progress was possible.

The appointment of Enos Nkala as Minister of Home Affairs after the election showed how determined Mugabe was to secure the complete surrender of Nkomo, rather than settle for an uneasy deal. Nkala, himself Ndebele-speaking, is a long-standing enemy of Nkomo. He had stood as a ZANU(PF) candidate in Matabeleland and lost his deposit. Yet after the elections Mugabe insulted the Ndebele people by appointing him to settle issues with ZAPU.

A new security apparatus was set up and detentions of ZAPU leaders followed. Nkomo's body-guards were disarmed during a campaign to have him 'eliminated'.

With hindsight it now appears that the role of Nkala was to deliver Nkomo to the negotiating table bound and gagged. With any remaining national ambitions of Nkomo destroyed, his lieutenants and followers could be brought into the ruling party. ZANU(PF) would then have the mantle of a truly national party.

It is impossible to follow the dynamics of the moves towards a deal without an understanding of the situation in Southern Africa as a whole.

## The pressures on Mugabe

A powerful factor in Mugabe's thinking must have been the devastation of Mozambique and Angola by reactionary bands directly supported by South Africa.

Up to 20,000 Zimbabwean troops are now deployed in Mozambique to secure lines of transport and combat the MNR. The tops of the security apparatus have no illusions that a quick and easy victory is likely because of the devastation of the country and the collapse of FRELIMO's authority in many areas. A costly, drawn-out military operation, which is most likely, will drain increasing resources from the Zimbabwean state.

Faced with this prospect, Mugabe had every reason to consider the military cost of repression in Matabeleland.

As a pragmatic politician he was forced to recognise that the military occupation of Matabeleland had not produced the political results he had expected. Continuation of this policy would inevitably invite deeper South African involvement in support of reactionary bands, which would seek the support of an oppressed tribal-national group.

Fighting on these two fronts, it was likely that the army and police would become bogged down and weary. The political implications were dangerous to the ruling elite.

There was an element of risk in the strategy of smashing ZAPU and forcing Nkomo to the wall. There was always the possibility that Nkomo, incapable of providing a socialist solution, could have been driven in the direction of separatism and alliance with South Africa.

But, despite being defenceless, Nkomo had an important card to play—the continued and solid support of the Ndebele for ZAPU. This meant that the unequal partnership of convenience would not have to be a humiliating surrender for Nkomo. Even so, it will involve him in a less powerful position than he had before.

It is reported that the deal will be based on the representation of ZAPU within the leading organs of ZANU(PF) in proportion to its electoral support.

But these practical arrangements will cause new headaches and tensions within the ZANU(PF) leadership. These can be overcome (and then only temporarily) by Mugabe taking increasing power into his own hands, and balancing between the different political-regional factions within ZANU(PF).

The working class and peasantry may wonder at the amazing zig-zags of the politicians. But many will sigh with relief that Mugabe had the boldness to attempt to resolve the tribal-national division of the country.

For all these internal and external reasons it is likely that the deal will be made, despite the formidable hurdles which will have to be jumped.

The incorporation of what remains of the ZAPU leadership into ZANU(PF), under the slogan of unity, will undoubtedly bring a welcome pause to the tribal-national battles. The frenzy whipped up by the ZANU(PF) leadership before and after the elections will

now recede. But the poison of tribal prejudice has seeped into the consciousness of some sections of the working class, and certainly remains in the peasantry.

Building 'unity' at the top by rearranging party positions and securing the voluntary winding up of ZAPU will bring a temporary pause to the vicious anti-ZAPU campaign which carried all the marks of a crude tribal struggle.

This will remove one of the formidable obstacles to rebuilding the unity of workers in Bulawayo, Harare, and the crucial area of the Midlands.

## Problems of one-party rule

At the same time it will open up new problems in the ruling party. The incorporation of selected ZAPU leaders into privileged positions, at the expense of ZANU(PF) careerists, has been fought with the greatest energy by sections of the latter.

Even though Mugabe may succeed in over-riding this opposition and 'uniting' with Nkomo, this will import all the divisions of the middle-class leadership into a single party.

After a period of celebration and 'reconciliation', the petty squabbling among the leaders will resume. Basically the 'new' ruling party will consist of ZAPU supporters in Matabeleland, and ZANU(PF) supporters in the East. In the Midlands, where the parties are more evenly divided, there are likely to be fierce battles to determine which local party leadership predominates.

When the unity deal is seen to have solved none of the social problems, there will be a growing realisation that the politicians have looked after themselves very nicely. The workers and peasants will want to put forward genuine leaders of the working people to replace corrupt party hacks.

Workers of ZANU(PF) and ZAPU will be able to see more clearly the need for class policies against their common exploitation, and seek unity with their fellow workers against pro-capitalist leaders. Ndebele workers particularly, will find that the ZAPU leaders have done nothing to secure their interests, and will look for a way forward.

But spontaneous tendencies towards working-class unity can be cut across by the deep-rooted tribal and national divisions by unscrupulous politicians. The national question will not go away just because a single party has been proclaimed, as the Karanga-Zezuru conflicts within ZANU(PF) have demonstrated.

After a temporary pause, it is inevitable that tribal-national discrimination and oppression will resurface. Since capitalism cannot deliver the goods, the competition for land, jobs, and education will follow the old tribal and regional channels.

Only a genuine socialist leadership in the working class can cut across this process, by building and sustaining firm unity among Shona and Ndebele workers on the basis of linking the struggle for decent wages, jobs, homes, education, and land to the struggle for socialism against the pro-capitalist leadership of both ZAPU and ZANU(PF).

## LEADERSHIP OR BUREAUCRACY ?



*Nkomo and Mugabe signing the Lancaster House agreement—guaranteeing capitalism its future in Zimbabwe.*

The explosive pressures building up from below after the elections can be seen both in the demonstrations which were mounted against councillors in many towns before the elections, and in the near-riots and victimisation of supporters of minority parties by women supporting ZANU(PF).

These demonstrators vented their frustration about their poor prospects and lack of housing on supporters

of the minority parties, but also, in some cases, on well-to-do ZANU(PF) members.

The violence was fuelled particularly by the lack of improvement in their lives experienced by ZANU(PF) women: "There is a shortage of houses, why should they stay in houses when we don't have houses. Their houses will be distributed to party members by the party."

At first the ZANU(PF) leadership encouraged these actions, but soon feared they would escalate out of control and even take a clearer class direction. Appeals for restraint by leaders such as Shamuyarira and Nyagumbo had no effect, however, and in the end the reprisals were stopped only by the intervention of Mugabe himself.

## Pressures accumulating

All the pressures of Zimbabwean society are now accumulating at the top. The inadequacies of the leadership will now be seen more clearly as the workers, youth and peasantry see no solution to their urgent problems. Among the most advanced workers there will be a search for the way out of the seizing up of the Zimbabwean revolution.

Those who started off as the leadership of a guerilla movement, forced to live in modest conditions and often sharing the dangers of war, are now the well-to-do politicians living in luxury and fawned on by the capitalists. Nothing brings this out better than the financial contributions these leaders make to the party.

**Immediately after independence party leaders used to contribute \$500 a month to the party and in return receive an allowance, but now Ministers earning up to \$4,330 a month are only contributing \$50 a month.**

The outlook of this leadership now reflects its material position of wealth, high salaries, farm ownership and income from businesses. The common complaint among workers is that the leaders preach socialism in the day but practice capitalism at night.

These leaders are increasingly remote from the workers and peasants. Many of them feel closer to the capitalists and wealthy whites in the suburbs where they live, than with the masses. Instead of closing the gap between themselves and the masses, they are increasing their privileges. Many are permanently in debt to the building societies and the banks.

With their privileged position this layer is unable to make a break with capitalist policies. Neither can they mobilise the workers to carry out the transformation of society. They show no real interest in the problems of the workers and peasants. Rather their coming to power has been accompanied by the rise of corruption and nepotism.

The Department of Labour officials are a terrible example of the general contempt and hostility of the state bureaucracy towards the masses. Instead of attempting to solve the problems of workers during disputes, they often call the police in to arrest them.

Within a two-year period, no less than four chief industrial relations officers, one deputy chief, and 42 industrial relations officers resigned to take up positions in private companies. As Shava, the Minister of Labour, was forced to state after these revelations: "One remains wondering whether such officers are not actually agents of the private sector from the outset."

Evidence has come to light of industrial relations officers leaking confidential information to the capitalists, socialising with management, and being unwilling to

speak to the workers. The new labour law gives no powers to the workers to expose and correct such pro-capitalist activities.

Equally in the Department of Land and Resettlement, leaders of the co-operatives complain of rudeness and pro-capitalist policies.

With these state policies it is not surprising that the capitalist organisations have no similar complaints!

What is taking place in Zimbabwe is more than the transformation of the guerilla leadership and educated strata into a privileged bureaucracy. The top leadership is more than privileged and wealthy. Through its growing ownership of farms and involvement in business, it is becoming a junior partner of the big capitalists, hanging onto the coat-tails of the monopoly businessmen and landowners.

In August 1984 the Second Congress of ZANU(PF) adopted a Code of Conduct, supposedly aimed against capitalist elements in the party. Since that time, the Code has hardly even been mentioned, let alone implemented. Moreover the **method** of investigation it proposed, involving secret reports and enquiries, is diametrically opposed to what workers want, which is **open** discussion and action to discipline those seeking to enrich themselves at the expense of the masses.

The Code of Conduct was not implemented in the selection of candidates for the 1985 elections at local or national level. Instead, among the ZANU(PF) candidates for election were many well-known owners of big farms and transport companies. They had been put forward to the districts and branches as candidates approved of by the central party leadership. Now in Parliament these elements have an unparalleled opportunity for enriching themselves, while the rank and file suffer unemployment and stagnating poverty incomes.

The Code of Conduct is the only concession that has been made to control the growing wealth of the party elite. The idea was that the party top leaders would discipline themselves by getting rid of their farms and companies.

But now it is reported that Cabinet ministers and army officers are refusing even to answer questions on their ownership of farms, transport companies, and firms.

In reality, after five years of independence marked by growing corruption in the party and civil service, the workers are now well aware that they have no control over their political representatives. This feeling is now noticeable right down to the cell level.

## A one-party dictatorship?

The fundamental force behind the drive towards a one-party dictatorship is the crisis of the system which has failed to deliver the goods: capitalism. The lack of jobs, land, houses, and decent wages—which capitalism cannot provide—is building up politically explosive material.

Faced with these pressures from below which cannot be met, the leadership is balancing between the interests of the workers and peasants and the capitalists. It hopes to maintain the illusion that it gives equal attention to the interests of the exploited and the exploiters.

If capitalism was a growing, wealth-creating system, the demands of the workers and peasants could at least partially be met. Social benefits could be expanded and the explosive material defused. With the masses seeing the prospect of satisfying their basic demands within the present system, the government could tolerate a variety of political opinions without fear of weakening its hold on power.

## Bonapartism

But capitalism in the colonial world has been unable to develop the productive forces necessary to provide for the needs of the people. Since independence in Zimbabwe there has been hardly any significant advance in production.

Instead of reorganising production on the basis of state ownership of the banks, mines, big farms and factories, the ZANU(PF) leadership has defended capitalism. The weak productive base has been further weakened by factory closures and the stagnation of the world market.

The ZANU(PF) leadership is aware that the crisis of capitalism is kindling a political explosion. It fears that the frustrated hopes of the masses could turn towards opposition parties, or, more likely, towards internal rank and file opposition movements.

It is these pressures which are forcing the leadership to balance between the monopolies and strengthen the personal rule of Mugabe—all ingredients which make up Bonapartism in Zimbabwe.

The agro-industrial wage dispute shows how, at times, the leadership is forced to make gestures towards satisfying the demands of the workers.

Yet, more importantly, the conflicting pressures are forcing Mugabe further along the anti-democratic path. Political opposition is repressed. The state apparatus is being consolidated not so much against the threats from South Africa, but against the future internal opposition of the workers and peasants.

All these trends taken together are what add up to the one-party dictatorship. The leadership is driven ahead along this road to secure itself in power mainly against the coming socialist opposition. At the same time it hopes that the added state powers will help it to control different factions and Shona tribal rivalries which are festering in the party.

Mugabe presents the one-party state as a solution to the national division of the country. It is this aspect of the propaganda which gains some support for the one-party state campaign. The illusion is being peddled that the problems of national disunity and tribalism can be solved by a one-party state.

The prospect of a one-party dictatorship has been strengthened by the collapse of the minority parties—the UANC and ZANU(Sithole). ZANU(PF) rallies regularly have ‘confessions’ by defectors from other parties. Many of these had high positions in their former parties. The sense of demoralisation in these parties is deepened by the indefinite detention of many party activists.

This collapse, taken together with the deal being

negotiated with ZAPU, concentrates all the contradictions between the classes within the ruling party. Already the intense party loyalty being drummed into the rank and file is evidence of inner party tensions.

As the party leadership consolidates its wealth and position and the party forces more diverse elements and members of minority parties into its ranks, so party democracy is more and more trampled on.

Party leaders accuse new recruits to the party of being “just opportunists, hoping to get a job after joining the party.” (Ndlovu in *Herald*, 7 August 1985) In Matabeleland and elsewhere there is, indeed, this ‘false type’ of membership.

But the ZANU(PF) leaders use this fact to falsely justify suppression of party democracy. They are hostile to questions being raised by the rank and file, and direct the party apparatus to suppress all inner-party opposition.

The detention in March 1985 of Marxists who were members of ZANU(PF) and the official trade unions was only the most extreme form of repression of genuine socialist views within the party.

The workers’ experience is that complaints are not taken up by the leadership. The party is ruthlessly directed from above, and meetings are conducted in the form of rallies rather than forums for political discussion.

All potential sources of power are being removed from the lower levels of the party—the cells, branches, districts and regions—and entrenched at the top. A number of decisions have been taken which reinforce the personal position of Mugabe in the party and government. The new political bureau is handpicked by him and it is this same bureau which is meant to enforce party control over the Cabinet.

## Emergence of a left wing?

With the widening gulf between leaders and members, the objective conditions are ripening for the emergence of a left wing in the party. Such a grouping would be critical of the compromises being made and look towards the rank and file for support.

The workers are keenly aware of the left statements occasionally made by individual leaders. The criticism by Ushewokunze of the Director of Railways who was closely associated with Mugabe was widely discussed. Many, even among the most politically advanced, will hope that the struggle for socialist policies would be made easier by a ‘left’ leader endorsing their position.

Comparison is sometimes made with the labour movement in other countries, particularly Europe, which has thrown up leaders within the mass labour parties to the left of the official leadership. These lefts have campaigned on elements of socialist policies: for greater controls over multinationals, in support of specific strikes, against nuclear weapons, etc.

These left leaders have stopped short of adopting Marxist policies and methods and therefore, under all the pressures of capitalist society, have bent and retreated. But they have considerable support among the activists and evoke a tremendous echo among the workers when they move into struggle.

The processes are very different in Zimbabwe. In Europe the labour movement has been built by the working class on the foundation of democratic traditions in the unions and local party bodies. Right-wing leaders use all manner of methods to try to suppress socialist opposition—including expulsions of Marxists—but they cannot completely rule out vigorous debate and the expression of diverse opinions among the rank and file. It is upon this democratic base that the left leaders rest.

In Zimbabwe the party is fundamentally an organ of the bureaucratic elite reinforced by state power, which deals ruthlessly with 'dissident' opinions. Potential left leaders have, moreover, no links to the rank-and-file workers or even to the peasant cooperatives. They would have no home base (apart from their tribal and regional support) from which to put forward socialist policies.

Any potential left leaders would also be state functionaries with all the privileges of a bureaucratic elite.

Any persistent left criticism made by a member of this elite would soon bring into question his salary, mortgage on the house, car, ability to pay off loans on the farm, etc. His personal security would also be at stake.

But criticism of different aspects of the compromise with capitalism are made by leaders every so often. Such criticism takes the form of demagogic statements made from above, not linked to the rank and file. These critics are part of an elite which is balancing fundamentally on a peasant base and which is hostile even to the idea of the workers controlling the party.

The speeches and actions of Ushewokunze and Tekere show the limitations of these potential 'lefts'.

Ushewokunze, a doctor with substantial landowning interests in Bulawayo, has called for the formation of Marxist study circles. But he was nowhere to be found when workers were suppressed for setting up genuine study circles to study ZANU(PF) policies and Marxism.

As the grand master of the left phrase, he has not bothered to link up in any way with the critical rank and file of the party.

Tekere, a maverick whom (at times) workers have hoped to see expose the privileges of the new elite, is another left phrase-monger.

After announcing the Zimbabwean revolution had been hijacked by the elite, he returned to his Manica base. Instead of supporting the demands of the peasantry for land, however, he announced he would personally 'deal with' squatters on unoccupied 'white' land.

These 'squatters' are the very same peasants who gave everything to the cause of the guerilla struggle. As ZANU(PF) supporters they suffered the horrors of the war in the east, but they fled from Tekere when he came to 'investigate' complaints of squatting. His statements against the 'squatters' now have the enthusiastic approval of the most reactionary white members of parliament!

Again, for a moment, he gained some respect from workers for his opposition to party violence, and his defence of the right of ZAPU to campaign in Mutare. This vanished, however, within two days when he announced he would go, gun in hand, to shoot any 'birds' in Matabeleland opposing the one-party state.

The workers can expect nothing from these elements who change their tune from day to day. These opportunists are not prepared in any way to support the struggle for party democracy and socialist policies in a party ruthlessly ruled from above.

Their phrase-mongering is linked to the jockeying for

power between the different regional bases of ZANU(PF). These regions are in turn the sub-tribal areas of Shona-speaking people.

The party leadership is 'balanced' to provide tribal representation according to the different dialects: Zezuru, Manyika, and Karanga. The struggles at the top, although conducted in the language of socialism and radical policies, are fundamentally about the alignment of different political overlords.

In the pubs and hotel bars, the political 'struggles' of the petty-bourgeois elite are discussed as they really are—in the language of tribalism.

The growing divisions between the masses and the political elite will inevitably lead to a working-class opposition movement to this leadership—of employed workers, youth, women and peasants also.

The leadership is acutely aware of discontent over jobs, wages, and land. The recent wage increases before the 1985 elections of 5 to 15 per cent, and the increase of agribusiness wages, show that attempts are being made to hold the support of the workers.

## Left opposition in ZANU

Gestures such as these can delay, but not stop, the growth of a movement of opposition. As Marxism has explained, reforms within capitalism, particularly in the colonial world, are tenuous and can soon be reversed. The approaching world recession will further limit gestures of this kind, as the profits of the employers decline while prices continue to increase for the workers.

The pressures from capitalism in decline—joblessness, inflation, low wages, and the lack of a movement on the land, will eventually force the workers and peasants into action against their leadership.

With their growing wealth and privilege, the political elite is vulnerable to the charge that they are parasitic—defending privileges, but unable to contribute to the building of the economy or political unity of the masses.

This opposition will develop unevenly. Because of the repression and tight control within the party, it is unlikely to rise up significantly within the party cells in the first instance.

Yet in time—as opposition to the pro-capitalist policies of the party leadership takes root among the youth, in the trade unions, among women, and among peasants—it will find its mass reflection in the party also.

The party leadership will try through bureaucratic and police means to suppress this opposition. And the so-called 'lefts' in the bureaucracy will add their weight to this repression.

But, with solid working-class roots, socialist opposition in the party will cut across the suppression, and insist on expressing itself.

When the socialist movement finally gains support nationally, as it will, potential left leaders in the bureaucracy will be faced with a personal challenge. Although they will ruthlessly defend the party establishment in the beginning, they will also calculate that such a movement could open the road to their individual advance.

Eventually we will see such opportunistic left leaders

jumping on to a socialist rank and file movement in the jockeying for power.

But, in the period immediately ahead, the real question is the perspectives for the emergence of opposition to the capitalist policies of the party leadership in working-class channels outside the party framework itself.

## The youth

It is among the youth that a socialist opposition is most likely first to develop. But there are definite layers of youth and there will be an uneven response to the genuine ideas of Marxism.

Among the unemployed youth, hundreds of thousands are drafted into the party organisations and used as the foot soldiers of the leadership. The youth in the Youth Brigades and Youth League are strongly attracted to the official ideas of 'socialism', but they want the leadership to go further.

The school youth show the greatest eagerness to absorb Marxist ideas. This democratic socialist opposition in embryo is already feared by the party bureaucracy, which has tried to limit political discussion in the schools. They are also more likely to emerge as an opposition because they resent the intimidation of the party youth who insist on them turning out to their meetings.

The youth have gained most from the early period of reforms as there has been a massive expansion in secondary education. But these advances in culture, and openings to the world of ideas and science, coupled with the inability of school-leavers to get jobs, have led to a critical assessment of the rampant careerism of the privileged bureaucracy.

The initial spurt ahead in education has now been followed by cuts, and this has resulted in declining standards, particularly in O-levels. The O-level results in 1985 were shocking. The pass rate declined from 43% in 1983 to 27% in 1985. Only 20% of the 73,000 candidates who sat for English passed. (*Guardian*, 21 October 1985) The shortage of suitable reading material has been blamed, but undoubtedly the problem is also the quality of teaching as youth show a great interest in learning English.

The mood in the schools has changed from one of optimism, progress, and sacrifice to one of growing disillusionment both among pupils and teachers. This mood has been partly brought about by the rapid promotion of ex-teachers to high-paid jobs. On the other hand there is the

lack of job opportunities for school leavers. What are we studying for? ask the students. For the first time the problem of discipline is arising in the schools.

The lack of jobs for well-educated youth is a time-bomb ticking away under the desks of the bureaucracy. The figures on the lack of jobs are quite staggering—**only 34,000 jobs have been created since independence, while about 170,000 school-leavers are joining the workforce every year.**

In the early years of independence, this youth unemployment was partially disguised by the economic upturn and the whites leaving the civil service, which created a number of opportunities for well-paid employment. Now apprenticeships are rare, and the monetarist policies of the government have led to a freeze on civil service appointments.

Some black bankers have even called for the firing of one-third of the civil servants as a way of reducing the budget deficit. (Dr Julius Makoni, *Herald*, 10 August 1985)

The school-leavers are now 'all dressed up with nowhere to go'. Many girls despair of getting jobs and marry early, while the boys search eagerly for a while and then, disillusioned, become dependent on the family.

At times the youth suffer from political instability. Without the strict discipline of struggle, they can become demoralised through prolonged joblessness, or seduced by the individual opportunities for advancement which still remain.

The disillusionment of the children of the revolution is a severe warning to the reformist leadership. But from the point of view of Marxism it is an indication that the objective conditions are ripening for a turn towards revolutionary ideas among broad sections of the youth.

The lack of jobs for school-leavers will help to break down the gap which is dividing the school youth from the mass of unemployed youth.

The socialist youth will have to learn the lessons of Marxism internationally to be able to make a real contribution to the development of Marxism in Zimbabwe. They will have to make a serious study of theory and of the perspectives for the Southern African and world revolution.

They will have to orient consciously towards the working-class—towards the workers' committees and unions, and towards the working masses in ZANU(PF) and the Youth Brigades. They will need to take up the problems of the mass of the youth and discuss with them a socialist way forward.

It is only in this way that a conscious socialist opposition will get the ear of the struggling youth and workers, and gain a base among the tens of thousands of party youth.

# THE LABOUR MOVEMENT



*Workers at a May Day rally. How can the trade unions be transformed and brought under workers' control?*

Although the youth have the energy and time for political discussion, they do not have the strength in production of the employed workers.

The question which is on the mind of all genuine strugglers is how the great potential of the workers for resistance to the compromisers and the capitalists can be realised.

During the struggle for independence the trade union leaders mobilised no challenge to the Smith regime or the bosses. Most were passive collaborators, not merely with capitalism, but also on the question of majority rule.

Hence the unions stagnated, and the workers were forced into the background by the petty-bourgeois nationalists.

After independence, while the union leadership eagerly fell over themselves in praise of compromise with capitalism, there was a spontaneous movement of workers—taking advantage of the black government to strike against the capitalists for a living wage.

This movement was not sustained because the workers looked to the ZANU(PF) leadership, rather than to their own power, to achieve their demands. Eventually these 'socialist' leaders used the police and the army to break the movement. Many strikers were dismissed after Kangai, the then Minister of Labour, threatened them

with the whip.

The union leaders dissociated themselves from this strike movement. Instead of supporting the workers' demands they attached themselves to the Department of Labour and pleaded with officials to attend their gatherings.

Despite the lack of leadership the strikes notched up many achievements—a national minimum wage, state regulation over dismissals, and the election of workers' committees which arose during the strike wave (but became regulated by the government as an alternative to strikes).

## Ebb and revival

Through the period of recession from 1982 to 1984 there were virtually no strikes, and the union leaders did not resist redundancies and factory closures. Where struggles against redundancies did take place these were under the leadership of the workers' committees.

These committees, under greater democratic control by the workers, have been a source of resistance to the corruption of the leaders. But, inevitably, even the best of the workers' committees have been forced to recognise their limitations.

*Restricted to the factory they cannot make changes to the disgraceful Industrial Council agreements made by the union bureaucrats with the capitalists against the workers' interests.*

In the face of these difficulties many workers' committees have been isolated, demoralised and forced to retreat. But it is to these committees that the workers will first turn to fight the exploitation of the capitalists and the control of the state bureaucracy.

There has been considerable industrial action since the elections. The workers have made use of the contradictory statements of the politicians. After Mugabe's post-election anti-Smith speech there were some strikes against racist management (with 2 000 demonstrators at Mashava Mine on 20 July 1985).

The dispute over the agro-industrial wage showed the enormous potential for struggle existing within even isolated sections of the working class. After the government announced an increase in the minimum wage to \$143.75 a month a furious resistance was mounted by the capitalists. This resistance was met by strikes and disputes throughout forests, plantations and estates as the workers insisted on the full increase.

*At the Muteyo Forestry Commission 150 workers struck early in August, at Mazowe more than 1 000 later in August, and about 4 000 in Manicaland tea estates early in October.*

When the government was faced by this movement it dithered, making one contradictory statement after another.

Other struggles show the potentially explosive situation in manufacturing, which has not benefitted as much as other sectors from the upturn.

In protest against redundancies, the workers of Springmaster, the largest furniture company in Zimbabwe, seized control of three factories early in October. The workers' committee appealed to the government to take over the company, and commandeered the company cars. But, with no support from the trade unions and other factories, the redundancies were eventually carried out.

In Brockhouse, an engineering company, there has been a protracted fight to save jobs. Towards the end of 1985, after a year of struggle, the workers succeeded in saving the factory by demanding the government take it over. Usually the government has simply advised workers to form a cooperative with no guarantee of state support.

These struggles have been essentially defensive. But the mood of the workers in industry is definitely hardening after decades of exploitation and arbitrary management.

The present struggles, important as they are, are designed to put pressure on the government. The mass of workers have yet to understand that their class demands cannot be met by their party leaders in a compromise with capitalism.

But movements such as these will strengthen the workers' committees and the desire to link up with other factories.

They are the foretaste of much bigger industrial battles to come, against dismissals and redundancies, for higher wages, pension rights, etc.

Simultaneously, it is entirely possible that non-industrial forms of working-class resistance will break out, such as bus boycotts, community action against lack of housing, rent strikes, etc. These will cut across factory divisions and combine many of the grievances of women and workers.

Unlikely as it may seem at present, there will eventually be the growth of mass opposition to the compromise with capitalism and to state control over the trade unions.

## The trade unions

A labour movement characterised by democratic discussion and decision-making, with perspectives independent from the government, has not been allowed to develop in Zimbabwe.

The trade unions are still suffering from a bad hangover after the liberation struggle. Having contributed nothing to the victory over white reaction, the union leadership now finds itself the pawn of the present government. At the same time it stands discredited in the eyes of the workers because it does not support their struggles.

*This crisis in the unions is the result of two main factors. On the one hand the policies of guerilla struggle belittled the role of the working class; and on the other hand the union leadership provided no way forward.*

Many workers gave material support to the guerillas, but this only emphasised their feelings of insignificance in contrast with the fighting guerilla youth. Having no faith in the working class, the guerilla leadership made no calls for unions fighting around bold economic and political demands, let alone preparing the workers for an armed seizure of power in the towns.

The timid and bureaucratic leadership of the unions often were the pawns of the ICFTU and other pro-capitalist agencies. They split again and again in the face of the challenge of UDI and capitalist reaction.

Despite the burden of this leadership, there were important struggles by the workers in the factories and townships against the Smith regime, which showed the potential for a worker-led opposition.

It is basically the same leadership (with the exception of the best elements, who were detained, removed or murdered) which is occupying the seats of power today. More than ever they are now under state control and free from control by their members.

An independent rank and file movement has been hindered in its development by the general demoralisation in the unions. The fighters for union democracy and socialist policies find the workers are sceptical that the unions can be changed.

This attitude is based on their experience of the corrupt union bureaucracies. They are also aware that this corruption has been tolerated by the state.

Large sectors of the working class have much deeper hopes and illusions in the nationalist leadership than in the pathetic union officials. Having no experience of a fighting union, many workers regard the present unions, at best, as pro-employer benefit funds with corrupt officials.

Where else could you find a situation where militant workers are proud to say they have resigned from their union?

## State control

Soon after independence the ZANU(PF) leadership made every effort to convert the existing trade unions, which were not of its making, into loyal party structures. The party leadership did not want to allow any potential source of opposition to its domination to remain. Although it appeared to have a radical stance, this leadership firmly opposed strikes and sought co-operation with employers in breaking the old leadership.

Workers' committees directly linked to the party apparatus were encouraged in opposition to the existing leadership. Party factions were formed in the unions to take over the union offices, often with the co-operation of the employers.

Direct state intervention in the trade union field became obvious with the removal of the secretary of the textile union, Phineas Sithole—and the installation of Albert Mugabe, the brother of the Prime Minister, to lead the officially-sponsored ZCTU!

Phineas Sithole had earned a radical reputation in the period of Smith for fighting against ICFTU domination of the trade unions. But this reputation of trade union militance was fatally compromised by his political support for ZANU(Sithole)—which participated in the 'Muzorewa' government—and it was this that paved the way for his removal.

The new leaders, however, did not come from the ranks of the working class. The opposition to Phineas Sithole in the textile industry after independence, for example, was led by Soko, a management official of the notorious multinational, Lonrho!

This internal opposition was finally able to win only with the mobilisation of the Department of Labour and the police. This union, which had well-developed democratic structures, was then virtually absorbed into the Department of Labour.

On the basis of class-collaboration—opposition to strikes and appeals for workers to 'work hard for the capitalists'—the ZANU(PF)-approved officials found they were often unable to displace the old leaders. Why should the workers fight for leaders based on a "new" brand of collaboration?

Where attempts to defeat the old leaders failed, the ZANU(PF) leadership either formed splinter unions based on the political support among workers for the party, or eventually made peace with the old collaborators.

The splinter unions had apparently radical policies and practices, but in reality were based fundamentally on support from the Department of Labour.

These supposedly 'radical' splinter unions followed in the terrible traditions of splits in the past. The end result is that there are now, for example, at least 11 different unions in the food industry!

With few exceptions, the splinters failed to grow or win the leadership in industry. They failed because of the policies of collaboration with the bosses carried out by the ZANU(PF) tops and implemented by the Department of Labour.

The disunity and lack of leadership by trade union officials resulted in stagnation in the trade unions even during the strike movement of 1980-81. Workers were often attracted to a 'radical' splinter union for a while, only to become disillusioned and then return to their own union or lapse into complete inactivity.

Now—faced with many fragmented unions without any credibility—the government is changing its policy.

For a period the government followed a policy of divide and rule, favouring sometimes the 'radical' splinter, at other times the registered and longer-established unions.

But the general trend in policy now is in favour of the old rogues, as was shown by the detention of workers campaigning for socialist policies in the engineering union. Complete state support is being given to the old discredited leadership of the past.

These changes have been brought about by the disgrace of the ZCTU leaders and by the fact that workers can no longer distinguish between the old and new policies of collaboration.

The ZCTU leaders who had been promoted to positions of authority for their subservience to ZANU(PF) and collaboration with the employers, proceeded to enrich themselves. These people vied for the most abject expressions of loyalty to the party, to which many were late-comers.

## Corruption

Union funds were looted, friends and relatives brought to hotel 'seminars' and sent abroad on trips, and gifts and funds received from unions internationally disappeared. Critics of this debauchery were removed from the leadership and damned as opponents of the government.

Eventually the government found that all credibility of these ZCTU officials was being lost. Just as Mugabe had had to get rid of the discredited Minister of Labour Kangai, so this trade union leadership was finally denounced by the new Minister of Labour, Shava. After a lengthy process of bureaucratic manoeuvre, during which the same Shava initially refused to accept their being dismissed, they were replaced.

A recent government report has confirmed what the Marxists had been arguing all along: that the unions are bureaucratic shells with a leadership under no democratic control by their members.

"The survey revealed a shocking state of affairs in some unions", the authors wrote, pointing out that some union bosses "make no regular financial reports while in other unions the leadership deviates from constitutional requirements in order to serve private ends." (*Herald*, 16 August 1985)

In plain language this means that the leadership is milking union funds for their own houses, cars, clothes, relatives, etc. Yet for the crime of pointing out these facts in the engineering union and campaigning for socialist policies, Marxists in Zimbabwe suffered detention and torture.

The whole strategy of the government is to make use of such surveys to 'restructure' the bureaucracies by even further state control. By intervening, the government is

trying with one hand to make the unions more acceptable to the workers who want nothing to do them. But with the other hand it is repressing all movements of the workers for union democracy and socialism.

## 'Reform' from above?

The government now declares itself against all splits and for a policy of one union per industry. But this is not part of a policy to put the control of the unions in the hands of the members, but a policy to integrate the unions more securely with the state.

It puts forward this position, not to assist the unification of the workers in the struggle for a living wage, jobs, and decent working conditions, but in order to control the unions more efficiently from above.

These policies are a result not only of the ideas of the ZANU(PF) leaders, but of the **objective** demands of capitalism. "Monopoly capitalism is less and less willing to reconcile itself to the independence of trade unions", Trotsky wrote in 1940.

"It demands of the reformist bureaucracy and the labour aristocracy, who pick up the crumbs from its banquet table, that they become transformed into its political police before the eyes of the working class."

It is this trend, shown most graphically in the colonial world, which has drawn the trade union bureaucracies together with state power.

But this intervention by the ZANU(PF) government to 'reform' the trade union bureaucracy from above cannot achieve even the formal unity of the existing bureaucracies.

The disunity of the trade unions cannot be solved by bureaucratic means which deny democratic control to the membership.

Only a leadership basing itself on the struggle of the workers against the capitalist bosses, and armed with a socialist program for union democracy, a living wage, etc., can win the genuine agreement of workers to unite in one trade unions.

Thus, the state-managed clean-up of the ZCTU and the 1985 ZCTU Congress has not heralded any real change in policies, but only a less openly corrupt and more efficient leadership.

Mutandare, leader of the mining union, is now the undisputed strong man of the ZCTU, but has made it abundantly clear that he is not prepared to challenge the government in any real way. In the future, however, there could be some conflict between the ZANU(PF) leadership and the union leadership over questions such as wage increases and price controls.

But, despite all this, there have been some changes in the unions. The ousting of the 'gang of four' from the ZCTU leadership (Makwarimba, Soko, Kupfuma, and Mashavira) has shown that unpopular leaders can be removed, even if campaigns for union democracy are suppressed.

Two leading lights of the 'gang of four' are now in trouble with their own unions. Soko has been dismissed at the textile union's congress, and Makwarimba of the commercial workers' union is facing a revolt in Gweru.

Even though these developments are undoubtedly a result of bureaucratic rivalry as well as the disgust of the workers, some change is in the air.

Apart from the manoeuvring at the top there is also evidence of rank and file revolt.

By throwing the NEWU (National Engineering Workers Union) regional secretary out of a Bulawayo factory, the workers showed their spontaneous disgust with the corrupt leadership: an action which completely confirmed the demands put forward by the engineering campaign in GEMWU (the previous name of this union).

A recent demonstration by 4 000 workers organised by a splinter union in the garment industry in Harare to demand a speeding up of the unification of both unions, also repudiated the Industrial Council agreement which does not benefit the workers. Even with Youth Brigade support for this demonstration, the large-scale mobilisation indicates considerable dissatisfaction among the rank and file.

Even in the rather quiet Harare Municipal Workers' Union, whose leadership recently expelled two supporters of a campaign for union democracy and socialist policies, there are rumblings among the membership. This resulted, at the 1985 AGM, in the replacement of the long-standing president, Maodzwa, by an apparently more radical opponent, because of the workers' dissatisfaction with his handling of wage negotiations.

None of these movements yet add up to the groundswell needed to raise the present demands of the workers to nationally coordinated action. But they do confirm the early developments of a future wave of opposition to the employers and the policies of compromise with capitalism.

## Revival of workers' movement

The first half of 1985 was the low-water mark for the working class since the strikes of 1980-81. This low point was marked by a decline in struggle on the one hand, and the frenzy whipped up by the ZANU(PF) leadership before and after the elections.

It was marked also by the arrest and victimisation of Marxists, who, while having the sympathy of many thousands of workers, were not actively defended when this would have meant defying the trade union leaders and the full weight of the Mugabe regime.

The workers' movement will be driven into action once again by economic and political factors. Over time it will become clear that the re-election of ZANU(PF) and any deal at the top with ZAPU will have changed nothing as far as the lives and conditions of working people are concerned. Yet the economic upturn has removed the government's excuse for the general lack of progress.

With the economic upturn and a halt to the debilitating succession of retrenchments and factory closures, the working class is regaining some of its confidence. Among many workers there will be the growing realisation that eventually they will **have to fight against the very government they have elected** if they are to secure the necessities of life.

The coming downturn in the economy will not necessarily have the same dampening effect on the workers' struggle as in 1982-84. What really affects the workers' consciousness is the change from one period of capitalism to another.

The approaching downturn will bring home to the mass of the workers that capitalism is in terrible decline with rising inflation coming along with the closing of many factories. What has obedience, patience and sacrifice availed them in the past? Many will be drawn to the conclusion that a policy of compromise with capitalism is completely against their interests.

After the pre-election wage increase of 15% in July 1985, real wages were the highest that they had been for more than a year, after many years of decline.

But the government only kept the lid down on price increases during the period leading up to the elections. Now milk, maize meal, sugar, cigarettes, electricity, and bus fares have gone up. The price of meat has increased dramatically. These price increases have already overtaken the wage increase.

The Reserve Bank has warned that a rapid increase in inflation is inevitable. At the same time it is unlikely that the minimum wage will be substantially increased, despite promises by Mugabe.

On the wider front the government will be seen to be backtracking on its promises for education, health, land, and on other questions.

The blame for poverty wages, lack of jobs, and inflation will increasingly be put at the door of the government, as the workers now feel that the upturn should have brought about real improvements.

Another political factor which will spur the working class on to independent action will be the implementation of the Labour Relations Act which provides enormous powers to government officials. The workers were promised they would make important gains through this law.

In time this also will be found to offer very few benefits, while the workers have to suffer even more government controls. There is bound to be anger that the workers have been conned by the talk of a pro-worker law.

The workers in Zimbabwe will turn again and again to the workers' committees to solve their problems. They will use them to their limits, before having to turn once again to the very difficult problem of transforming the unions.

Unless a leadership develops at the factory level the task of changing the unions will not even be posed. But such a movement for workers' control of the unions cannot be created simply by the heroic efforts of a minority of conscious activists in the factories and townships: the conditions for success will arise only when the workers are driven by rising prices, bus fares, and rents, to take co-ordinated mass action.

Movement after movement is likely to take place in the workers' committees and unions for democracy and socialist policies. Zimbabwean workers will want to copy the example of black workers in South Africa who are *building independent democratic trade unions*. Every effort should be made by the activists to make direct links with the unions in South Africa.

The union leadership in South Africa has the duty to give unqualified support to activists in Zimbabwe who are fighting for union democracy. They have a respon-

sibility to make clear their total opposition to state control and repression of socialist trade unionists.

It is necessary for the activists to be firm, but patient at the same time. Until a strong, conscious movement of mass opposition develops among the workers, the current leadership cannot be effectively challenged.

What holds this movement back is the formidable obstacle the workers face—the combination of the trade union bureaucracy and the Mugabe government which is quite prepared to use repression to defend the union bureaucracy and capitalism. The workers will have to confront their 'own' government. This movement is bound to develop, but it will do so on a massive scale only when feelings are strongly aroused.

The experience of the struggle in the engineering industry shows that even the most principled opposition to the union leadership with the general support of the workers cannot succeed if there is not a strong movement of the workers.

If this movement does not exist, the leadership will use every unconstitutional and illegal device, backed up by thuggery, to maintain control at all costs. If struggles go ahead without being buoyed up by the mass movement, then the genuine strugglers and factory leaders will be isolated and exposed to state repression.

Within the ranks of the workers the pressures are building up for union democracy, a living wage, a 40 hour week, no redundancies and the nationalisation of the monopolies—a program of change.

The challenge of the time is not the broad national mobilisation of the recent past. Rather the task is the careful development, in this period of repression, of a workers' leadership steeled in theory and able to lead the workers when the movement goes forward again.

This can only be achieved through the socialist education of the activists, particularly the leaders in the factory committees, who are in struggle against all forms of collaboration with the capitalists.

This is the task faced by all genuine strugglers in the factories, municipalities, mines, and farms.

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## Women

In the future we will also see movements of working-class women whose energies up to now have been diverted into party strife and punishment of ZAPU supporters in the East and Midlands.

Working-class and peasant women are used by the leadership to enforce the dictatorship of the party over half-hearted party members and supporters of opposition parties. Mugabe encourages a cult of personality among party women (led by his wife) whose 'uniform' is his portrait on bright African print cloth.

The majority of working-class women are forced to be active in the party to protect their homes against political vandalism. They attend party meetings but only give nominal support and are visibly less enthusiastic than in the immediate years after independence.

This unstable base of party loyalty has led to movements against local party leaders flaring up among

women, especially in opposition to municipal corruption and lack of consultation on increased municipal rents and charges.

They are bound to explode again and again as the limits of capitalist reform are reached, particularly on the housing question. Women have also led the demand for more schools, as in Warren Park (a Harare township), despite police repression of their meetings.

Although there have been changes in law to spell out the formal equality of women, women suffer harshly the result of capitalist crisis. Fewer and fewer women are able to get jobs as domestic servants, let alone factory work. Their attempts to make a living through petty trading are periodically repressed.

It is noticeable that the higher forms at school have proportionately smaller numbers of girls. Working class and peasant girls are made to feel that their education is an expensive luxury. In the schools they are grossly subservient—often kneeling before the teachers.

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## The peasants

It is reported that many peasants at the moment are feeling there has been an improvement in their life. Most are loyal to the ruling party, and the squatter movement is very quiet.

As a class the peasants have all the problems of putting forward their common interests when they are scattered and unorganised.

But it is not at all ruled out that there can be a movement of the peasants in the future. This is inevitable in fact because of the international capitalist crisis which is deepening the exploitation of the former colonial world.

Ironically, the fact of good rains and a better harvest is not a guarantee of peasant docility. On the contrary, we can expect increased demands for land from peasants who up to now have not been able to work more land because of the drought or poor financial support.

Increasingly, this layer of the peasantry (a middle peasant rather than a genuine kulak or 'rich peasant' class) will find its advance being cut off by party bureaucrats and the rising black land-owners well supported by the banks and monopolies—termed the 'telephone farmers' by the press.

The struggle for the land will soon expose these elements and open up splits between the rank and file and the ZANU(PF) leadership. The huge inequalities on the land have yet to be tackled. Up to the present only some 35 000 families out of over 350 000 needing land have been resettled.

Even though the government states that resettlement is a top priority, more money has been spent on the Sheraton Hotel alone than on resettlement in the whole 5 years since independence!

The capitalist farmers still have the use of 71% of the very best land, while the communal farmers have only 13%. There is explosive population pressure on 40% of the communal lands.

It is estimated that by the year 2000 the number of peo-

Even in townships women suffer many of the traditional tribal disadvantages. Because of family poverty, girls are often compelled by their parents to become the second wife of a man with a reasonable wage. The municipal beerhalls (modelled on the South African system) encourage the men to spend their wages on drink, and frequently wives are denied adequate housekeeping money.

All these factors force women into the political background. But an active sense of grievance is growing, particularly among working-class women, which can be explosive. Some of this discontent is also reflected in the rising divorce rate.

There is great potential for struggle among the women for decent housing, jobs, and full emancipation. While these demands are the same as those of the workers the practical methods of linking up the movement of the women with that of the organised workers will have to be taken up by the socialist opposition.

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ple in communal areas will have doubled—a fact which shows how out-of-date the targets for resettlement are becoming.

In these areas there is general landlessness among young families, and a high proportion of the peasants do not have any cattle or sufficient draught animals to plough. Increasingly they are dependent on the income of migrant workers in the urban areas.

In the rural areas there has been a considerable development of the co-operative movement despite peasant suspicion that co-operatives were to substitute for more generous land allocation.

But the co-operatives which are projected by the party leadership as the solution to all problems and the way forward to socialism complain they do not get the state support they need.

A disproportionate amount of state finance goes to the capitalist and 'emergent' black farmers who are being helped to buy big farms. In 1984, for example, \$49,2m was granted to 88 000 peasant farmers while 1 400 capitalist farmers were granted \$115m.

In 1980 it was reported that the peasants could not understand why the workers had taken to the road of mass strikes. In the years to come, the high prices of consumer goods and general shortages will bring a greater understanding of the capitalist crisis to the peasantry.

This, in turn, will provide the basis for the coming together of the movement of the peasants and workers.

Taking up the problems and demands of the peasantry, the organised workers will be able to win increasing peasant support in the battles ahead.

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## PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE



*In the ranks of the workers and youth in the factories, mines, farms, and townships a socialist opposition to the leadership is growing.*

The demand for change from below—from the youth, workers, women, and peasants—will build up a pressure-cooker atmosphere in ZANU(PF) in the future. There are two trends taking place within the party, going in precisely opposite directions:

- \* the masses suffering landlessness, unemployment, poverty wages, a shortage of housing: weighed down by all the limitations of capitalism and
- \* the party leadership drawn into privilege, fiercely defensive of their positions, and increasingly using their political privilege to enrich themselves.

These contradictory movements are pulling Mugabe into inconsistent policies which are causing the capitalists many a headache. The perspectives for Zimbabwe are reduced by the bourgeois press to a problem of Mugabe's psychology, as they look for the source of the future direction of the country in his mind!

The "contrasting sides of his character" despairs the *Financial Times* (21 August 1985), "the adoption of a mixed economy while calling for socialist transformation—have made Mr Mugabe something of an enigma". This newspaper complains that "he seems to speak with two voices" and present "two faces". (9 August 1985)

The phrase 'facing both ways' implies that Mugabe and his government are taking an even-handed approach to the interests of the capitalists and the working masses—sometimes favouring one, sometimes the other.

The Second Congress of ZANU(PF) (Thesis 4.3a) resolved to bring about the "state ownership of the means of production". After the elections ZANU(PF) leaders announced that the task now was to wrench "both political and economic power from the hands of the bourgeoisie and to place it in the hands of the working people."

Such statements have the enthusiastic support of the rank and file—but the whole policy of the bureaucracy shows it has no intention of carrying them out. Rather, the whole trend of government policies from the ZIMCORD conference onwards is towards the encouragement of foreign capital and the growth of capitalism in Zimbabwe.

The social measures which have been taken up have been limited to what is possible within the capitalist framework. The leadership has not hesitated to use the state forces to defend capitalist interest.

Peasants making use of fallow land, workers coming out on strike, and squatters settling on urban land have all felt the full force of the law.

They have suffered imprisonment, while not a single capitalist has had this experience. The nationalist politicians take the support of the workers and peasants for granted.

They are open to the insidious and persistent pressures of the factory owners, bankers, and big farmers. The whole economic program of the government is dictated by the limits set by the bankers of the IMF (International Monetary Fund). (See *Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, No 15)

### Orientation

The nationalist leadership is overwhelmingly pro-capitalist in orientation. MPs and top officials are now starting to accumulate directorships, businesses and farms. Undeniably they are becoming the appendage of the monopoly banks and corporations.

Originally the leadership talked of a reluctant com-

promise with capitalism. Now, ironically, the 'socialist' leadership is following in the footsteps of Thatcher's monetarism by cutting state spending on services useful to the working people. Now we hear the regime talk of the 'active encouragement' of big business.

This collusion with the capitalists is not what the ZANU(PF) leadership consciously decided on after coming to power. But it is the road along which they were driven once the compromise was accepted.

Once accepted, this policy has a logic of its own. It becomes the cornerstone of all social and political policies.

As Mugabe himself has said, it is important in politics to study not what politicians say but what they do. A study of the decisions of the Mugabe government has shown the remorseless pressures of capitalism on the leadership:

- \* the use of police and troops against the 1980-81 strike movement;
- \* the secret deal with the IMF;
- \* cuts in food subsidies, which are to be removed from the budget;
- \* the growth of the repressive state apparatus;
- \* the effective shelving of the leadership code;
- \* the controls over workers in the Labour Relations Act;
- \* the delays in land reform and resettlement;
- \* support for the Nkomati Agreement;
- \* the crackdown on the Marxists in the trade unions and ZANU(PF), etc.

All these measures taken together indicate more than a 'shift to the right', and now demonstrate that the regime is set on a course of encouraging the development of capitalism.

## Zig-zags

Yet there has not been a straight line development towards a policy of all-out support for capitalism.

At times the capitalists have felt decidedly nervous, mainly because of their close connections with the old regime, rather than because of the talk of socialism. They are fretful because they have no social base in the country—because they have to depend completely on the ability of the weak black petty bourgeois in the state to hold back the workers and peasants for their defence and survival.

Imperialism would have preferred a puppet regime and at times wishes it could turn back the clock.

The policy direction of the Mugabe government has been marked by zig-zags.

It started out with big spending programs in health and education which have greatly benefitted the people. It tried to keep up this spending until it surrendered to the IMF.

Also, undoubtedly there have been fierce battles within the bureaucracy over the open corruption of whole layers of the leadership and over the future direction of the government.

These struggles appeared to come to a head at the Independence Day speech in April 1983 when Mugabe de-

nounced the "bourgeois tendencies that are affecting our leadership" and attacked Cabinet ministers who acquired commercial farms and businesses.

This speech was greeted by a student demonstration and later a women's march. It appeared to herald the intervention of the Zimbabwean masses in politics in struggle against the corrupt elements.

These early developments, however, petered out rapidly when Mugabe refused to endorse even this measure of public support against corruption at the top. When Mugabe realised that he could not act against sections of the bureaucracy unless he involved the masses, he retreated.

From that point on he has done nothing to criticise bourgeois trends or corruption, and has moved to the right. He has even protected officials and leaders known to be corrupt.

The students who had announced "there is no halfway house between capitalism and socialism" lapsed into apathy, and the workers realised that their struggles were unlikely to gain support from above.

This turn had an important effect on the possibilities of struggle against pro-capitalist and corrupt leaders in the unions. The workers, and masses generally, became extremely cautious about involving themselves in politics except through 'official' channels—that is ZANU(PF).

There will have to be a **qualitative** change in the relation between workers and the government before the movement of the working class into political opposition takes place. Only the earliest hints of this development can be seen at present.

But the regime is forced to bring this working class opposition into being through the unpopular measures it has to take to defend capitalism in crisis.

Despite the steady rightwards drift, issues such as the wage increase for agro-industrial workers have at times wiped the smiles off the face of the capitalists, and continue to raise questions about the future direction of policy.

The government's decision to raise agro-industrial wages in 1985 was opposed by the capitalists, who were in turn denounced by ZANU(PF) leaders. Such shouting matches can create the illusion of a turn to the left at the top. But the workers and youth must be clear that the ZANU(PF) leaders were concerned only with their power and authority. Good or bad, they want their decisions to be accepted.

## Contradictions in policy

In reality, after months of contradictory statements, the government was forced to make a humiliating retreat on the agro-industrial wage question. Obviously a factor in Mugabe's thinking must have been the threats of *the employers to do everything possible to sabotage the increased wage.*

What this decision shows is that any significant reforms will be hysterically resisted by the capitalists, who will use the coming downturn and any weaknesses among the workers to claw back any gains.

Through determined struggle the workers can win

reforms against the capitalists. But capitalism cannot allow any significant reforms on a lasting basis.

In the struggle for reforms the workers and the government claiming to represent the workers' interests soon face the organised hostility of the capitalists.

Increasingly, the workers will have to take action even to secure the most modest of reforms made by the government, as the capitalists feel they successfully resisted Mugabe himself on the wage question.

Despite the occasional dispute between the government and particular employers, the compromise and defence of capitalism is well cemented at all levels of the state.

Gestures on wages and, at times, on land occupation are the exceptions which prove the rule. In the five years after independence the lava of the revolution has been cooling and the one-time revolutionaries are now the well-paid bureaucrats. The huge privileges of the whites are now opened up to the bureaucracy, and there is a yawning gap between them and the workers in the townships.

## Bureaucratic conservatism

The growing conservatism of the bureaucracy is reinforced by a variety of factors.

Unlike the rest of Africa, Zimbabwe is a country with a significant industrial base which can, for example, manufacture its own textiles or irrigation piping. Harare is a city in which the African delegates to international conferences come to shop.

The bureaucrats are well aware that even with the limitations of capitalism (which do not seriously affect them) the country has not yet slipped into the same sea of misery and starvation as the rest of Africa.

The conservatism of the bureaucracy is vastly deepened by the catastrophic conditions in 'socialist' Mozambique—in contrast to the earlier period when FRELIMO was a guiding light to the young guerillas.

The bureaucracy does not understand the contradictions of a regime which has run into all the problems of attempting to build a state-controlled economy within the confines of a single desperately impoverished country which has suffered the full force of sabotage by South Africa. Instead it prides itself on having taken the 'better' road of compromise and stabilisation of the state on a capitalist basis.

While publicly the leadership announces its undying solidarity with Mozambique, the bureaucracy has drawn the conclusion that nationalisation of the economy would be a disaster. After the Russian bureaucracy abandoned Mozambique they concluded that the 'socialist world' (Stalinism) is not to be trusted. They are also careful to have regular 'security' discussions in secrecy with the South African regime to attempt to avoid the international humiliation of a Nkomati-style accord with the apartheid giant.

This negative example of 'socialism' on Zimbabwe's doorstep weighs heavily on the minds of the bureaucracy. Completely wrong conclusions are drawn—that capitalism is a better alternative.

In its national narrow-mindedness, the bureaucracy

does not grasp the perspective of the Southern African revolution—that no country can have freedom and development with capitalist reaction entrenched in South Africa.

It does not see that there is no way forward on the basis of private ownership, yet that state ownership of the means of production can only provide a way forward if the revolution spreads to the heartland of reaction: South Africa.

They are rather more concerned to consolidate their privileges and make unspoken agreements not to tweak the tail of the apartheid tiger.

The pressures on the bureaucracy from the peasantry are local and diffuse. The pressures from the workers are not as yet channelled through democratic trade unions and consistent workers' leadership in the party cells.

The domestic worker who has had his wage more than doubled since independence, and for the first time can educate his children, prefers to defend the leadership and hope for the best.

The pressures from below are either steered into tribal violence, diverted into disputes among local leaders, or suppressed.

The pressures from capitalism, on the other hand, are relentless and thorough: the secret arm-twisting from the IMF along with the promise of further loans, calls for a better climate for capitalist investment, and the bribes of cars and easy access to palatial housing.

If 'influence' is to be measured in the number of Ministers visiting and staying to listen at their respective conferences, then the capitalists win hands down over the trade unions.

Described as the 'inherited infrastructure' by the leadership, the stronger development of capitalism in Zimbabwe compared with the rest of black-ruled Africa is the best argument to leave things as they are, so far as the bureaucracy is concerned.

But as has been explained, the road of collaboration is not always a smooth one. Mugabe, who stands head and shoulders above his colleagues, realises quite clearly that an open identification with the capitalists would be disastrous to the bureaucracy he leads.

The art of politics for the bonapartist leadership is to maintain the illusion of keeping an even balance between the interests of the capitalists and the working masses.

## Disputes

Disputes with the capitalists, such as the storm over agro-industrial wages, are probable in the future as the world downturn looms.

The nationalist leadership will inevitably be drawn to completing a one-party dictatorship because of the rising opposition from below. While a massive attack has been launched against ZAPU (which is continuing even now), 'one-party towns', 'one-party districts', and 'one-party provinces' are being enforced in areas outside of Matabeleland.

If the deal with ZAPU succeeds, as is most likely, the constitutional changes necessary will follow on without

difficulty. This will entail the removal of even the existing limited democratic rights, particularly the freedom to organise and express ideas opposed to those of the leadership.

Everything is also pointing in the direction of white politicians being included in discussions about enforcing a one-party state. Smith has said he is available for such talks. Already spokesmen for ZANU(PF) are talking of white candidates representing the ruling party in the next elections.

When the threat to the white seats becomes a reality Smith's Conservative Alliance (CAZ) will want to fight. But they will realise that defeat is inevitable on the basis of maintaining their formal privileges.

If possible the ZANU(PF) leadership will try to avoid becoming embroiled in slanging matches over the political privileges of the whites.

The election victory of the CAZ in the white elections has made negotiations more difficult. But it cannot be excluded that sections of CAZ would be 'won over' to the one-party state if there were firm guarantees for the representation of the capitalists and whites in the party and state. Smith's retirement could form part of this 'deal'.

These prospects show that such a one-party regime would have nothing in common with socialism!

Although this is the most probable course, it cannot be excluded that such negotiations could fail as the result of racist outbursts from the whites (such as those regularly made by Smith) and an angry response from the nationalist leaders.

## The key question of South Africa

Since independence, there have been some illusions that Zimbabwe could enjoy national sovereignty without antagonising its dominant neighbour. But the cauldron of mass struggle against apartheid, and military attacks by South Africa constantly threaten to pull the Zimbabwean leadership into a showdown it wants to avoid.

Any South African intervention or humiliation for Zimbabwe could have unpredictable consequences, despite both sides wanting to maintain the present diplomatically correct but cold relations.

Both countries recognise the enormous South African investment in Zimbabwe and the desperate need for guaranteed transport links for Zimbabwe to the south:

Besides the fact that a quarter of Zimbabwe's foreign trade is with South Africa, more than 85% of Zimbabwe's imports and exports pass through South African ports because of the continued disruption of traffic through Mozambique.

Both sides would have a lot to lose if the present relationship broke down.

But the pressures are building up for an open confrontation.

The heavy involvement of Zimbabwean troops in Mozambique against the MNR bandits is an attempt to find a way out (at great expense) from the present deadlock. The Mugabe government desperately needs a trading outlet through Beira to have some alternative to the South African railway system.

The government is able to get aid from major capitalist countries to re-establish the Beira route. To protect this route Mugabe has had to order a major military intervention which is requiring ever higher military spending.

A quick victory against the MNR is ruled out. FRELIMO forces are unable to consolidate the gains which are being made by the Zimbabwean troops. A decisive economic and military aid is promised to FRELIMO, the present intervention threatens to push the Zimbabwean troops into sinking sands.

Nevertheless, the government has to continue to try to build transport routes independent of South Africa. Also, as a counter-weight to South Africa's pressure on it, the Zimbabwe government needs as much international pressure on South Africa as possible.

For this reason Mugabe has to be an avowed supporter of sanctions despite the fact that any attempt by Zimbabwe to impose sanctions itself would rapidly encounter severe retaliation from South Africa. For these reasons, more than token measures are unlikely in practice, whatever may be said.

Because Mugabe is obliged publicly to take a defiant stand against South Africa, he cannot afford to allow the CZI capitalists to openly point to Zimbabwe's weaknesses. This is why the argument between Mugabe and the CZI over sanctions is one of shadow and not of substance.

Equally, a strict economic calculation of its interests alone does not determine South Africa's relations with its weak neighbours. On the basis of economic logic—widening markets and opportunities for investment—the Botha regime would want peace.

But the growing desperation of the South African regime, lashing out wildly as it tries to crush revolution at home, will make peaceful relations between the two countries impossible. This will provoke the youth, workers, and peasants, and deepen their hatred for apartheid and capitalism.

The ZANU(PF) leadership will undoubtedly play on this mood to distract the masses from local issues such as rising youth unemployment, and make strong verbal denunciations of apartheid, coupled with rhetoric about 'action'.

These verbal battles have the potential of developing into a confrontation with South Africa in the field of trade and transport, which the leadership would desperately want to avoid. But even these 'sanctions' and 'counter-sanctions' would not necessarily open the way for emergency measures to be taken against the huge South African and other foreign-owned monopolies.

The history of the colonial revolution has shown—in the experience of Syria, Burma, and Ethiopia—that colossal struggles of the workers and peasants, and huge splits and convulsions in the old regime, are needed before bonapartist rulers (resting on capitalism at the outset) are driven to take over the commanding heights of the economy. Then the state apparatus is reconsolidated on a new social footing.

In other countries where capitalism has been overthrown in the colonial world—such as China, Cuba, Vietnam, Mozambique, and Angola—in contrast to Zimbabwe a completely new state was built around the nucleus of the guerilla army.

These revolutions occurred where imperialism was too weak to intervene militarily at the outset, or else (as in the case of Vietnam) where imperialist intervention spurred the resistance, driving it forward to the abolition of

capitalism.

In no country where the old state machine has survived has a social transformation taken place as a cold, deliberate, action of the leadership, especially as they did not set as their aim the tasks of the state taking over production.

In none of these countries was capitalism anything like *as developed as in Zimbabwe*. There would have to be both a devastating decline in the economy and huge struggles by the masses to force the hand of the leadership to expropriate the capitalists.

The historic task of the working class, however, is not to pressurise a bonapartist regime into expropriating the capitalists, but to rise to the conscious task of taking power into its own hands.

Only the working class, together with the peasantry, fighting an enormous struggle **against** the whole class-collaborationist strategy of the Mugabe government and the party bureaucracy, can bring genuine democracy, solve the land problem, unite Shona and Ndebele, and end capitalism.

Already Zimbabwean workers are enthusiastically following the militant struggles of the workers in South Africa who have built democratic trade unions through enormous sacrifice. Here the working class has all the self-confidence of being in the forefront of the struggle against capitalism.

This revolutionary struggle will give added confidence to the Zimbabwean workers' movement. This will open a way forward for the present stalemate to be broken. The working class faces the task of linking the struggles of the workers and peasants, of the youth and the women, of Shona and Ndebele, into a single stream.

This struggle in turn has to be joined to the revolutionary mass struggles against apartheid and capitalism in South Africa which is the bastion of reaction in Africa.

In the coming years we will see the consolidation of the bureaucracy of the ruling party in Zimbabwe, and an increased tendency for it to degenerate into an open defender of capitalism and privilege.

But eventually a mass movement of socialist opposition, led by the workers and youth, will develop in Zimbabwe and challenge the compromised leadership.

## Socialist programme

The gulf between the policies of the leaders and the aspirations of the masses will create the conditions in which youth and workers will give a ready ear to the ideas of Marxism. A conscious struggle will have to be waged for a socialist program and leadership against all the confused ideas of the petty bourgeois.

It is necessary to prepare in the next period for these future developments by making a disciplined study of theory and perspectives. This is particularly important for the youth who will provide the fresh cadres of Marxism in Zimbabwe.

Marxists will have to take an active role in the strug-

gles of the workers' committees. Only then will the ground be prepared for the difficult task of removing the corrupt union leadership which is supported by the state.

Marxists will have also have to play their part in clarifying the way forward in the cells and branches of ZANU(PF) and ZAPU for as long as they remain the parties of the masses, or in any new mass party of fusion.

Through participating in the workers' committees, unions, and party cells and branches, through discussing the way forward and explaining the tasks, activists armed with Marxist ideas can lay the basis for a socialist program to transform Zimbabwe.

If genuine socialists do not rise to the task of building the mass socialist opposition in the workers' committees, trade unions, and youth organisations, the people of Zimbabwe will face a future of worsening mass poverty and national conflict.

Eventually, as we have explained, any 'deal' between the ZANU(PF) and ZAPU leaders will be seen by the masses as having solved nothing. All the old hatred will revive, even within the framework of a single ruling party, if there is no socialist alternative to the bureaucracy.

The workers and peasants in Zimbabwe face a stark alternative: workers' power or an acceleration towards disintegration, chaos, and tribal fighting. Without the workers coming to power there is always the terrifying prospect of a complete tribal-national split and civil war.

Under the impact of a world slump which would push commodity prices to the floor and destroy the productive base of the economy, sections of the bureaucracy—if under overwhelming pressures from below—could be driven to take over the banks and monopolies dominating the economy, though the SA capitalists would resist this with whatever means lay at their disposal.

But the cost of the ending of capitalism on this basis would be the rule of a privileged bureaucracy totally hostile to workers' democracy. Moreover, the economic gains of a state-controlled, planned economy on this basis would be undercut and sabotaged by the monster of South African imperialism—as is presently the case in Mozambique.

The best and most secure way forward for workers, youth, and peasants in Zimbabwe lies in the struggle to replace capitalism by workers' democratic rule. The Zimbabwean working-class can lead this struggle to victory—but it will be impossible to sustain this victory and take it forward along the road to socialism without a workers' revolution in South Africa itself.

The enormous growth and strengthening of the workers' movement in South Africa in the years ahead, which is preparing the way for the revolution in South Africa, will also weaken the reactionary forces of intervention and provide a giant magnet to the working class of Southern Africa as a whole.

The Zimbabwean revolution has opened and can be carried forward on Zimbabwean soil, but will only be completed with the revolution being carried out throughout Southern Africa.

In this setting alone, with Zimbabwean workers linking up with their South African comrades, can the Zimbabwean revolution be successful in completing the democratic tasks and starting on the road to a Socialist Federation of Southern African States.

## **WORKERS' SONG!**

When the new Railways and Harbour Workers' Union was launched on 11 October 1986 in Port Elizabeth, one of the songs sung went as follows:

Ezimbabwe bazitshisile  
 Ingalo zikaMarx  
 Bazitshisile ingalo  
 zikaMarx  
 Zeziziphuku-phuku  
 Zama Bourgeoisie  
 Ezicamanga ngengcinezelo  
 Sizobanyathela-nyathela  
 NgeMarxism

In translation:

**In Zimbabwe they have burnt the  
 followers of Marx  
 The bourgeoisie are fools  
 They are thinking to push us down  
 We are going to tread them into the  
 ground with Marxism.**



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There is no theoretical supplement accompanying this issue of *Inqaba*. We will resume publication of the Supplement with the next issue, which will be in the usual format.

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*Inqaba ya Basebenzi*, BM Box 1719, London WC1N 3XX, Britain