

inqaba

YA BASEBENZI

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ZIMBABWE: Perspectives and reports

Also inside: The Pretoria bomb blast—

Can these methods lead to liberation?

Plus interviews with miners involved in the struggles of July 1982.

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Zimbabwe's lessons for South Africa

The revolution in Zimbabwe, by overthrowing white minority rule, has inspired oppressed and exploited people throughout Southern Africa, particularly in the heartland of racism, South Africa itself.

Events in Zimbabwe, both before and after independence, have been weighed and tested to find lessons there for our own struggle.

Great sacrifices were made in the Zimbabwean struggle to achieve better conditions in the factories, mines, townships and farms. With independence, working people looked forward to the end of all the abuses and hardships of life under the Smith regime.

But has this happened? Lately, wages have been frozen while prices soar. The trade unions are being brought under tight control. Large farms remain in the hands of the whites and big companies while peasants and former guerillas can find neither land nor jobs.

While white minority rule has been overthrown, only a few have won significant new benefits from independence: a handful of black petty bourgeois with their big houses, farms and flashy cars. The capitalist mine, factory and farm owners have lost nothing.

The workers and peasants continue to suffer because capitalism maintains its stranglehold on society. Smith has gone, but the rich exploiters who supported him remain.

So long as capitalism exists, the working people will be cheated of the gains promised by independence and

majority rule.

The revolution in Zimbabwe was sidetracked before capitalism was overthrown. This explains the instability in the country now.

The government zig-zags between open support of capitalism on the one hand, and, on the other hand, appeals to the youth and working class to check the extreme greed and corruption among those in government and outside.

Frustrated by the unsolved problems of Zimbabwe, many former guerillas have returned as 'dissidents' to the bush. Not understanding where the solution to these problems lies, they have turned to blind terrorist action against the regime and against whites.

The Mugabe government, having itself no solution to offer, has replied with simple repression and counter-terror by the 5th Brigade.

The South African ruling class has looked on the situation in Zimbabwe with glee. "Look," they say, "this shows you what happens with majority rule—chaos, and murder." Meanwhile they assist right-wing subversives to help cause maximum disruption.

The Mugabe government calls itself 'socialist', yet capitalism has not been overthrown. This allows the capitalists to use the mounting problems of Zimbabwe to argue that "socialism doesn't work."

What does Zimbabwe really show? That the struggle to overthrow white rule cannot lead to stability, democracy and a decent life UNLESS

CAPITALISM IS OVERTHROWN AS WELL.

In SA, immense struggle and sacrifice will be needed to take on and defeat the monstrous regime of white privilege. The revolutionary effort unleashed in this struggle will achieve its aim of genuine liberation only by crushing capitalism, the root of our oppression and exploitation.

As South Africa is much more industrialised than Zimbabwe, this struggle will be decisive not in the countryside but in the towns, led by the mighty working class which capitalism has created.

Far less than in Zimbabwe will any room exist for a popularly elected government to be consolidated on a capitalist basis.

The Freedom Charter, programme of our movement, which puts forward minimum conditions to improve our lives, cannot be implemented under capitalism.

Democracy, the right to work, to a living wage, to a house and decent education are necessities capitalism cannot afford. Only socialism can guarantee these things.

The future of Zimbabwe and South Africa lies in the hands of the working class, which has the task of destroying the basis for capitalist exploitation and oppression throughout Southern Africa.

Perspective on Zimbabwe
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Malebela a Zimbabwe mo Afrika Borwa

Diphetogo mo Zimbabwe, ka go tlosolosa mmuso wa lekokonyana la basweu, di thotheditse batho botlhe ba ba gateletsweng mo Borwa jwa Afrika, segolo bogolo mo pelong ya kgaoganyo ya batho ka letso le mmala, e bong Afrika Borwa.

Ditirafalo mo Zimbabwe, pele le morago ga boipuso, di ne tsa lebisiwa tsa ba tsa tlathobisiwa, go tsaya malebela, mabapi le ntwaga rona.

Boineelo jo bogolo bo ne jwa dirwa mo ntweng ya Zimbabwe ka maikaelelo a go bona maduo a a botoka mo madirelong, meepong, ditoropong le dipolasing. Mo boipusong, badiri ba ne ba solofetse go fenyisa tshotlego le mathata a matshelo a ba neng ba le mo go one mo nakong ya puso ya ga Smith.

Mme a se, se dirafetse? Mo dikgweding tse di fetileng, kokeletso ya dituelo e ne ya emisiwa fa ditlhotlha tsone di oketsega ka metlha. Makgotla a badiri a tsennngwa mo taolong e e gagametseng ya mmuso. Dipolasi tse dikgolo le dikampani di sa ntse di le mo maatleng a basweu fa batlhoki le balwela-kgololesego ba tlhoka masimo le ditiro.

Lefa lekokonyana la babusi ba basweu le ntshitswe mo pusong, bonnyenyane jwa batho ke bone ba ba boneng sengwenyana sa maduo a itsholelo mo boipusong: ke bonnyenyane jwa bahumi ba bantsho, ka matlo a magolo, dipolasi le dikoloi tse di maphatsiphatsi. Bajanosi (capitalists) ba meepo, madirelo le dipolasi ga ba a latlhegelwa ke sepe.

Badiri le batlhoki ba tswelotse ka tshotlego ka gore bajanosi ba sa ntse

ba tswelotse ka kgatelelo mo sechabeng. Smith o ile, mme bahumi ba bagateledi ba ba neng ba mo rotloetsa ba sale teng.

Fa bojanosi (capitalism) bo sa le teng, badiri ba tlaa tswelotse ba tsiediwa ka tsotlhe tse ba di solofeditsweng mo boipusong.

Diphetogo mo Zimbabwe di ne tsa bapisiwa pele ga bojanosi bo tlosolosiwa. Se, se tlhalosa dikgoberego tse di mo lefatsheng leo gompiono.

Mmuso wa Zimbabwe o fitlha go itshupa fa o rotloetsa bojanosi ka fa ntlheng nngwe, mme ka fa ntlheng e nngwe o kopa basha le badiri go sekaseka bopelotshetlha le maragaraga a ba ba leng mo pusong le kwa ntle.

Ka go tenwa ke mathata a a kana a Zimbabwe a a sa fenngwang, bontsi ba e neng e le balwela-kgololesego ba sa ntse ba boetse sekgweng e le marabela. Ka go sa itse tsela ya go fenyisa mathata, ba tswelotse ka go bolaya ba ba mo pusong le makgowa.

Puso ya ga Mugabe, ka go tlhoka kitso ya go fenyisa mathata a, e ipusolosetsa ka kgatelelo le polao, e e dirwang ke masole a 5th Brigade.

Babusi ba Afrika Borwa ba lebeletse ditirafalo tse di mo Zimbabwe ka boitumelo. Ba re, "Bona! moo go lo supegetsa gore boipuso jwa batho botlhe bo ntse jang—dikgoberego, dipolao le boikgokgomoso." Ba bua jaana ba tla ba thusa malatswathipa (Mo Zimbabwe) go dira dikgoberego tse dintsi.

Puso ya ga Mugabe yare ke ya "bojammogo", ntwaga bojanosi bo ise bo tlosolosiwe. Mo, go letlelela

bajanosi go dirisa mathata a a golelang pele a Zimbabwe gore ba re "bojammogo ga bo kgonagale".

Zimbabwe yona tota e supang? Gore ntwaga ya go thankgola mmuso wa basweu fela ga e kake ya tliša kagiso, puso ya batho ka batho le matshelo a a siameng **GO FITLHELA BOJANOSI BO THANKGOLWA.**

Mo Afrika Borwa ntwaga e kgolo le boineelo di tla tlhokega go fenyisa puso ya basweu. Maatla a diphetogo mo ntweng ke one a a ka tlišang kgololesego ya boamaruri ka go thankgola bojanosi, modi wa kgatelelo le bonwamadi.

Mme ka Afrika Borwa e tlhabologile go feta Zimbabwe, ntwaga e ga e kake ya kgonagala mo dikgaolong, e ka kgonagala mo ditoropong e eteletse pele ke badiri, bone ba ba dirilweng ke tsamaiso ya bojanosi.

Freedom Charter, mosupa-tsela wa mokgatlho wa rona, o o solofetseng go tokafatsa matshelo a rona, ga o kake wa dirisiwa mo tsamaisong ya bojanosi. Puso ya batho ka batho, tshwanelo ya go dira, tshwanelo ya dituelo tse di lulameng, tshwanelo ya bodulo le tshwanelo ya thuto e e lulameng ke ditlhokwa tse di sa kakeng tsa dirafadiwa ke bojanosi. Dilo tsotlhe tse, di ka kgonaga fela mo tsamaisong ya bojammogo.

Bokamoso ba Zimbabwe le Afrika Borwa bo mo maatleng a badiri, ke bone ba ba nang thata ya go fenyisa bonwamadi le kgatelelo tse di dirwang ke bajanosi mo Afrika ya Borwa ka kakaretso.

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Izifundo zeZimbabwe malunga ne South Africa

Inguquko eyenzeke eZimbabwe, ngokuketula umbuso wabelungu, il-ethe ukushiseka ebantwini abacindezelweyo nabagetshengwayo eMzantsi Afrika, kakhulukazi endlunkulu yombuso wokuhlukanisa ngebala, iNingizimu Africa ngokwayo.

Izenzeko eZimbabwe, ngaphambili nangemuva kukamaziphathe, zibhekisiswe futhi zahlahlutshwa kahle ukuze kutholwe izifundo malungane nempi esibhekene nayo.

Kwenziwe ukuzinikezela okukhulu empini yaseZimbabwe kuzanywa ukuthola inhlalo nempilo engcono emafrekini, ezimayini, emalokishini nasemapulazini. Ngokufika kukamaziphathe, bonke abasebenzayo babheka phambili bebheke ukqedwa kokuhlushwa nokuhlupheka empilweni abebayiphila ngaphansi kombuso kaSmith.

Kodwa konke lokhu akukenzeki. Imiholo icindezelwe phansi kunjalo ukubiza kwezinto kuya phezulu. Imibutho yabasebenzi ilokhu iboshwa ngemithehto. Amapulazi amakhulu aselokhu asezandleni zabamhlophe nezinkampani kanti abalimi nababelwa empini abana zindawo zokulima nemisebenzi abayitholi.

Njengoba umbuso wabelungu uketulwe, abambalwa kuphela ababenakho ukubona umvuzo womaziphathe: idlanzana lezicebi zabamnyama ezinezindlu ezinkulu, amapulazi nezimoto ezichichimayo. Abaqashi bezimayini, amafektri namapulazi abalahlekelwanga yilutho.

Abasebenzi nabalimi baselokhu behlupheka ngoba umbuso wabaqashi usaqinile ezweni. USmith ususiwe, kodwa izicebi zabaqashi ezigebenga abasebenzi ebezimsikele zisamile.

Uma umbuso wabaqashi uphumelele, abasebenzi bazalokhu bephazanyiswa ngemivuzo eyayithenjiswa ngumaziphathe nombuso wabantu bonke.

Inguquko eZimbabwe yagejiswa ngaphambi kokuketulwa kombuso wabaqashi. Yikhona okuchaza ukungabikho kokuthula ezweni namhlanje.

Uhulumende uqala-qalaza phakathi kokusikela umbuso wabaqashi, kuthi kwenye ingxenye azikhalele ezinganeni nasebasebenzini ukuze abheke okukhulu ukuphanga nokukhohlakala kwalabo abakuhulumende nalabo abangaphandle.

Abaningi balabo ababengamaphekulayikhuni, bedidwa ukungapheli kwezingxaki eZimbabwe, babuyela ehlathini 'bengabavukelibuso'. Ngenxa yokungazi kahle ukuthi impendulo yalezizinkinga ilelephi, baphendukele umbuso nabelungu bethusa ngokubulala.

Uhulumende kaMugabe, ngokuba angenampendulo yalezizingxaki, naye uphendula ngencindezelo nokuthusa ngokubulala nge-5th Brigade.

Ababusi baseNingizimu Afrika babheke zonke lezizinkinga ngokujabula okukhulu. "Bheka", bayasho, "lokhu kutshengisa okwenzekayo uma abantu abamnyama bebusa—ingxubevange, ukubulala, iziphithiphithi". Kodwa kunjalo nje banceda izigebengu zabamhlophe ekwenzeni umonakalo omkhulu.

Uhulumende kaMugabe uzibiza 'umbuso osezandleni zabasebenzi', kanti umbuso wabaqashi awuketulwanga. Lokhu kunika abaqashi umdla wokusebenzisa izingxaki ezikhona eZimbabwe ekuthini 'um-

buso wabasebenzi' awunamphumelaphambili.

Kodwa iZimbabwe itshengisani? Itshengisa ukuthi ukuketula umbuso wabelungu ngeke kulethe ukuthula, ukuvumelana nempilo enhle ngaphandle kokuthi umbuso wabaqashi nawo uketulwe.

ENingizimu Afrika, impi enkulu nokuzinikezela kuya kufuneka khona ukuze kuketulwe umbuso wabelungu.

Umzabalazo wenguqulo uzo-bangela kulempi ukuba kutholakale inkululeko eyiyo nembala ngoku vadlazwa umbuso wabaqashi—okuyiwona mpande yencindezelo nokugetshengwa kwethu.

Ngoba iNingizimu Afrika inamadolobha amakhulu ukudlula iZimbabwe, lempi ngeke iliwe emaphandleni, kodwa emadolobheni, ikhokhelwa amaqhawe abasebenzi abakhiwe umbuso wabaqashi.

Akukho neyodwa ingxaki ebhekene nabasebenzi angaqedwa ngaphansi kombuso wabaqashi. I-ungelo lokusebenza, umholo olingene, indlu nokufundiswa okufanele izinto ezinyanzelekayo umbuso wabaqashi ungeke ukwazi ukunikeza abantu. Umbuso wabasebenzi kuphela ongaletsa konke lokhu.

Kanjalo iFreedom Charter, okuyiyona nsika yombutho wethu, elwela izinto ezidingekayo ukuze impilo yethu ibengcono, nayo ngeke ifezwe ngaphansi kombuso wabaqashi.

Ikusasa leZimbabwe neNingizimu Afrika lilele ezandleni zabasebenzi, okulele kubona umsebenzi wokuvula indlela yokuqeda ukugetshengwa kwabantu nencindezelo ngumbuso wabaqashi eMzantsi Afrika wonke.

Zimbabwe se lesse vir Suid-Afrika

Die omverwerping van die blanke minderheidsregering deur die revolusie in Zimbabwe het die onderdrukte en uitgebuites dwarsdeur Suider-Afrika sowel as in SA diep geïnspireer.

Die gebeurtenisse in Zimbabwe, voor en ook na onafhanklikheid, is oorweeg en getoets om lesse vir ons eie stryd daaruit te leer.

Groot opofferinge is gemaak in die stryd in Zimbabwe om beter omstandighede in die fabriek, myne, plase en woonbuurte mee te bring. Met onafhanklikheid het die werkende mense verwag dat daar 'n einde sou kom aan die mishandeling en swaarkry wat hulle onder die Smith-regering gely het.

Maar het dit gebeur? Onlangs is die lone bevries, terwyl pryse bly styg. Vakbonde word al hoe meer onder staatsbeheer gebring. Groot plase bly in die hande van blankes en groot maatskappye, terwyl klein landbouers en voormalige guerillavegters geen land of werk kan kry nie.

Alhoewel die blanke minderheidsregering omvergewerp is, het net 'n handjievol mense nuwe betekenisvolle voordele daardeur behaal: die swart middelklas, met hul groot huise, plase en spoggerige motors. Die kapitalistiese plaas-, myn- en fabriekienaars het daarmee niks verloor nie.

Werkers en landbouers kry nog altyd swaar omdat kapitalisme sy wurggreep oor die gemeenskap behou. Smith is weg, maar die ryk uitbuiters wat hom ondersteun het, is nog altyd daar.

Solank as kapitalisme bestaan, sal die werkende mense gekul word uit die voordele wat deur onafhanklikheid en meerderheidsregering belowe was.

Die Zimbabwese revolusie is op 'n syspoor gebring voordat kapitalisme omvergewerp was. Dis die rede waarom die land vandag onstabiel is.

Die regering slinger heen en weer, met die een oomblik openlike steun aan kapitalisme, en dan weer oproepe aan die werkers en jeug om die korrupsie binne sowel as buite die regering te bestry.

Gefrustreer deur die onopgeloste probleme van Zimbabwe het talle guerillas as 'dissidente' terug bos-toe gekeer. Omdat hulle nie weet hoe die probleme opgelos kan word nie, het hulle blindelings hul toevlug geneem in terrorisme teen die regering en teen blankes.

Die Mugabe-regering, wat self geen oplossing het nie, se antwoord was eenvoudig dwang en terreur deur middel van die 5de Brigade.

Die heersende klas in SA kyk met blydschap na die situasie in Zimbabwe en sê: "kyk wat gebeur met meerderheidsregering—warboel en moord." Intussen steun hulle regsgesinde ondermyners om soveel moontlik wanorde te skep.

Alhoewel kapitalisme nie omvergewerp is nie, beskou die Mugabe-regering homself as 'sosialisties'. Dit laat die kapitaliste toe om die toenemende probleme in Zimbabwe te gebruik as 'bewys' dat "sosialisme nie werk nie".

Wat bewys Zimbabwe regtig? Dat die stryd om blanke heerskappy omver te werp nie tot stabiliteit, demokrasie en 'n ordentlike lewe kan lei nie **TENSY KAPITALISME OOK OMVERGEWERP WORD NIE.**

In SA sal geweldige stryd en opofferinge nodig wees om die monsteragtige regering van blanke heerskappy te verslaan. Die revolu-

sionêre inspanning wat in hierdie stryd tot uiting sal kom, sal sy doel van ware bevryding slegs bereik deur die vernietiging van kapitalisme, die wortel van ons onderdrukking en uitbuiting.

Omdat SA baie meer industrieel ontwikkel is as Zimbabwe, sal hierdie stryd beslissend wees nie op die platteland nie maar in die stede, onder leiding van die magtige werkersklas wat deur die kapitalisme geskep is.

Nog minder as in Zimbabwe bestaan daar enige kans in SA dat 'n meerderheidsregering op 'n kapitalistiese basis gekonsolideer kan word.

Die Freedom Charter, die program van ons beweging, met die minimum eise om ons lewenstoestand te verbeter, kan nie onder kapitalisme uitgevoer word nie.

Demokrasie, die reg om te werk, om 'n ordentlike loon, 'n huis en behoorlike opvoeding te kry, is noodsaaklike dinge wat kapitalisme nie kan bekostig nie. Net sosialisme kan hierdie dinge verseker.

Die toekoms van Zimbabwe en SA rus in die hande van die werkers, wat die taak het om die basis van kapitalistiese uitbuiting en onderdrukking dwarsdeur Suider-Afrika te vernietig.

The Pretoria bomb blast- CAN THESE METHODS LEAD TO LIBERATION?

Killing 18 people and injuring 217, the car bomb blast in Church Street, Pretoria, on 20 May produced more dead and wounded than any other action by the ANC since the turn to 'armed struggle'. The casualties included not only military personnel, but black and white civilians.

That civilian lives were lost appears to represent a change of military tactics on the part of the exile leadership. "President Tambo has made clear in recent speeches" states comrade Slovo in *Sechaba*, April 1983, "that we are entering a stage in which we have to answer the enemy's murderous and terrorist tactics against civilians, against women, against children, against unarmed refugees, by more than just hitting their economic targets."

To the Pretoria bombing, the SA government reacted with yet more murderous and terrorist tactics. SAAF planes bombed Maputo on 23 May, killing at least five Mozambicans and one South African—all civilians, and not even at ANC military bases as SA claimed.

This was the second terrorist act of this kind in six months, following the murder of 42 people in Maseru by SADF commandos on 9 December last year.

On 9 June three more brave young guerillas, Simon Mogoerane, Jerry Mosololi and Marcus Motaung, were hanged by the vengeful regime in Pretoria.

Where is this vicious spiral

By P. Qubulashe

leading? Does it advance the workers' struggle for power, for the liberation of all the oppressed? The escalating costs of the present forms of 'armed struggle' make these increasingly urgent questions.

Indeed, every war involves costs. But all war, as every serious military commander knows, is concerned with achieving political ends. Military strategy cannot be governed by abstract moral debates—such as whether or not it is right to take lives—nor, on the other hand, by the reactions of revenge.

The fundamental question is: what is the nature of our enemy and how can he be defeated?

The wanton aggression and murder by the regime is, in the words of Defence Minister Magnus Malan, "an example of our capabilities, and of what we are prepared to do to defend the integrity of our country".

But what is this "integrity of our country" which General Malan vows to defend?

The pass system imposes on Africans, the overwhelming majority of the people, a status scarcely different from slaves. The slave of ancient Greek society was, at least, assured of shelter and food. But

modern capitalist SA cannot provide to black people even these elementary needs.

In 1982 200 000 Africans were arrested for failure to produce passes at the instant demand of a policeman or other state officials—a rate of 550 a day.

Ten people every day die of TB. Hundreds more, young and old, die of typhoid, cholera, measles, and many other preventable and curable diseases.

Yet the Minister of Health, Dr Nak van der Merwe, found it possible to say: "Responsibility for a high toll of dying children should be shared by those people who bred uncontrollably." (!) (*Daily News*, 13/4/83). Perhaps the Doctor is only prepared to accept responsibility for the death toll of whites who die of diseases associated with excessive food-intake?

This apartheid system not only murders black people in their hundreds of thousands every year by the slow but very painful means of starvation. Not only does it every year administer the 'justice' of the whip on thousands of Africans (40 253 in 1982). It also breeds gangs of white thugs who make killing of black people their hobby.

On 17 April, two white brothers, surname De Beer, stormed into a train compartment (from Pietersburg to Johannesburg) and gunned down at point blank range five Africans, leaving three dead and two injured.

One of the brothers made it quite clear in the magistrates court that if he were to escape "he would shoot more black people." Reason? Both

brothers have "hatred for blacks" and believe they were correct in committing this murder.

With no exaggeration, the magistrate might well have found himself sympathetic to the beliefs of the De Beer brothers. Many of the apartheid judiciary have the same hatred for blacks.

On 27 October 1982, a 19-year-old Mr Ronnie van der Merwe fulfilled his desire to hit a 'houtkop' black by killing a 23-year-old African, Japhta Kgopa, with *nunchaka* (karate) sticks. The Pretoria regional court has sentenced Mr van der Merwe to "no more than" two years in jail. He will serve only 2 000 hours of "periodic imprisonment" at the weekends, of which 800 hours have been suspended for the next five years!

A system gangrenous with white racism; a system which relentlessly grinds black people with poverty and disease; which locks them up in the squalid labour camps (Bantustans and townships); which super-exploits them at the point of production; which mutilates their bodies with sjamboks; which hounds and shoots them like rabbits; which has not only privileged whites but succeeded in churning out lunatics of the type of Ronnie van der Merwe and the De Beer brothers...

...this is the system which General Malan vows to defend with

all the means at the disposal of the state!

This system, dehumanising and enslaving black people in our country, does not result from racial discrimination alone. It is the historical product of capitalism in SA which has developed on the basis of cheap labour—the migrant labour system.

However, apartheid as a political-cultural system has also acquired a relatively independent logic and momentum of its own. Experienced in this sense, it appears as the ultimate cause of the oppression of the black people.

State violence

But underlying all the bloody racist violence of the state, and the lunatic mutants it has given birth to, is the need of the capitalist class to defend their private ownership of the factories, mines and land—in order to perpetuate their profit-making system against the demands of the working class and all the oppressed.

In countless struggles, for example at Bulhoek in 1921, at Sharpeville in 1960, in Soweto in 1976, our resistance has been met by the bloody violence of the state. There has never been room in our country for pacifist illusions in the minds of the

masses—or for doubting that, to end this monstrous system, the regime's force will need to be met with a greater counterforce.

A search for the means to defend the masses against the violence of the system, and for the means to defeat the state, has impelled thousands of courageous youth and also workers to seek training in the use of arms.

The previous misguided adherence to the principle of 'non violence' by the ANC leadership was drowned in the blood of Sharpeville. Since then—and, even more, since Soweto—the leaders of the ANC and other organisations have reacted to the violence of the system by organising guerilla activity.

The task, writes comrade Slovo (*Sechaba*, April 1983) "is to transform what we are doing into something which approaches much more closely the words people's war". The term "people's war" refers to the struggles fought in such countries as China, Vietnam, Cuba, Mozambique, Angola etc., over the last thirty-five years.

It is true that in such underdeveloped countries rural guerilla armies have succeeded in taking power. But the social conditions which permitted this to take place do not exist in South Africa.

One condition for rural guerilla war is a massive peasant population. SA has undergone a powerful



capitalist development, building an industrialised economy, and bringing into being a massive working class—depending not on the land but on wage-labour for survival. The peasantry has virtually disappeared.

Today the overwhelming majority of the people—in town, on the farms, in the Bantustans—belong to working-class families.

This fact is acknowledged by comrade Oliver Tambo when he refers to the rural population as being “not...peasants”, but “members of the proletariat who happen to be in the countryside because of the way the system operates in South Africa.” (*Southern Africa*, XVI, 1, Jan-Feb 1983)

The history of the last ten years—even the history of guerilla action—shows still more clearly than before that the decisive terrain of struggle is in the big industrial cities—built by the sweat of cheap black labour, but under the control of the capitalist class and its divide-and-rule state machine.

It is only here, in the heartlands of capitalist property and rule, that our enemy can be decisively defeated.

Where guerilla armies have taken power in underdeveloped countries, it has been against decrepit regimes resting on weak support in society. On its industrial base, in contrast, the SA capitalist class has developed a mighty and ruthless state—with a strong social base in the (increasingly militarised) white population.

Can a guerilla strategy defeat this state? “In the military field”, continues Slovo, “we have proved that there is no target beyond our reach; whether be it Sasol, Voortrekkerhoogte or nuclear power stations”...and now, he could add, buildings in the heart of Pretoria.

Unsurprisingly, the state and the class it defends regard the taking of arms against them as an intolerable challenge to their authority. Inevitably, these actions goad the ruling class to fury, and to vengeance.

The state reacts to each bomb blast and attack not only by intimidating peoples of neighbouring countries, but by stepping up repression. After the Pretoria blast, as has happened many times before, police mounted roadblocks—in Soweto, on the Lesotho border, etc.

It is reported that this year alone 25 000 roadblocks have been

mounted—well over a hundred a day!

Every hunter knows that a beast is most dangerous when aroused by surface wounds. What every activist in our movement needs to address with the utmost seriousness is this: are guerilla actions capable of **finishing off** the beast that is goaded into wounded anger?

Some in the movement appear to believe that the system can be paralysed by blowing up railway lines, factories, etc. ‘The sophistication of the SA economy is also its weakness’, they argue.

Wasteland

Let us leave aside the fact that, could these intentions be carried fully into practice, it would be at the price of squandering the product of the labour of millions of workers: our movement would inherit only a devastated wasteland.

Spectacular bombings may frighten a few investors into selling off their shares. But, rather than weakening or intimidating imperialism and the local capitalists, it only consolidates their unity.

What history has shown in other relatively ‘sophisticated’ economies like ours—in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay for example—is that urban guerillaism is easily contained and defeated by a ruthless state machine,



Malan

at huge cost to the working class movement and also to the brave but misguided guerilla youth themselves.

Is there any reason why things would be different in SA? This is the question advocates of guerillaism must answer clearly.

The point is that a developed and entrenched capitalist system does not depend only on the individuals who rule in its name at any moment, on the factories and buildings in existence, even on the present personnel of the armed forces and police.

When Verwoerd was assassinated, did anyone expect more than that...a Vorster would replace him? Likewise, if the Presidents’ Council building is bombed a hundred times—even if all its members were assassinated—would that destroy the power of the ruling class to continue its divide-and-rule constitutional manoeuvres?

But this does not make the ruling class invincible. The mass movement spearheaded by the working class has already, even at this early stage of its resurgence, shown its ability to inflict defeats not only on the employers, but even against the state—forcing it, for example, to withdraw its Pensions Bill. When Botha’s constitutional proposals are made inoperable, it will be as a result of this same mass power.

The miserable and worsening conditions of the working people compel them into struggle, not just in this factory and in that, over these wages and those working conditions—but in an increasingly generalised struggle to end poverty wages and the pass laws, and to secure a government of their own.

This movement, developed to its fullest, is the only counter-force able to defeat our enemy. It is the only force in this oppressive system over which the ruling class has no ultimate control. The labour of the working class in production is the essential life-blood without which their profit system and their state cannot survive.

In far less favourable conditions than in SA today, the Russian working class took power in 1917, abolishing capitalism, establishing its own democratic rule, and creating the conditions for the liberation of the peasantry, oppressed minorities, and women.

The Soviet workers’ state subsequently degenerated, with a privileged bureaucracy usurping power. But



this does not by one jot diminish the historic lessons of October 1917.

In the face of the rising workers' movement in our country, the capitalists' *Financial Mail* has had to whimper "it is not just employers who had to make fundamental readjustments to their attitudes and policies. **The government has been compelled to heed the power being exercised by emerging unions.**" (Our emphasis).

At the same time, in response to the ANC attack on Koeberg power station, it roared that guerillas "must be hunted down and eliminated." (*FM*, 24/12/82)

This difference of approach to the unions and to guerillas does not reflect a sudden benevolence by the bosses to the organised working class. **The point is that, far from feeling seriously threatened by guerillaism, the capitalists feel adequate and strong enough to deal with it.** Confronted with the organised power of the working class it is a different matter.

Every strike of the last ten years has been 'illegal'—organised, like guerilla action, in defiance of the bosses' state. Yet the bosses cannot "hunt down and eliminate" the lifeblood of their system. Hence the nervous talk of "readjustment" and "heed".

These chilly ripples are being driven down the spines of the capitalists and their state even though

only around 7-8% of the black working class are organised in the independent unions. Even on this modest basis what can already be seen is the 'subversive' capacity of the working class to end the apartheid system and its capitalist base.

Slovo appears to recognise this in writing that "it is the working class which is the only force that will guarantee that our victory will lead to real social emancipation, will lead to the abolition of that kind of exploitation (why not call it what it is: capitalism?—*Editor*) which is at the foundation of racism, and not just a regime which will just replace the one set of exploiters by another, even though they might be of a different colour."

In short, the revolutionary struggle of the working class to change society is the struggle for national liberation in its only effective form. It embraces the aspirations of every oppressed struggler.

To guarantee the victory of this struggle—the only lasting victory possible—what is necessary is the development of the working class movement to its full potential, as a conscious mass movement for the transformation of society, rallying round it all the oppressed.

"The government has been compelled to heed the power being exercised by emerging unions."

The central task of all activists is to assist in the building of this movement of the working class, fully confident of its own power and conscious of its historic mission.

But, as comrade Slovo admits, the present organisation of the armed struggle does not contribute to this task: it leaves the masses as mere "sympathetic onlookers...who welcome what we are doing...people who cheer the brave deeds of our cadres and who weep when any of them are caught and destroyed by the enemy."

This is the inevitable consequence of a strategy that is conceived, planned and executed outside the organs of the mass movement itself.

The mass struggle is not a passive 'anvil', existing in order to absorb the 'hammer' blows of a military strategy conceived from outside. The mass struggle of the 1970s and 1980s, spearheaded by the working class, is **itself the active force in the situation**—the hammer against the bosses and the state.

Every struggling worker knows that it is not Morena that can free us. But the present strategy of 'armed propaganda', instead of developing the self-confidence of the working class in its collective capacity to liberate society, inevitably creates an impression that liberation can be brought from outside its own ranks, "from the north".

To overcome the problem of passive identification with guerilla actions, Comrade Slovo proposes to "more and more involve the people in actual participation". But participation in what?

The only answer emerging from his article is 'participation' in the activities of MK, now to involve not only "economic targets", but also direct response to SADF terror against civilians.

But this would continue to subordinate the actual struggles of the working people and their **political** requirements, to an externally-conceived **military** strategy; it would perpetuate the very problem Slovo identifies.

Conditions themselves are impell-

ing wider and wider layers of working people to 'participate' in a mass struggle that throws up increasingly generalised and political demands. It is this struggle which calls out for the defence and advancement of what it has achieved.

To serve its needs as appropriate, weapons are a tool, and only a tool.

Each tool is useful in different ways in different conditions. The movement of the recent period has been governed by a flexible assessment among the workers of what actions are possible to undertake in particular conditions.

In no factory are workers continuously on strike. When action is to be undertaken, it is an assessment of the balance of forces which determines such matters as whether to 'go-slow', to strike, or to occupy a factory; how, when and where pickets are deployed; how scabs are to be disciplined; what support can be mobilised from other workplaces and how.

It is through making such assessments, translating them into action, and digesting the lessons as a guide to future actions, that the workers' movement develops its consciousness, its confidence and power.

Through the conscious and scientific development of this method, embracing the lessons of the working class movement internationally, the working class will rise to its tasks in the revolutionary confrontations that are inevitably unfolding—and, organised and armed in its millions, will have the ability to take on and defeat the capitalists' apartheid regime.

But, whether in a single factory, a region, or nationally, the strategy and tactics of the workers' movement can be effectively formulated only by the direct organs of that movement itself.

This is the real meaning of Marx's saying that "the emancipation of the working class can only be the task of the working class itself."

The strategy and tactics of the use of weapons involves no different considerations. In what strike, in what demonstration, in what uprising, what weapons are to be used and how is a matter for decision and control by the elected organs of the workers' movement itself.

The guerilla method, on the other hand, is governed by secrecy, not only from the state, but also from the

Inqaba's cartoon

(August 1982)



workers' movement.

What organs of the *mass* workers were even consulted when a decision was taken to 'support' the Leyland strike by bombing a Leyland showroom in Natal?

Were the workers at Sasol and Koeberg involved in the decisions to try to destroy the very places they were building and working in?

Instead, despite the shelter and support available to the guerillas, their strategists make a fetish—for security reasons, they argue—of their need to isolate themselves organisationally from the mass movement.

But if the need for security justifies this, it is precisely an indication that such actions are not appropriate to the workers' struggle in the existing conditions. When conditions are appropriate, every revolutionary worker will welcome with open arms the weapons and the skills which armed and trained cadres can deploy, provided that those cadres participate fully under the organised discipline of the working class.

The workers movement, developing in struggle against the state, will acquire the necessary collective experience to guarantee security.

The present task is to build, openly and underground, the forms of workers' organisation which can effectively lead the liberation struggle—mass trade unions, and an ANC of the working people themselves.

Such organisation will provide the

necessary forums for the working class to decide on what methods are appropriate in particular struggles—including what weapons can be used, and when, and how.

Out of this will develop the means to prepare and carry through, on a conscious basis, the mass armed insurrection which alone can isolate and defeat the regime.

The tragedy of the present organisation of the 'armed struggle' is that, far from being able to defend the workers' movement, it cannot even defend its own cadres. The three young revolutionaries just hanged in Pretoria were arrested, tried and con-



victed of attacks on four police stations during 1979-81, after their underground hideout was discovered by an African herdsman.

At the same time, the dangerous armoury developed by the state in reaction to guerillaism...is turned also against the workers' movement. Every bomb blast gives the police and the army more excuse to harass and terrorise workers.

Workers are prepared to make sacrifices—but not unnecessary ones for the sake of a futile strategy.

After Pretoria, armed police stopped cars and buses in Soweto, opening boots and bonnets searching for bombs—and anything else that interests them. On the Lesotho border, every returning migrant worker was forced to queue up and be subjected to the same searches.

Oscar Mpetha, veteran class fighter now 74 years old, was placed on trial

The mass struggle is not a passive 'anvil', existing in order to absorb the 'hammer' blows of a military strategy conceived from outside. Spearheaded by the working class, the mass struggle is itself the active force in the situation—the hammer against the bosses and the state.

and convicted...under laws pertaining to 'terrorism'. The SAAWU leaders are harassed under the same laws.

Many more workers are detained and killed, caught in the net of the SA regime's 'total strategy' against guerillas. These victims are not only in SA, but, as a result of the regime's attempt to root out 'guerilla bases' in the surrounding countries too. No end to this is in sight, as long as the methods of guerillaism are continued.

Guerilla methods also cement white support for the bankrupt capitalist class. Such support will be multiplied a hundred times if guerillaism degenerates into indiscriminate violence against civilians.

In Vietnam, Mozambique, Angola, imperialist armies of occupation fighting far from home, cracked under rural guerilla pressure. But

in SA white workers with nowhere else to go will grow crazed under guerilla pressure, and provide fanatical cannon-fodder to garrison the profit system.

In contrast, the **workers'** struggle, for workers' unity, democracy, and socialism, offers a future for all working people.

The independent trade union movement cannot afford to remain silent on the dangerous consequences of guerilla methods—not from the standpoint of 'non-violence' or confining itself to 'trade-union politics', but from the standpoint of what advances the workers' struggle for national and social liberation.

This was one notable omission in the major political speech by Joe Foster endorsed by the FOSATU Congress last year.

The only means to ensure the success of the struggle against apartheid and capitalism is the mobilisation of

the workers and youth around the programme of Marxism—for democracy and socialism through workers' control of production and society.

There is a thirst for revolutionary ideas among the black youth. Even the capitalist press reports that "a large proportion" of youth arriving in the ANC training camps express "an interest in Marxism." (*Financial Mail*, 10/6/1983)

The youth are drawn to Marxism not for the sake of ideas themselves, but to find a way to change society. Their thirst can be satisfied not by formal study of Marxist theory but by using the method of Marxism to work out practical solutions to the problems facing the oppressed.

Pre-requisite

As the essential pre-requisites for the liberation of the black people, the tasks for the ANC leaders, and for every activist, are:

*to assist in the organisation of the working class into trade unions on a revolutionary programme, for workers' unity in action, for decent wages, jobs and homes, for an end to racist oppression and exploitation—through workers' power and workers rule.

*the rebuilding of a mass ANC—as an organisation of the workers rallying all the oppressed, on a socialist programme, with a leadership developed among the workers' own ranks, schooled in the ideas and methods of Marxism.

This achieved, victory will be certain.

Only a mass socialist ANC can undercut the sinister efforts of the apartheid regime to foster a racial confrontation as the last line of defence of capitalist property!

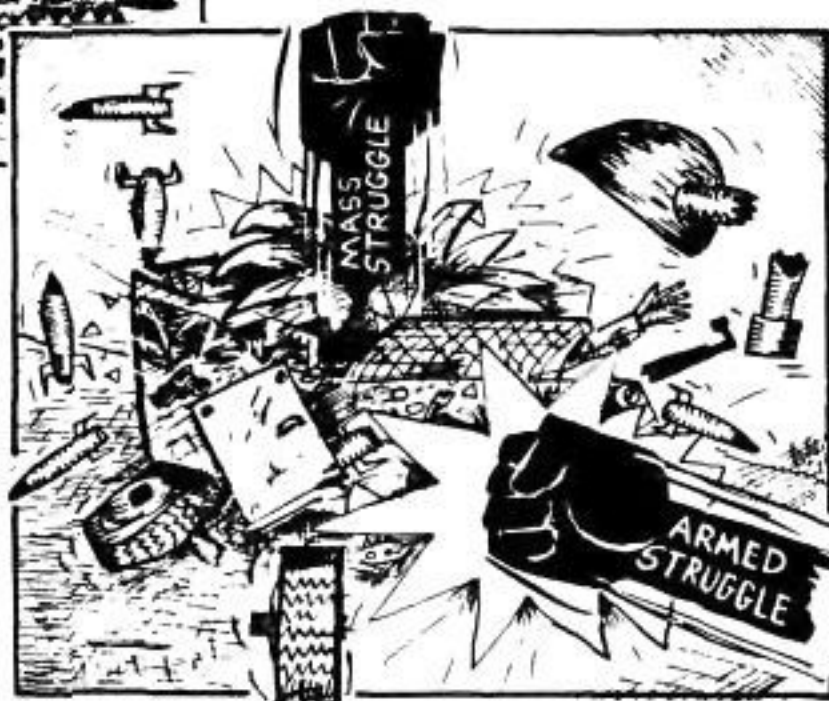
Only an organised working class can stop the terror of the apartheid system!

Only the united development of the workers' struggle can offer a secure future to all workers, white as well as black!

Only the unity in action of working people throughout Southern Africa can end once and for all the domination of the region by the terrorist SA capitalist regime!



Sechaba's answer
(April 1983)



...Sechaba reaffirms the separation of the armed struggle from the mass struggle.

JULY 1982 MINE STRIKES-



Anger over low pay increases sparked off strikes and unrest involving at least 70 000 miners during the first week of July 1982. At the end of the week official figures recorded 10 miners killed and many others injured and paralysed for life. In addition hundreds were arrested and dismissed and deported back to their home areas.

An *Inqaba* correspondent spoke to two of the victims of deportation in their home areas. Although the struggles discussed here took place a year ago, the conclusions drawn by the workers underline the burning need for united mass organisation of black miners. The NUM has emerged as the biggest union of black miners and needs to be built to unite all miners on a fighting programme if the workers struggle is to be carried forward.

Interview with young worker:

Q: Can you tell us what happened in your mine?

A: Yes, we learned with anger that our annual wage increase was low. We immediately decided to go on strike and this started with the 10pm shift on Sunday evening. The mine police immediately came to the scene and persuaded us to go to work.

But when we were underground the following day the question kept nagging us whether our going to work would persuade the bosses to give a higher wage increase. We were all agreed that they would not. So, instead of doing work underground, we decided on a sit-in.

At this time the white miners came and argued with us to go but we refused. We decided instead to come up to the surface and meet management and get assurances from them of a higher wage increase.

Word had spread and we found mine buses ready to take us to the shaft manager's office. The white miners claimed to the manager that we did not want to work and wanted to go back to our homes.

The manager did not ask us any questions, but instead told us that we should go to the compound, collect our belongings and go off to our home.

We tried to give some explanations but none was accepted. We were bussed to the compound to collect our belongings immediately, given R10.00 and a train ticket each, rushed to the train station and told that whatever the mine owes us will be paid at our local TEBAS (recruiting agencies).

When we arrived at our local TEBA, we were told to wait while our money was being sorted out. We finally got it but were told, however, that the mine where we were working could not accept us again until after six years had elapsed. What a shock!

Q: What wage increase was offered?

A: Much less than what we expected. It ranged from R2 to R10—a paltry

sum when one thinks of the work we do.

Q: What do you think the miners should be paid?

A: Miners need a wage that will enable us and our families in our homes to live. For example, to buy food, clothes, books and pay school fees for our children.

Q: How many miners were involved in the strike?

A: Almost all of us. I would put them at between 2 000 to 3 000 in our mine.

Q: Were you organised before these strikes? Did you have any committee that represented you when you had grievances with management?

A: No—no such thing was allowed. We were always told to use management-created channels! Libota, Indunas etc.

Q: Were there any tribal divisions during the strike?

A: No, absolutely none. The people who first passed word of low wage increases were Xhosas, and we were unanimous, as miners, that we should stand together for a higher wage increase, no matter what happened. We were united right up to the day when we were deported to our home areas. Shangaans, however, attempted to break the strike by going to work.

Q: Did the management use them?

A: Yes, to an extent that when we were told to go home, they were left to continue with their work. Everybody was bitter at their treachery but we note that they are afraid of white people.

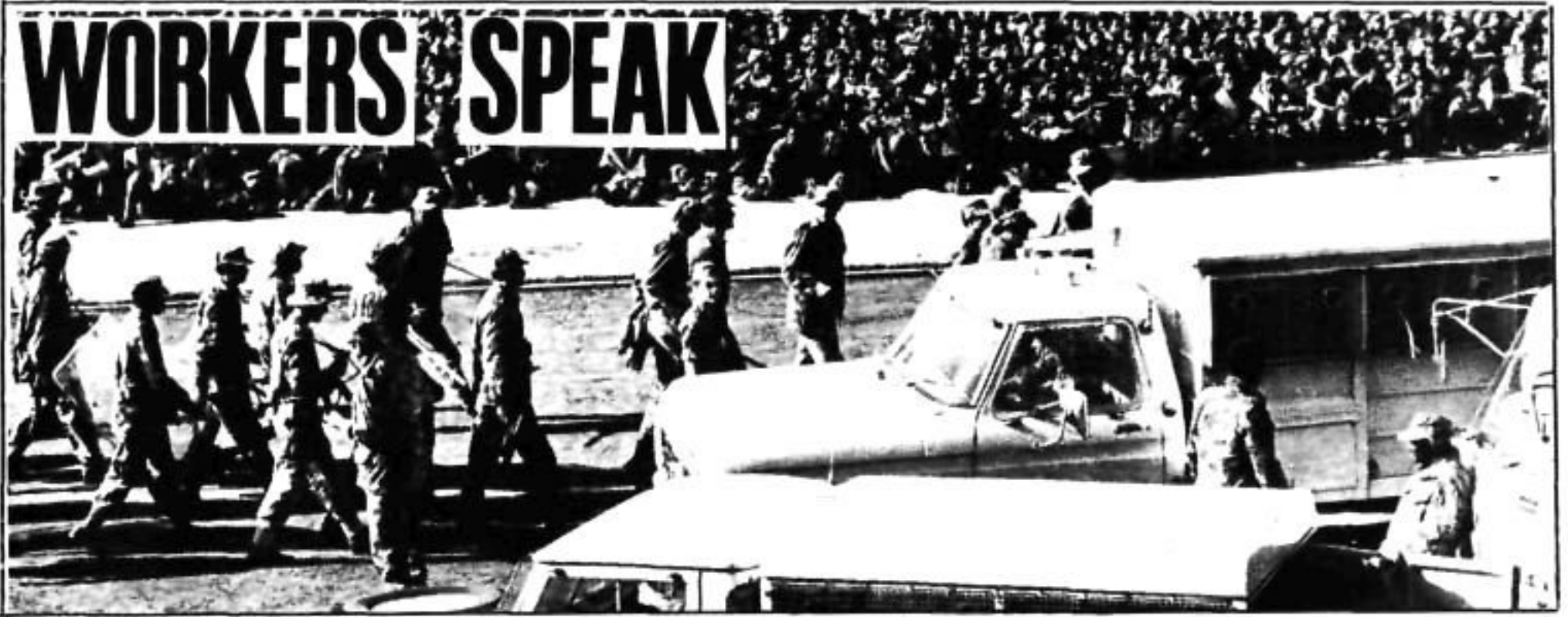
Q: Could these divisions be avoided in the future?

A: Not unless people understand that united we stand and divided we fall. It should be fully understood that as individuals we cannot achieve much but united we can.

Q: Do you think a trade union would be useful?

A: It depends what a trade union does. I don't really know what a trade union is. If it works for our unity, then it is a good thing.

WORKERS SPEAK



Interview with worker with ten years' mining experience

Q: Can you tell us what happened in your mine?

A: The strike started when the Xhosas stopped other workers going to work. It was a Sunday night shift and the mine police came to find out what was happening but they could not enter the compound.

When this happened, management called the SAP, who immediately on arrival started throwing teargas into the compound.

What was actually at stake was low wage increases.

We had not talked to the bosses because they never listen to us, but on Monday morning the management called Libota and told them to advise us to follow the right procedures.

What they were saying, in fact, was that we should go to work on the promise that money will be forthcoming.

We all went on Monday and the following day but no wage increase was announced. So we decided not to go to work. At this juncture, the SAP came and started shooting indiscriminately.

Many of us fled and slept outside the compound, but when we came back the following day the management would not allow us in. We were labelled trouble-makers.

When we were finally let into the compound, it was to collect our belongings and be bussed to our different home areas. Nothing was said to us except that we will get all that was due to us at our local TEBA's. When we finally reached the TEBA's we were told that we could not be recruited to any mine until after six

months to a year had elapsed.

Q: What did the police come to do?

A: I suppose they came to restore law and order but they never asked any questions. Instead they started beating us up—very badly indeed. These policemen also shot at us. Many people were killed, and many others were injured although the management has hidden the exact figures.

In fact what the management did was to send all those injured to hospital and pay them while they were hospitalised. On discharge those workers were paid some compensation and their injuries were recorded like those sustained at work.

The aim is to hide the causes of these injuries, and even if you go home and report that you were shot by the police, no-one can easily believe you.

Q: Did you get any wage increase?

A: No, no higher wage increase was made. It was a small increase; far less than what we had expected.

Q: Did you have a representative to talk with the management about your grievances?

A: No, we had none. Only management-chosen representatives, eg indunas, PA's, were allowed. These people identified wholly with the management and their role was merely to translate to us in the vernacular everything from the management. They never passed the workers' grievances onto the management.

There were Libota also whose role was to take workers' grievances from each room, pass them to the Senior Sebota who then passes them to the

management. The report back would follow the same route. And this way of communication was useless because our grievances were never attended to.

As for grievances concerning money, each worker could approach the mine captain and if there is a wage discrepancy then we meet the manager.

Q: Were there tribal divisions during the strike?

A: No, all the workers stood together except the Shangaans. This was not because they were satisfied but because they were afraid of batons and teargas. Indeed when they went to work they were escorted by the police, and when they came back to the compound they were housed outside for fear of reprisals from other workers.

Q: Do you think a workers' representative organisation would be helpful?

A: I think it would be the best thing that we could have because we can then be sure that our grievances are passed to the management by people we can trust and who would pass them with the urgency that they deserve. It is true that you become more confident and relaxed when you know that you have your own people whom you can entrust with anything.

Q: What is your future here?

A: You know it is frustrating when one knows for sure that one can never get any job here. The country here is very poor but I am not sure that I agree that nothing in the way of creating jobs can be done. The authorities should stop wasting money on themselves and create some jobs.

Trade union unity



To workers in the independent trade unions, the Cape Town conference of 9-10 April has marked a new stage in the two-year-long struggle to unite the movement.

It has opened the way to a national federation joining together decisive sections of organised workers, including a union of mine-workers, and consolidating the gains of a decade of hard struggle.

This would provide, for the first time since the crushing of SACTU twenty years ago, a single voice able to speak for the mass of black workers.

But a new federation today would be built on a much higher level of struggle, organisation and experience than at any stage in the past. It would be far bigger than any of its predecessors, and would have opportunities as never before to organise the unorganised.

Once the nuts and bolts of launching the new federation have been worked out among the unions, activists will be faced even more urgently with questions such as:

- * how to strengthen union organisation as thousands of new members are drawn into the ranks;
- * how to overcome racial and other divisions among SA workers, to build a truly united movement;
- * how to carry forward the fight against redundancies, and prepare to take advantage of the next economic upturn;
- * how the trade union movement should view its tasks in the political struggle.

In the next issue, *Inqaba* will publish material contributing to the discussion.

ZIMBABWE:



Students demonstrate against capitalist ministers: "Let these people know there is no halfway house between capitalism and socialism".

a new turn?

The past few months have seen a quickening of political life in Zimbabwe. Since independence the political activity of the workers, peasants and youth has largely been limited to shouting responses at rallies and showing loyalty to the government. These limits have now been broken and the independent political stirrings of the working people can be felt.

The event which triggered off a student demonstration (20 April) and a women's march (4 May) in Harare, and caused much discussion in the working class, was the speech by the Prime Minister, Robert Mugabe, on the third anniversary of independence.

He lashed out at "the bourgeois tendencies that are affecting our leadership." He criticised

unscrupulous councillors and mayors for "unashamedly assigning to themselves money-making contracts,

misappropriating public funds, and misusing public property."

But most of all he hit out at Cabinet ministers who with a "hypocritical commitment to socialism have, under one guise or another, proceeded to acquire huge properties by way of commercial farms and other business concerns." Those who should be meting out social justice were, he said, turning "into a class of avaricious exploiters of the masses and so traitors to their cause."

His speech was a public indication of differences within the ZANU leadership, and an admission that something is seriously wrong with the course of the revolution. But was this merely 'sounding-off' (as had hap-

By Sam Parkin

pened on the second anniversary of independence), or does it signal a real turn in Zimbabwe's politics?

This denunciation of bourgeois tendencies in the leadership added fire to the resentment already smouldering in the 'townships' over the growing riches of the new black elite, its arrogance, its contempt for the working people, and its collusion with the capitalists. Mugabe's speech was seen as a green light to the restless ranks of ZANU, and swung the spotlight away from the bloody civil strife of Matabeleland to the burning question of leadership.

The open controversy within ZANU reflects the frustration of the masses' hopes in the gains promised by independence. Unemployment is rising dramatically, wages have been 'frozen' since the end of 1981, prices are rocketing, land resettlement is moving at a snail's pace, and workers' housing development is almost at a halt.

Independence

As in most African countries which have won independence, the first leadership and 'independence party' have an enormous reserve of support. Elsewhere this has usually taken more than a decade to turn into bitter disillusionment and opposition as mass poverty has worsened while corruption and self-enrichment at the top has grown apace.

In Zimbabwe, where national independence was fought for at the cost of some 30 000 lives, the expectation of a radical transformation of society has been all the more sharp. Although the ZANU leadership still has enormous credit, the crisis of leadership has come on sooner.

What has led to this situation?

In Zimbabwe with its vast rural areas and large peasant population (in contrast to SA) the basis existed for the liberation struggle to be carried forward through a guerilla war. At the height of the struggle, in 1979, it became evident that the guerilla movement could develop to the point of overwhelming the white minority regime.

But this prospect threatened to draw in the SA regime on a much bigger scale than before, as the ruling

class there sensed that a military defeat for white rule would open the floodgates to the expropriation of capitalism in Zimbabwe and huge struggles in SA.

Confined to their strategy of guerilla war, the leaders of ZANU and ZAPU were faced with a hard choice. Either they—and their backers in the front-line states—had to risk the devastation of a general Southern African war to resolve the question of power in Zimbabwe; or they had to turn to negotiations and inevitable compromise.

The only alternative—never contemplated by the nationalist leadership—was to turn their resources to the task of organising and mobilising the workers' movement in Zimbabwe, to link it to the mass movement in SA, and to prepare a mass armed insurrection in town and countryside which no military power would be able to stop.

It was at this period of crisis that the imperialist powers generally realized how dangerously unstable the Southern African region was becoming as a result of the guerilla war and the popular hatred for the Smith-Muzorewa regime. A negotiated 'settlement' became urgent.

This opened the road to Lancaster House and the compromise of ZANU and ZAPU with white privilege (e.g. guaranteed seats for whites in parliament, etc) and with capitalism.

The radicals among the leadership

argued that once power was in their hands there could be a steady step-by-step development towards their political and social goals: land to the peasants, a 'constitutional completion' of the struggle against white privilege, and the ending of capitalist domination. A slow transformation could be carried out **from above**, without sacrificing Western aid or having a full-blown confrontation with South Africa.

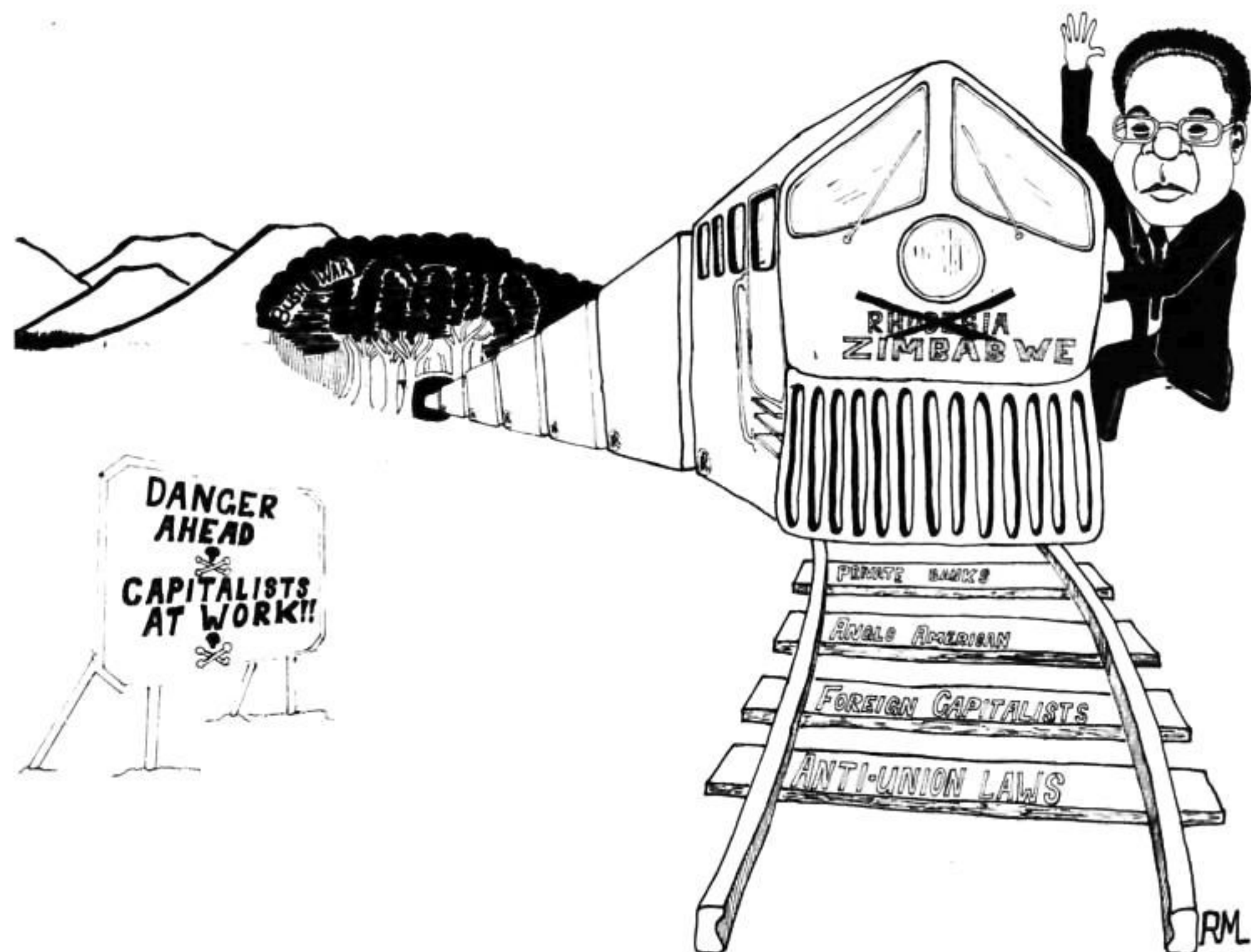
It was this approach which crystallised in ZANU's election program and in every major speech by the leadership since then. Implicit in this approach was the belief that the Zimbabwe struggle could pass through two separate historical stages, in which power could first be consolidated democratically in African hands, while the question of the capitalist stranglehold over the economy and state could be postponed.

The plans of the leaders presupposed continued economic expansion to provide the basis for the reforms promised in jobs, wages, housing, land reform, etc. The idea was that peace and stability would bring in its train an economic boom, new investment, and eventually the economic muscle needed.

This idea was spelt out most emphatically in the ZIMCORD conference document which was itself a plea for the capitalist nations to provide grants and loans to support this strategy. With the growing anxieties of the imperialists about the possibili-



Signing the Lancaster House agreement in 1979.



ty of losing everything in Southern Africa, these pleas were accepted and the asked-for finance was gathered in from the West.

On this basis the Zimbabwean revolution was temporarily stalled by its leaders, and guarantees were made to the capitalists that no expropriations were on the agenda. But all the same the capitalists were aware that the popular government was not of their choice, and that there were in reality only slim legal and political obstacles to prevent the government turning against them if it changed its mind.

Above all there were the socialist demands from the rank and file of ZANU which forced the leadership into making contradictory statements; one day blaming the workers for being lazy, the next day calling the Stock Exchange a 'brothel'! This constant changing in position works badly on the capitalists' nerves. As one banker said: "They say something different to us than they say at the rallies. It gets so bad I just don't listen to the local radio: if there's anything really

important happening it'll be on the BBC."

The directly conflicting demands from the workers and peasants and from the businessmen, converging on the new government, have driven it onto the twisting road of balancing and manoeuvring between the classes. The general direction of this road has been, however, in word and deed, towards defending the property of the capitalists against squatters and strikers.

Despite the capitalists' fears, their nerves were soon calmed by the general opening up of post-independence trade, and the increased profits of the monopolies and the landowners. So began the superficial friendship between the ZANU leaders and the big capitalists.

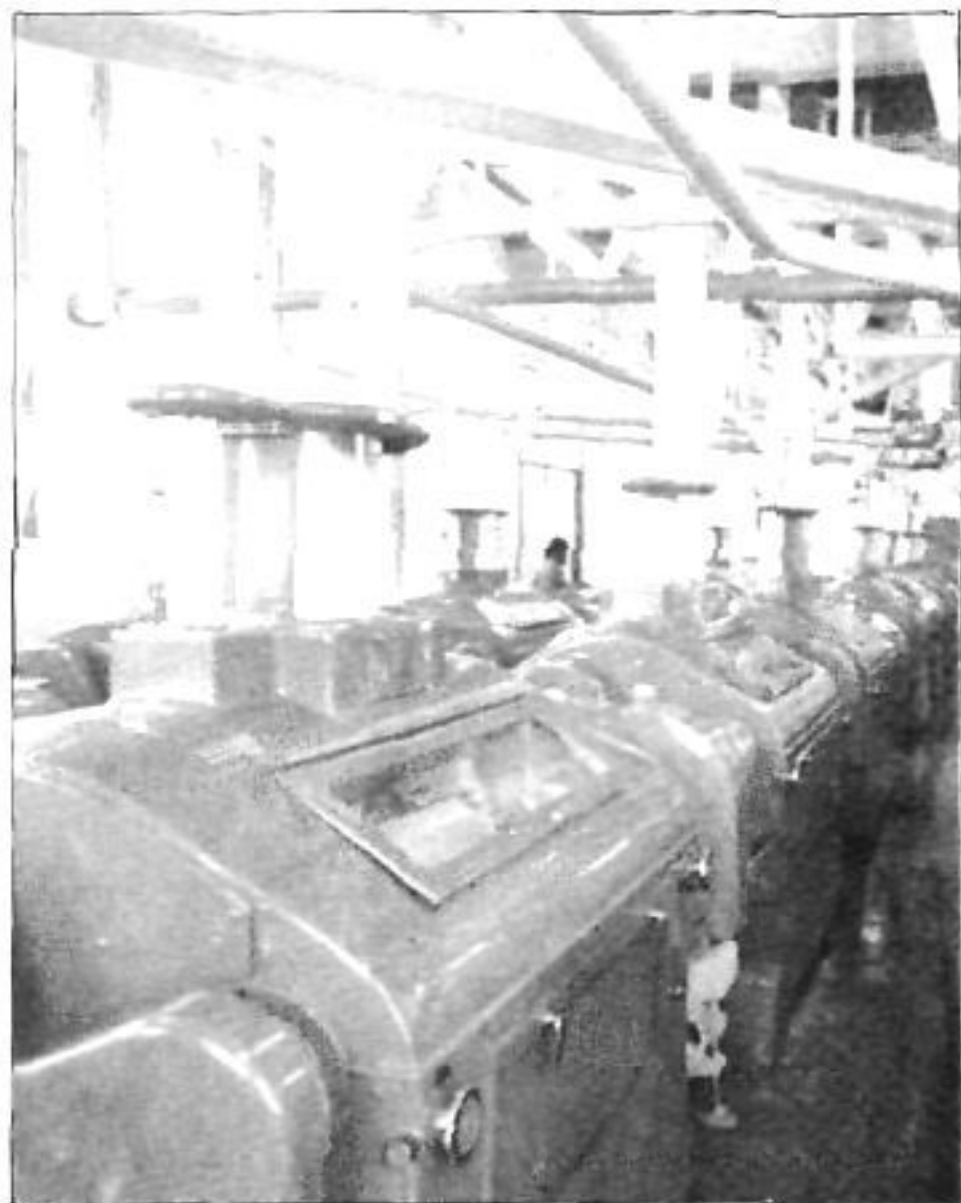
But this post-war boom could not paper over the dependent or colonial character of the Zimbabwean economy which basically serves the world market in minerals and raw materials. Even these basic industries which bring in foreign currency—mining, tobacco and steel—are mainly controlled by multi-national giants

such as Anglo-American, Rio Tinto, British American Tobacco, Lonrho, etc.

SA investment in Zimbabwe is immense. During the UDI period there was a large influx by private and state-owned SA companies. The Anglo-American Corporation is reported to be the largest company in the country with vast interests in mining, forestry, transport, banking, agriculture, breweries, manufacturing, etc. At the last count AAC had directors in at least 82 companies. It owns the only coal mine in the country (Wankie).

Barlow Rand, Hulett's, Abercom, Plate Glass, CNA, Dorman Long, MTD, OK Bazaars, Premier Paper, Sanlam, SA Breweries, Syfrets, Union Steel and Lion Match are but some of the SA companies in commanding positions in the economy.

All in all, the total foreign-owned capital stock is estimated to be worth Z\$1 500 million (R2 000 million) or a massive 70% of the total capital stock in the country (the total includes what is government-owned). Some Z\$583 million (about R700



million) of this is owned by SA capitalists.

This overwhelming domination of the economy by foreign companies shows just how pathetic the Zimbabwean 'capitalists' are.

SA domination

SA domination over the Zimbabwean economy is shown also in transport and trade. While the National Railways of Zimbabwe has been able to shake off direct dependence on SA locomotives, about 84% of Zimbabwe's imports have to come in via SA. About 75% of exports go through SA ports. This dependence is not expected to be significantly reduced.

On top of this some 22% of Zimbabwe's exports are sold in SA and 25% of its imports are bought from there. The biggest proportion (at least 40%) of Zimbabwe's manufactured exports go to SA.

Dependence on SA is encouraged by a Preferential Trade Agreement which the Mugabe government has made every effort to maintain. Without it there would undoubtedly be a crisis in manufactured exports (especially clothing, furniture, and

some electronics), with the jobs of thousands of workers threatened.

In the three years of independence there has been little increase in exports to African countries, because of their poverty, and there have even been small trade wars resulting from rivalry among the member countries of SADCC. SADCC can only offer limited advantages, and cannot replace Zimbabwe's economic links with SA. Nor has it been possible to significantly expand Zimbabwean trade to Eastern Europe or China.

Because of capitalist SA's military and economic power, any real socialist transformation of Zimbabwe is inescapably bound up with the struggle in SA. The expropriation of the banks, mines, factories and plantations in Zimbabwe would obviously meet strenuous retaliation from SA, actively backed by the imperialist powers. Yet what alternative is there if any of the social problems are to be resolved?

On a capitalist basis, there can be no solution.

Linked to the colonial character of the economy is the complete dependence of capitalism in Zimbabwe on cheap labour in order to make profits.

This is the basis of the capitalist economy in Zimbabwe—and also its limiting factor, because low wages

limit the buying power of the population. It makes the economy all the more dependent on exports.

Without cheap labour Zimbabwean exports could not compete on the highly competitive world market. Without it, Zimbabwean products on the home market would also be threatened by ultra-cheap imports. Even on the basis of cheap labour, this is already taking place in the clothing industry.

Despite all the promises of independence, minimum wages for industrial workers (Z\$105 a month) are only half of the poverty datum line. Wages in other sectors are lower still.

Reforms

The main social reforms since independence have been the expansion of health care and education. The basis for these reforms has been the exceptional upturn in the economy immediately after independence—with growth of 15.4% in 1980 and 13% in 1981.(GNP)

But this upturn was based on temporary and contradictory factors: on the one hand the short-lived improvement in the terms and volume of

trade resulting from the lifting of sanctions; on the other hand, on increased consumer demand generated through the mass strike movement of 1980, the subsequent increases in the minimum wage; and increased government spending.

While there was certainly some investment in replacing worn-out machinery and modifications to factories, there was little investment in new factories. In the two and a half years to mid-1982, there was a small **net outflow** of long-term private investment.

Yet new investment is what the future development of every economy depends on.

Capitalists won't invest unless they can realise their profit by selling the goods produced. In Zimbabwe, with its small domestic market, this means securing export markets.

For growth and investment, in other words, Zimbabwe's fate is bound up with the international economy and its SA component.

But the upswing of world capitalism which followed the Second World War is definitely over. Capitalism has entered an **entirely new period** of crisis—of general downturn marked by occasional and weak upturns.

The severe recession of 1979-82 throughout the capitalist world sharply reduced the demand for the basic exports of Zimbabwe. As a result the economy soon started moving on a downward path. Even with the world economy temporarily turning up again, the bourgeois economists don't predict there will be an increase of exports even to the level of past years.

Stagnating exports also mean a critical shortage of foreign currency which limits domestic investment by restricting the import of machinery.

Clearly capitalism is incapable of achieving the industrialisation and development Zimbabwe needs.

With the economy and hence tax revenue stagnating, the government's social reforms depend increasingly on spending beyond its means. The budget deficit in the current financial year is estimated at some Z\$700 million, or 13% of production.

This, effectively printing money which is not backed by goods, devalues money, and leads to price rises. **What is won by the workers, in other words, is clawed back in other**

ways by the capitalist system.

The government has also tried to maintain spending and secure foreign exchange by borrowing from imperialist banks, etc. Between independence and the end of last year foreign borrowing **quadrupled** from Z\$350 million to Z\$1,5 billion. Now the cost of repaying these loans, with interest, amounts to 16% of export earnings.

In addition, in mid-1981 the government borrowed Z\$37,5 million from the IMF—and in April this year a further Z\$385 million was borrowed.

IMF 'conditions'

Inescapably, borrowing from the IMF involves 'conditions'—in other words, demands from imperialism to 'put the house in order' by increasing capitalist profitability and attacking workers' living standards.

It is no secret that an early 'condition' set by the IMF led to the 20% devaluation of the dollar last December. Raising the cost of imports, this alone is estimated to have increased local prices by 7%.

In addition, the IMF wants cuts in social spending, food subsidies, and continued 'wage restraint'

The effects of the capitalist crisis have been very stark in the last few months: the devaluation, dramatic rises in prices, increasing layoffs in industry and mining, and housing development almost at a halt.

Adding to these problems, the unprecedented drought has meant a desperate situation for the peasants and has virtually halted agricultural exports.

Were it not for the cushion provided by international loans, the economy would already be in a catastrophic condition.

All this completely undermines the development strategy put forward by the government in the Three Year Transitional Plan, and rules out the promised improvements in living standards for working people.

The architect of the government's economic strategy, Riddell, has admitted that the social reforms proposed by his Commission were based on the assumption of continuing the high rates of growth achieved in the first two years of independence. "It was our view that the world recession, now hitting Zimbabwe really seriously, would end quite quickly. Therefore, we believed that this growth could be sustained up to 1985!" (*Herald*, 6 October 1982)

In fact the economy grew by only 2% in 1982, and is expected either to decline by 3% or experience zero



Health care has been much improved since independence

growth this year.

In his off-hand remark, Riddel exposes the confusion of perspectives which underlies the reformist approach. Reformists simply cannot—or will not—understand that the incurable crisis of world capitalism today will shatter every program for social and economic development which is not firmly linked to the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

Similarly, the impossibility of separating the national-democratic and socialist tasks of the revolution into two stages has been shown by the experience of Zimbabwe.

For working people, the burning social questions throughout the struggle to overthrow white minority rule were:

- * the peasants need for land;
- * the need to end the racial and tribal division in the country and to guarantee equality;
- * the need of workers and youth for secure jobs and a living wage.

In the opinion of the leadership none of these problems required the overthrow of capitalism itself, and could be solved by careful management and reform of the existing capitalist system. As Mugabe wrote in the Foreword to the 3 year Plan, "capitalism...has to be purposefully harnessed, regulated and transformed as a partner" of the state.

But the reality is that the "partnership" with capitalism has prevented, and will continue to prevent, any of these problems from being solved.

Land question

To restore the land to the Zimbabwean people was clearly a fundamental task of the struggle for national liberation. It was the central issue for the majority of the population, and largely accounts for peasant support for the guerilla war.

Nothing could be clearer from the standpoint of the struggle for national liberation: the history of colonialism in Zimbabwe was one of wars of conquest and outright land

grabbing by Rhodes, the British South Africa Company, and invading settlers.

Yet surprisingly little has been achieved since independence in tackling the land question.

Nothing could be more starker than the continuing contrast between white wealth and black poverty on the land. In 1980, the commercial farm land (almost entirely white-owned) was some 17,1 million hectares (of which 5,3m were arable), as compared to 16,3m (3,3m arable) occupied by the mass of Zimbabwe's black rural population. Half of the commercial land is in the best agricultural regions, while three-quarters of the peasant land is in the worst regions.

The peasant areas are vastly overcrowded with a population of 700 000 families increasing by 35 000 families a year. The huge commercial lands are owned by only some 5 000 white farmers or companies.

Half the families in the peasant areas have few or no cattle and 20% have no land rights. Poverty in these areas is desperate. Even in a season without drought, the average cash income of a family is \$18 a month.

Only a fraction of the commercial land (some 21%) is utilised—yet over 90% of all agricultural produce sent to market in Zimbabwe comes from this land. Here was an obvious opportunity to carry out a thorough land reform by distributing unused land to the peasants, without affecting the scale and mechanisation of the farming on which the food supplies to the towns depend.

The ZANU government hoped to do this—but without attacking capitalist property rights. As a result, the land reform program has failed hopelessly to satisfy the land-hunger of the peasants, or ease their desperate poverty.

The Lancaster House compromise provided that land could not be ex-



Drought has worsened the peasants' already desperate situation

propriated from capitalist farmers. It could only be bought—and then only on a 'willing seller' basis.

In other words, the Zimbabwean government could only obtain Zimbabwean land for resettlement by lavishly 'compensating' those who had enriched themselves by dispossessing the Zimbabwean peasants and exploiting the Zimbabwean workers, and who wanted to give up the land.

These costs would have to be added to the costs of resettling families and of agricultural assistance to make small-holdings and co-operatives viable. But already the government was facing a critical shortage of funds to finance reforms in education, health, housing etc.

Burdened by a shortage of foreign exchange required to buy out the capitalist farmers, the government has been scouring the world for donors who would be prepared to make foreign currency available for the purpose. However, the promised aid in no way approaches the sums which would be needed to buy sufficient land to solve the land question.

The government now finds itself in an extraordinary squeeze between millions of poverty-stricken and land-hungry peasants and the lack of finance (foreign and local) to carry out the land reform.

In addition as a result of bureaucratic inefficiency even the land purchased and the funds available are not being fully used for resettlement!

While peasants are suffering famine conditions in many areas, the government refuses to give them the green light to move on to unused government land!

The President of the Commercial Farmers' Union, Jim Sinclair, recently highlighted the dilemma of the government: "There is more land on offer to the Zimbabwean Government by white farmers than the Zimbabwean Government is willing to purchase, and, furthermore, at least one million hectares presently owned by Government has not been settled." (*Guardian Weekly*, 15 May 1983).

These facts expose the limitations of 'planned' resettlement within the framework of existing property relations.

Although public statements are contradictory, it seems that between 12 000 and 18 000 families have



gained land since Independence. Yet it is acknowledged that the communal areas can't carry more than half the existing population and thus need to have 350 000 families resettled.

The government's target of resettling 162 000 families by 1985 (at an estimated cost of Z\$600 million) would not cover:

- *the increase in landless population in the communal areas—35 000 families a year; plus

- *the 85 000 jobs lost in agriculture since independence.

What is now clear after disappointments in raising foreign aid to cover this land buying, is that even the modest target of 162 000 families cannot be met. To achieve this, 9 million hectares would be needed—only 1,9m has thus far been acquired.

Clearly no effective land reform

can be carried through while the requirement to purchase land and compensate rich farmers is adhered to. But the government also knows that, to tear up the capitalist book of rules and tackle the land question with socialist measures, would mean repudiating the Lancaster House compromise. It would mean shattering its 'partnership' with the capitalist class also in industry, commerce and finance, and would bring down retaliation from imperialism and the IMF.

It is precisely the big foreign companies which are also the biggest land-owners in Zimbabwe.

They can only be seriously taken on by revolutionary means, which would involve mobilising the working masses, in the rural areas and in the towns, and abandoning all illu-

sions in compromise with capitalism.

However, while the government has not trespassed on the rights of the capitalist land sector, active measures have been taken against 'squatters' who move onto private land. **In a complete change of language, it is now the squatters, not the rich whites, who are the "land grabbers"!** A special 'squatter control unit' of politicians, civil servants, police and the army has been set up to deal with the growing squatter movement.

At the same time, there is a greedy scramble for land by the rising black elite.

Conditions for the peasantry have worsened in the past two years. Drawn into the market economy, they have burnt their fingers. After many areas had a fair crop last year they sold their surplus. But with the drought striking particularly hard this year, the same peasants have now had to buy mealie-meal from the shops at much higher prices than they sold it for.

While 7 out of 10 of the 'communal' farmers will not be able to repay loans, virtually **no** farmer on a resettlement scheme is able to pay back installments on loans. The interests of the peasantry are entirely bound up with nationalisation of the banks and state provision of strong assistance to cooperatives.

The cooperatives now being formed cannot develop successfully in an economy dominated by monopoly capitalism. For cooperatives to flourish, control over credit, marketing and the commanding heights of the economy must be in the hands of the people.

National unity

The land question has undoubtedly been a major factor behind the increased regional conflict that has torn Zimbabwe, particularly in 1982. Although ZAPU—ZANU rivalries have flared up, underlying the tensions between Matabeleland and the Harare government, has been the slow progress made on the land question.

This point was made clearly in a recent interview in the overseas press with a senior ZAPU official:

"The war was about land hunger. We expected fair distribution of this land. People in the country were

eager to jump at the white farmers' land. This didn't take shape. People got very disheartened. A person in Matabeleland thinks this kind of thing is intended to suppress Ndebeles. They didn't understand that the problem was the same in Mashonaland." (*Guardian Weekly*, 20 March 1983)

Lacking a socialist approach to land reform, the ZAPU leadership bought farms with money raised from ex-ZIPRA guerillas, in a utopian attempt to satisfy their land hunger. This scheme had disastrous consequences when arms caches were discovered on this land, which was then confiscated, to the fury of the ex-Zipra combatants.

In the disturbances since Nkomo was removed from government early in 1982, the land question has again been 'taken up', this time by frustrated "dissidents" resorting to terrorist methods. Armed attacks on white farmers have accompanied the more widely publicised kidnappings and murders of tourists, ZANU officials, etc.

Where white farmers have been shot, peasants have then used their land to graze cattle during the pitiless drought. The government has been forced to support white farmers against this terror, and thus emerge as the defenders of the existing property system.

Having no socialist policies to solve the land question and begin to heal tribal divisions, the government resorted to methods of brutal counter-terror which struck at the whole population of Matabeleland (mainly the youth, peasants and workers).

Under this pressure, peasants throughout the region "denounced" ZAPU, and bought ZANU party cards. But this was transparently only for protection, and to secure promised drought relief from the central government.

Without a solution to the material problems of life of the people of Zimbabwe—in other words, as long as the government's compromise with capitalism is maintained—the divisions among the people, especially along language and tribal lines, can only fester and deepen, preventing the emergence of a truly united nation.

Faced with insecurity and hunger, frustrated and worried about the

future, groups can turn inward for mutual support, resenting any advantage—real or imagined—enjoyed by other groups. Ndebele and Shona may each be incited to hold the other responsible for the country's problems.

In turn this climate of suspicion will provide endless opportunities for SA interference and manipulations.

On the other hand the continued compromise with capitalism inevitably perpetuates white privilege in Zimbabwe. It is not solely a question of the reserved seats in parliament. Race and class position, race and wealth, are still essentially bound together and will spell permanent indignity and oppression of black working people in Zimbabwe until the socialist revolution is carried through.

Jobs and wages

To some extent the pressure on the land could have been alleviated by a rapid growth in jobs.

Independence raised high hopes that jobs would be created to meet the needs of an estimated 1 million unemployed; with 80 000 young work-seekers being added a year.

The Three-year plan sets a target of only 36 067 new jobs a year—not enough to prevent unemployment rising. Yet not even this modest target can be met!

In 1980, for instance, when the economy grew at 15.4%, only 25 000 jobs were created. With the recession, the Plan's target for jobs lies in ruins.

In the coming two years it will be a huge struggle for the workers even to defend existing jobs. Although in 1982 jobs grew in numbers, this depended almost entirely on increases in state spending in education and construction. The general advance hid the jobs lost in mining (-5 000), agriculture (-26 000), manufacturing (-4 900) and public administration (-4 400).

These job losses reflected the beginning of the downturn which has gathered momentum sharply in 1983 with mines and factories closing down. Despite government measures to protect jobs, redundancies will continue to increase well into 1984.

With the decline in jobs, wages have been hard hit. Wage increases have been frozen over the past 18



Workers of Morewear Industries, Harare, demonstrate against management order to go on "indefinite leave"

months, while prices have risen by at least 30%. Workers are becoming cynical over the government's delay in allowing wage increases while letting prices go through the roof.

Prices of items directly affecting workers, such as mealie-meal, electricity, secondary school fees, bus transport, and beer, have rocketed in the past few months. "That there will be a **prices explosion** in Zimbabwe during 1983 goes almost without saying", the well known business economist, T.Hawkins, has concluded.

As dictated—either directly or indirectly—by the IMF and local bankers, the government has removed food subsidies, raised sales tax to 16%, and increased rail fares and electricity rates. Further attacks on working peoples' living standards are

Some of the price increases during the wage freeze

- ★ General rate increases in townships.
- ★ Electricity rates up 54% in Harare (August 1982).
- ★ Paraffin from 37c to 56c per litre (February 1983).
- ★ Bus fares up 1.81c per kilometer (December 1982).
- ★ Large white loaf from 25c to 28c, and a 10% cut in weight (October 1982).
- ★ Mealie meal (super-refined), 50kg, from \$8 to \$13.60 (December 1982).
- ★ Secondary school fees, basic, from \$9 to \$21 a term.

likely in the July budget.

Price rises have cancelled out the gains made by the strike movement of 1980 and increases in minimum wages.

Despite falling real wages, strikes are practically forbidden, and the workers arrested and denounced when they take place. At the same time employers such as Lever Brothers boast to the workers that they could pay double the minimum wages but were held back by the wage freeze of the 'socialist' government elected by the workers!

In these ways the capitalists cynically exploit, for political advantage, the failure of the government to carry out their overthrow. The disastrous consequences of **capitalist** policies are used to discredit socialism in workers' eyes.

This is always the price to be paid when a compromising reformist policy is falsely put forward as "socialism".

Crisis in leadership

If real progress towards the goals of the Zimbabwean revolution could not be made during the years of fastest growth, what can be expected during capitalism's recurrent periods of downturn, now and in the future?

The two years of prosperity in 1980 and 1981 gave the government some room to balance between the demands of the capitalists and of the workers and peasants. But with the economy in recession, contradictions between rich and poor, the govern-

ment's inability to carry out the targets of the Plan, to create jobs, to solve the land question are all heaping up.

The apparently easier road of compromise with capitalism and asking for aid is now being shown to be a dead-end. The murmurings of discontent in the townships are beginning to find an echo in the growing rifts within the leadership.

These rifts have become evident particularly in Mugabe's speech denouncing Cabinet corruption, and in the conflicting statements made by different ministers. They are evident also in the inability of ZANU to hold a party congress, despite being in power for over three years, and although the party membership is eager to discuss these important issues.

Attempts to set a date for a congress in May 1982 and again in May 1983 have been abandoned allegedly because of disorganisation at branch, district, and provincial level. Reports of the wholesale 'restructuring' of the party in many parts of the country appear regularly in the press. The latest promise is for a congress some time in 1984.

Much of the corruption at the top level in farm buying, ownership of businesses, bus companies and hotels, has been kept hidden from the public. Nevertheless enough has become obvious to make workers especially cynical about the calls for "socialism through hard work" made by those riding in luxury cars, owning splendid suburban houses, and having growing business interests.

The corruption and self-enrichment at the top is part of a process of counter-revolution unfolding **within** the Zimbabwean revolution.

The capitalist ministers and their entourage bow to the official ideology of "socialism" as something of no consequence in practice. All the while, their links with the capitalist class grow, along with honorary shares and directorships, and the differences within the government become sharply expressed in private.

Rumours abound about secret meetings 'at the top' around 'tribal' and regional groupings.

For Mugabe, matters were probably brought to a head when, reputedly, a resolution that Ministers should have only one income was

defeated in Cabinet. Mugabe's response was the angry anniversary speech and the stepping up of verbal attacks on capitalism.

The question now being debated in the company boardrooms and on the factory floor is whether the country is facing a real turn in the direction of socialist policies or not. Many say that there have been criticisms in the past from which nothing has resulted. Was this merely an anniversary re-dedication speech, or a sign that the country would be steered in a new direction?

It would be wrong to think that Mugabe, and the left-wing within the ZANU leadership, have drawn the conclusion from the crisis that it is now necessary deliberately to mobilise the working class, youth and peasantry to move decisively against capitalism.

Despite the extraordinary step, as a Prime Minister, of making his speech over the heads of his government and party, appealing on television directly to the masses for support, it is nevertheless significant that

Mugabe shrank from issuing any call to action.

A few days after his speech he would not even come out personally to meet the student demonstration gathered outside his office to support him—instead the crowd was ordered by the police to disperse.

Clearly there would be overwhelming support, both from the rank-and-file of ZANU, and from Zimbabwean workers and peasants in general, for an onslaught by the government against capitalism.

But Mugabe, whom the *Sunday Mail* gossip columnist calls the "only conscious socialist in the government", recoils from the revolutionary road of launching a real attack on capitalism and its pillars of support in Zimbabwe. To do so means mobilising a **mass movement**, which he is unwilling to contemplate because in the explosive and volatile situation he is not confident of controlling the consequences.

Ever the 'pragmatist', Mugabe and the other left-wing leaders in ZANU find themselves with nothing to cling

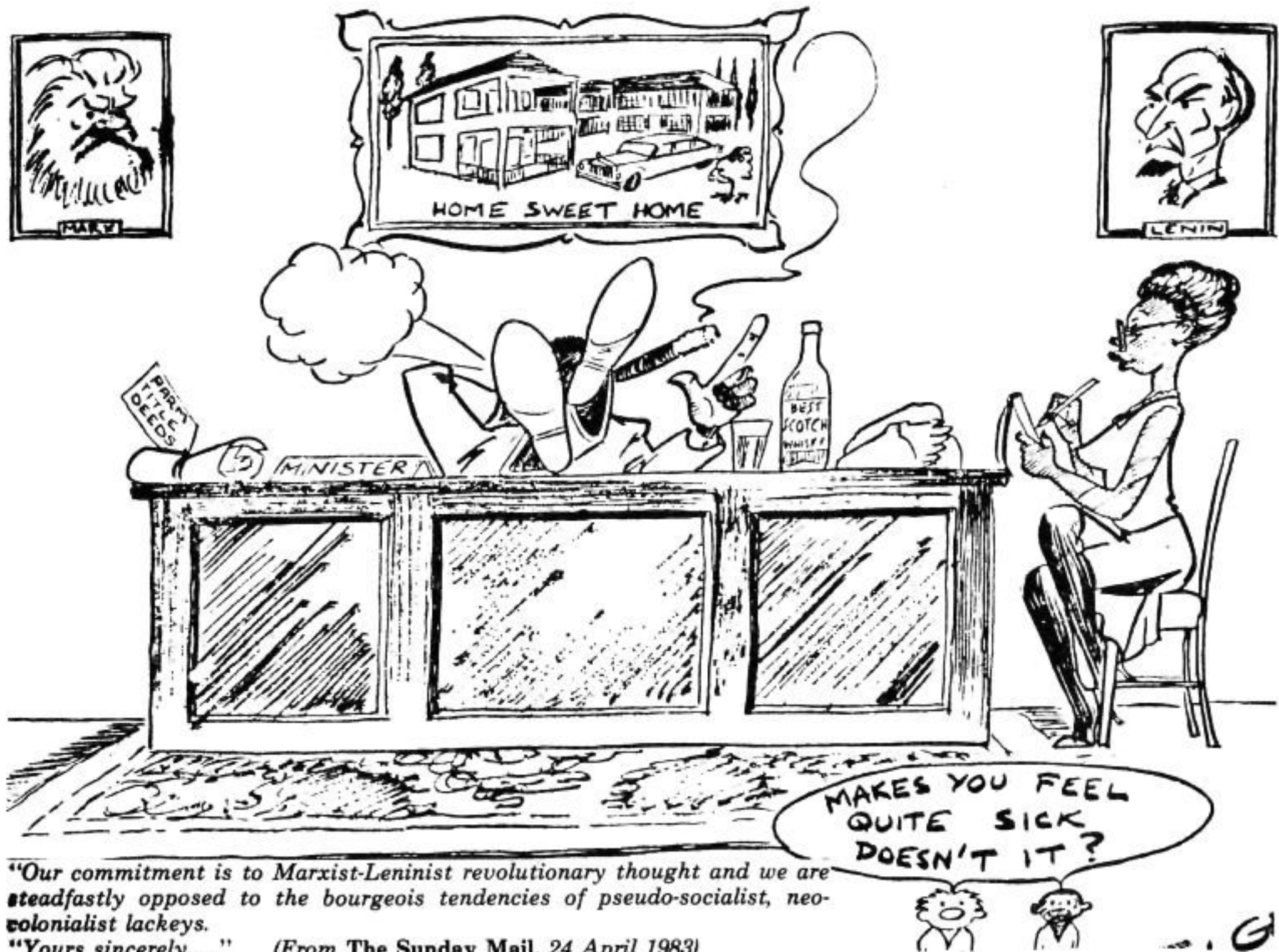
to but the sinking raft of their existing reformist program and strategy.

In fact, it is in the hope of rescuing this strategy that he has launched his public attack on "bourgeois tendencies" in the government and party. A party and Cabinet of 'genuine' socialists seems the only way of preserving the credibility of the government, and its policies of "reconciliation" and "partnership" with capitalism in the eyes of the masses.

Reformist 'logic'

Ironically, therefore, Mugabe would need to purge capitalist elements from the government, precisely so that capitalism itself need not be purged from the economy and society. So the 'logic' of reformism in Zimbabwe runs.

An editorial in the *Sunday Mail* (24 April) wrote that there was no lack of defence for the capitalist ministers,



"Our commitment is to Marxist-Leninist revolutionary thought and we are steadfastly opposed to the bourgeois tendencies of pseudo-socialist, neo-colonialist lackeys.

"Yours sincerely....." (From The Sunday Mail, 24 April 1983)

who had committed no crime in not being socialists. Capitalism was the "norm" in Zimbabwe. If they wanted to go into business, they should simply resign from the government and leave it to the "genuine socialists"!

Yet this cannot satisfy the demands of ZANU's workers and peasant supporters for the socialist transformation of the country. The consequences of not mobilising the mass movement is that the left-wing leaders in ZANU find themselves increasingly isolated, and incapable of decisive action. Two months after denouncing his Ministers in the strongest terms, Mugabe has not even managed to reshuffle the Cabinet!

Temporarily, the counter-revolution has been blunted; it has been forced to become more secretive; but it awaits its turn in the corridors of power, eyeing every mistake at the top.

In the former colonial countries, the indigenous capitalist class and petty-bourgeoisie is so weak economically that it has no alternative to back-hand deals and 'money from politics' to enrich themselves. The capitalist Ministers know this and are determined to hold onto power.

Therefore, the rifts within the government can only deepen, and prepare the ground for sudden and sharp turns and manoeuvres in the power struggles at the top.

The significance of Mugabe's speech is not that it signals any new direction in government **now**. But it does mark a turning point. It reflects the development of the pressure of **mass opposition** to the compromise with capitalism—though this development is still at an early stage.

Unlike speeches of the past, Mugabe has this time found a direct echo in a students' and womens' march. Both were determined to hold Mugabe to his course and to see the capitalist ministers swept away.

Student leaders denounced the capitalist ministers and the idea of gradual reforms (the essence of the two-stage approach): "Let these people know there is no halfway between capitalism and socialism," said one speaker, to enthusiastic applause.

They urged an inquiry into how ministers had acquired their property and demanded that this property should be confiscated. "Confiscate

There is an amazing disparity between the 'socialist' and 'Marxist' rhetoric which is poured out in the media, and the capitalist 'business-as-usual' going on in real life.

their farms, flats, buses, hotels, stores," read one placard. "Forward with Bob. Down with greedy leaders who preach socialism but practice capitalism," read another. Others read: "Not another Rhodesia", "Our brothers' blood was not shed to enrich petty-bourgeois politicians", and "Not another Kenya."

But the most significant statement was made by one student leader who said: "This demonstration marks the beginning of the politics of participation in the struggle for socialism."

It is precisely the conscious mass participation of the working class which is needed to carry through socialist transformation in Zimbabwe, one of the most developed countries in Africa.

The future path of the Zimbabwean revolution cannot be mapped out precisely, but economic crisis and its effects on working people will undoubtedly sharpen pressures towards the left and raise the intensity of the class struggle.

It is important to remember that the ZANU victory was the **worst option** for the capitalists, whose slogan in the 1980 election was "Anybody but Mugabe."

Of course, they have since reconciled themselves to the government, and the most far-sighted of them are well-pleased with the way the compromise with 'Marxist' Mugabe has worked out. Nevertheless, they would, if they could get one, prefer a government tied directly to them and facing safely to the right.

The ZANU-led government does not **rest** on the bourgeoisie, despite safeguarding their property interests. ZANU's support was and still is clearly in the peasantry and working class, and the leadership finds it difficult to compromise too openly with the capitalists. It is this which causes the internal strains and increasing outbursts against corruption and capitalism from the leadership.

There is an amazing disparity between the 'socialist' and 'Marxist' rhetoric which is poured out in the media, and the capitalist 'business-as-usual' going on in real life.

The relationship between the ZANU leadership and the capitalists is being constantly tested out. Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the struggle over the prices of cooking oil and mealie-meal, which came to a head late last year when both these products disappeared from the shelves.

In a complicated manoeuvre, the government withdrew state subsidies (in line with a policy of cutting agricultural subsidies as demanded by the international banks) but **refused** to allow the capitalists to raise prices. The cooking oil and milling companies responded by slowing down production, and soon there were shortages of both products despite no shortage of raw materials.

After months of argument against a background of unprecedented shortages (with the workers and peasants grumbling that even under Smith shortages like this had never happened), the government was forced into a humiliating retreat and large price increases were granted.

Experiences like this have undoubtedly antagonised the genuine reformers in the government, who must feel they are losing their grip on events.

These small victories for the capitalists raise the question of how strong capitalism is in Zimbabwe.

While the forces of capitalist production are fairly well developed in Zimbabwe, capitalism as such is weak—a "mansion on chicken legs"—as it has no firm social base. Besides the state, the most it can rely on locally is the narrow stratum of grasping petty bourgeois in and outside the ranks of the two main parties.

At independence there were 200 000 whites. Afterwards they began leaving at the rate of 2 000 per month, with only 600 white immigrants a month coming in. By March 1983, only about 180 000 whites remained in the country.

The two main props of Zimbabwean capitalism lie, in a sense, **outside the country**: in the ominous power of South Africa, and in the in-



ternational banking system—the nerve centre of capitalism.

On the one hand, sabotage by South Africa and even military intervention is a constant threat.

On the other hand the IMF and imperialist financiers have an enormous hold over the Zimbabwean government, as the reformist 'socialist' strategy depends on obtaining from them the aid, loans and investment to carry out land reform, build roads, building the Wankie thermal power station, etc.

It is these two forces which have reduced the 'revolution from above' to the most careful advances into public ownership. The state's share in enterprises has either been inherited from the old regime (e.g. ZISCO: 49,74% state ownership), or subsequently bought, as in the Zimbabwe institute of Mass Communications (which controls the press), Zimbank(75%), CAPS drug company, and United Transport Overseas.

Loans have also been given by the state to Wankie, Rio Tinto, Bindura, Zimbabwe Alloys, and MTD (Mangula), most of which can be converted into shares. There have been few complaints from the companies, as the terms have been quite generous. In the words of the Minister of Mines, it was the companies which usually approached government asking for a joint venture!

This nibbling at the monopolies cannot go far on the present basis. **While no details have been published about the conditions for the IMF loan, it is an open secret that one of them is an assurance to cut government spending by Z\$250 million.**

With the secret agenda of discussions with the international and local banks, the **agenda of social reform is**

silently being shelved. Zimbabwe is highly vulnerable to their pressure, as the external debt has risen from \$350 million in 1979 to an estimated \$1 500 million in early 1983.

Nevertheless, there are complaints that "numerous statements attacking capitalism and extolling socialism have brought frustration and uncertainty to business leaders" (*Sunday Mail*, 29 May 1983).

Even though the government has moved with diplomatic care in buying into companies, even though the capitalist state was not overthrown in the war or thereafter, even though the army has been used against squatters, and the police against strikers, the capitalists lack confidence in the future.

Although the old state has been consolidated in Zimbabwe, but with new personnel, the capitalists sense that it might not be able to defend them against a really concerted mass movement, once the government itself was deeply split between left and right.

Uncertain about the future of profit-making in Zimbabwe, the capitalists are not investing in new plant. The "chicken-legs" are becoming all the shakier.

Ironically, this—the inability of capitalism to develop industry, to provide jobs and decent wages, and a surplus for state expansion—is calling its future even more sharply into question.

Deal

The deal with capitalism struck at Lancaster House was, among other things, an attempt to avoid following the example of Frelimo and the MPLA, who were left no option but to expropriate capitalism in isolated, undeveloped countries like Mozambique and Angola.

But now Zimbabwe is being faced with all the accumulated rottenness of capitalism, with daily redundancies, low world prices for exports, and an economy in the hands of the multinationals and beyond the control of the 'socialist' government.

These pressures will also increasingly threaten the democratic gains of the revolution.

As the class struggle sharpens and

government measures for propping up the system weigh more heavily on working people, political parties will increasingly have the demands of the workers and peasants thrust on them, and opposition parties will be able to capitalise on their grievances.

Parliament, rather than serving as a forum for 'democratically' settling issues between the classes, will more and more tend to reflect the irreconcilable gulf in society, and this in turn will add fuel to the struggle.

Faced with the beginnings of such a process, the government is already speaking of the need to introduce a one-party system, in the hope of putting a lid on things. But this would not remove the fundamental crisis in society, and the demands of the opposing classes would merely become concentrated on and through ZANU itself.

Despite capitalist pressures and external threats, it cannot be ruled out in the coming years that the crisis may reach such intensity that the nationalist leaders may be compelled to take the economy into state ownership.

Driving capitalism from the commanding heights of the economy would allow real planning to begin, clear many of the obstacles to development, and begin to lay economic foundations for a transition to socialism.

But even that would not solve the problems heaped up, as in all the ex-colonial countries, by the power of international monopolies and dependence on the world capitalist economy. Only the carrying through of socialist revolution in the advanced industrial countries can solve these problems.

Therefore the future of Zimbabwe lies, not in illusions of a separate 'national' transition to socialism—which is impossible with the limited resources of any single country—but in linking the struggle for socialism here to that throughout Southern Africa and the world.

The overthrow of capitalism 'from above' in Zimbabwe would leave power in the hands of a privileged elite, which would then rest on **state ownership** instead of the present compromise with capitalism. It would not allow workers' democracy—i.e., the control and management of the economy, society and the state by the working peo-



Having compromised with capitalism, the government now blames workers who go on strike for "sabotaging" the economy. In this cartoon from the *Harare Herald* (1 April 1982) the Assistant Minister of Labour, Manyika, is shown 'dealing' with strikers.

ple themselves—which is a necessary condition for socialism to be built.

On the other hand, socialist revolution throughout Southern Africa in which the working class—in South Africa and Zimbabwe especially—could combine in taking power into their own hands, would mean a giant stride forward, transforming the masses' life and consciousness.

For that to become a real prospect, the workers' movement must be built and prepared politically for these tasks.

Indeed, the strength of the mass movement in Zimbabwe will be the critical factor also in determining the direction which the left wing in the government and ZANU leadership takes.

Because the capitalists and their allies have been given the opportunity to reconsolidate their position in Zimbabwe, and because of the powerful capitalist pressures upon the governing elite, no decisive move against capitalism can take place 'cold', i.e., without the pressure of the revolutionary mass movement.

It will obviously involve immense splits between left and right within the ruling party, the government and the armed forces of the state. But on-

ly the development of a revolutionary mass movement can provide the driving force towards the overthrow of capitalism, while ensuring the defence of Zimbabwe against reaction.

In preparing for that development, the building of the mass organisations of workers, peasants and socialist youth on the basis of clear policies is the urgent task.

Trade union movement

Despite the activity of the university youth—the new young elite—backed up in subsequent weeks by the women's march, the "politics of mass participation in the struggle for socialism" must centre on the trade union movement.

This will occur to a large extent despite those Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Union leaders who, a worker wrote, "are only able to compliment the government and statements by ministers; to me their bargaining power is cut from under their feet by the Government's pegging of salaries and wages." (*Sunday Mail*, 29 May

1983)

After the magnificent struggles of the 1940s, which culminated in the General Strike of 1948, the workers' leaders increasingly subordinated themselves to middle-class policies and organisations. Despite the strikes of 1972 and 1974, the workers' movement became completely overshadowed by the guerilla war.

But as the Smith-Muzorewa regime crumbled, the workers seized the opportunity to press their social demands in the largest strike wave in Zimbabwe's history.

These largely spontaneous strikes hit the large manufacturing companies (Bata, David Whitehead, British Leyland, Boart Drilling, ZISCO, Stewart & Lloyd), mining, transport, and even the plantations, between March and November 1980.

Some 250 000 strike days were lost in comparison with the 1974 figure of 20 000. **In the second week of independence alone there were 50 500 strike days!**

These strikes took place despite the Minister of Labour, Kangai, and the trade union leadership denouncing the workers as being led by "agitators and extremists".

The movement ultimately came to

an end as, on the one hand, workers' demands were partially met and, on the other hand, force was used—e.g., troops called in at Wankie, shootings at Empress Nickel, and the sacking of the entire workforce at Swift Transport.

The lack of involvement of the trade union leadership meant that the strike wave largely bypassed unions, which didn't receive the influx of members which could have been expected.

But the strikes notched up a number of achievements.

- * They put forward the bold demand for \$2 an hour, \$100 a week;

- * they forced many concessions from management;

- * they showed that the workers had taken over from the guerillas as the driving force of the Zimbabwean revolution.

The Mugabe government responded with a number of reforms. A 'Commission of Inquiry into Incomes, Prices, and Conditions of Service' was set up in September 1980, minimum wages were laid down from the beginning of 1981, and workers were encouraged to set up workers' committees.

These reforms were not designed to strengthen the existing trade unions. The government encouraged direct communication by the workers' committees with the ZANU leadership, which often led to the formation of 'splinter unions' especially in mining, municipalities and engineering, carried forward on the wave of enthusiasm for ZANU among workers.

Big stick

With the waning of the strike movement, the government used an ever bigger stick against teachers, nurses, train drivers and bus drivers who came out on strike in late 1981 and early 1982. Seeing the prosecutions and imprisonment of strikers, some workers have turned to action in the form of 'work-ins' to prove to the government they have grievances but will not threaten 'productivity', as they are accused of doing.

When a strike did take place, in the notorious Frame Group mills, the entire management of the company—including a former Selous Scouts officer—applied and were accepted

as members of ZANU(PF)! (*Herald*, 14 October 1982)

Incidents such as these, and the general lack of progress by the 'radical' splinter unions, have turned the workers back towards the older established unions. Unfortunately, without a socialist perspective the trade union leadership has not been able to give a clear lead to the workers on the question of wages, the workers' committees, and the downturn in the economy.

Despite this the unions are growing. The workers' committees especially are now discovering the limits of single-plant organisation and are seeking to link up with other factories through industrial unions.

Union growth is also stimulated by an enormous demand from the workers for education on how to organise, on health and safety protection, and on issues such as 'What is socialism?'

There is a growing struggle by the workers to gain democratic control of the workers' committees.

In some factories, like Nestle and Lever Brothers, managers chair the 'workers committee' meetings and representatives are bought out by promotion, often ending with houses in the suburbs. In a number of company reports, the capitalists noted that when workers' committees were seen to be working with management, they were regarded as 'sell-outs'.

These developments indicate a searching for strength and unity among the workers. There is enormous dammed-up energy waiting to be released into trade union organisation.

Despite the ZCTU being imposed by the state on the unions in July 1980, and despite its bureaucratic methods, in the future it will undoubtedly gain some life of its own. After decades of bitter quarrels, this is the first time in Zimbabwe that one national centre for trade unions has been created.

The task of organisation is immense. About 90% of workers are not yet unionised, which is scarcely better than in the dark UDI-days figure for 1969!

A social welfare system barely exists, apart from the free health facilities for those earning less than \$150. There is no unemployment benefit, no national pension scheme,

no sick pay and no maternity benefit.

To date, the furthest the political leadership will go towards mass participation has been the calling of rallies, without speeches from the audience. There are indications that workers particularly are questioning this approach.

In a recent letter to the *Sunday Mail*, a worker complained that the May Day celebrations had been dominated by politicians. He asked that "in future May Day be left to workers to organise themselves and to say what they want without fear" (29 May 1983).

Workers let down

There is growing scepticism about the national leadership especially due to the postponement of promised wage increases. There is scepticism towards the state, resulting from many experiences of being let down by officials from whom workers expect support.

In the 'labour relations' field, the capitalists have been able to buy out every Chief Industrial Relations Officer appointed to date. First Chigwendere resigned after two years at the job to become the 'personnel superintendent' of African Associated Mines in Mashava. Then his replacement, Staford Onyimo, served only five months before resigning to take up a post with a building supply company!

These examples are part of a growing trend among the state bureaucracy.

The trade union leadership, unfortunately, has given no independent lead in the forward organisation of the workers and particularly in the defence of jobs.

For example, after a desperate sit-in against redundancies by 449 workers at Berkfield Consolidated (a clothing firm), the leader of the union concerned said: "We in the industry or your union can do nothing". (*Herald*, 7 April 1983)

The speed of the downturn has shocked many workers, who have never before had to struggle against redundancies. Empress Nickel was closed down without any consultation with the workers' union; Karina Textiles closed in April, making 364 workers redundant; and at Shabani

and Mashaba some 2 000 jobs are at risk. Yet this represents only a small fraction of the loss of jobs not reported in the newspapers.

A similar lack of leadership has been shown in relation to the new Labour Relations Bill, which severely limits trade union freedom and especially the right to strike. Although a document has been prepared by union leaders critical of many provisions of the Bill, the workers have not been informed of its contents.

A difference of opinion about the Bill, briefly aired in the press, culminated in the suspension of one of the leading ZCTU officials. Obviously, differences exist also on the wage freeze and other issues, but there is a lack of democratic debate.

Nevertheless, workers are becoming increasingly determined to make their imprint on union policy. As workers become particularly aroused by arbitrary increases in rents, bus fares, electricity, school fees etc., and all the basic necessities of life, there could be sudden and unexpected struggles and developments.

There is hardly a major town which has not experienced a demonstration against rent increases in the past few months. It is this movement which has provoked the crisis in the ZANU leadership at the municipal level, and sent shock waves right to the top.

As yet the workers in their unions or workers' committees have had little role in these political struggles. The radicals within the party fear bringing the workers into political action lest the initiative is taken out of their hands.

On the other side, the workers view the denunciations of corruption sceptically, and trade union members are wary of being used to further the ambitions of a new layer of politicians.

Nevertheless, the new turn by the government will increasingly encourage the workers to participate in political life, as the struggle between left and right in the government and party is again and again forced into the open. In any real struggle between the capitalists and the government, the workers and the trade unions will inevitably be drawn in.

Marxists, together with all workers, will support every effort towards genuine reforms by the Zimbabwean government. A hectare of



Building workers: "Forward with the workers of the world!"

land more for the peasants, a dollar more on the wages of the workers—we will support every struggle for even the smallest gain.

But the duty of Marxism, at the same time, is to explain that the necessary reforms cannot be carried out on any lasting basis while the compromise with capitalism remains.

We must support every progressive step which may be taken by the government to deal a blow against the capitalist class and weaken its stranglehold on Zimbabwe. In the struggle between left and right within ZANU and the government, we must support the removal of pro-capitalist elements.

But at the same time it is necessary to explain that the crisis cannot be resolved unless the mass of working people are organised consciously to carry forward the revolution by their own strength, to take power into their own hands, and to drive capitalism out of Zimbabwe.

Therefore we must criticise every act or policy of government or union leaders which belittles the role of the working class in its own liberation, and must resolutely oppose every attack or restriction aimed against workers' democratic rights and freedom to organise and struggle.

For this reason, Marxism would oppose the introduction of a one-party state in Zimbabwe. Such a measure would be designed not (as

many people think) to secure 'victory for socialism', but to overcome by force the divisions and conflicts which are persisting **because of the compromise with capitalism** on the part of the ZANU leadership.

Restrictions on the democratic rights of the working people will play into the hands of reaction, while a one-party system would only bottle up the fierce contradictions in a single vessel, making them no less explosive as a result.

Marxists will fight to defend Zimbabwe, and every gain of the revolution so far, against South African or any other imperialist attacks. But our duty is, at the same time, to point out that the only defence which will prove effective is to carry forward the workers' struggle for socialism **in both countries.**

Against the military and economic power of SA capitalism, only a united mass movement of the Zimbabwean and SA working class, drawing to its side the youth and peasants, can provide a really effective weapon and defence.

The primary task of the strugglers in the cells and branches of ZANU, in the Youth Brigades and in the women's organisations is to help strengthen the trade unions and ensure democratic discussion of the issues facing Zimbabwe.

The line of struggle can only be through understanding the growing strength of the black working class in South Africa, and initiating direct links between the workers organised in the two countries.

From their side, activists in the independent unions in SA should push to establish firm contact with their fellow-workers in Zimbabwe employed by the same companies or in the same industries. Links of this kind, which are already beginning to be built, will strengthen and stimulate the workers in both countries, and enable them to prepare together for the struggles they face in common.

Any movement towards completing the Zimbabwean revolution will spur on the workers' struggle in South Africa to new heights. At the same time the Zimbabwean workers must learn to draw on the fighting capacity of the organised South African workers, to complete the job in Zimbabwe, and put the perspective of a Southern African Federation of Socialist States on the agenda ●

Zimbabwe's Labour

By Paul Storey

In his recent speech to the ILO, Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Mugabe described the Industrial Conciliation Act inherited from the Smith regime as a piece of legislation which was "the cornerstone of the exploitation of the black workers of Zimbabwe."

Now, after two years of working on it, the Zimbabwe government has come up with a new Labour Relations Bill. Mugabe stated that this new Bill would guarantee democracy and equality for workers.

But is this so? Will the Bill do away with the exploitation of workers and the existing harsh controls over the unions? This article examines the draft Bill as published in November 1982.

The Zimbabwean government's new draft law on labour relations gives the workers' movement cause for the gravest alarm.

In the past, Rhodesia's white minority regime used the notorious Industrial Conciliation Act to control trade unions. The Act included a system of registration and other measures allowing state officials to interfere in union affairs.

It laid down legal obstacles to strikes which made it practically impossible for workers to take action without facing the threat of jail. It barred unions from using their funds and facilities in the political struggle for workers' rights.

In every way it was designed to maintain exploitation and cheap labour, by obstructing workers from organising and using their strength.

Independence raised the hopes of workers that the new government would sweep away these hated provisions, and help strengthen the trade unions for the fight against capitalism.

Workers expected support from their government in the strikes that have taken place. They expected that workers' organisations would have a decisive say in economic policy. They expected effective action against victimisations and redundancies.

In all these and other respects, workers have been disappointed.

The government has continued to apply the Industrial Conciliation Act, and to use this and other old laws to control workers and arrest strikers.

Now, at last, the Industrial Conciliation Act is to be replaced. But the



draft Labour Relations Bill, while containing some reforms, also contains attacks on the democratic rights of workers and on the independence of the trade unions, which go further even than the old Act. In fact they are easily the equal of South Africa's oppressive Wiehahn laws.

The present Bill even provides for a system of **influx control**, allowing the Minister of Labour to order

workers to remain in any area, and to prevent work-seekers from entering any area where the "supply" of labour already meets the "demand".

Yet only the palest hints of protest have appeared in the national press, and there is no sign whatever of the trade union leaders mounting any campaign against the Bill. Indeed, with perhaps a handful of exceptions, Zimbabwean workers (organised and

Relations Bill -

an attack on workers' rights

unorganised alike) are quite in the dark about the contents of this Bill —although it is already in its **third** draft.

Let us look at some of the main features of the Labour Relations Bill as it affects the workers.

Controls on unions

The Bill aims to bring workers' organisations completely under the control of the state.

While workers may elect a **workers' committee** in every workplace, the Minister of Labour is given power without restriction to regulate and control their affairs.

The **trade unions** are to be disciplined by the continuation of the registration system laid down in the Industrial Conciliation Act.

Only... this system is to be made even more harsh and overbearing!

The aim is to have one registered union per industry. That has the advantage of avoiding the splintering of the trade union movement and the previous domination of negotiations and industrial councils by white artisan unions.

But the essential aim is clearly to bring union leaders under such tight controls that they will be dog's-bodies for the government.

On top of registration, there is now also to be a requirement that unions must be "certified". Within a year of registration, the union must apply for certification, which is a way of ensur-

ing that registered unions behave themselves. If certification is refused, registration lapses.

The Registrar has various grounds for refusing to register or certify a union or for cancelling it. Among them: that the union has not "fulfilled its responsibilities" under the Bill; or has not "complied" with the various restrictions and controls which regulations may lay down; or even that it has failed to "co-operate" with the state or with employers' organisations!

And once a union loses or is denied registration, it becomes legally impossible to function as a union. For example, it would be forbidden by law to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement with any employer. It would **never** be allowed to recommend a strike or any other workers' action. It would not be allowed to organise or co-operate with workers' committees. It would be forbidden to collect dues from its members, and would not be allowed to receive or spend any other money.

In addition to the registration and certification system, the Bill introduces other controls and interference into union affairs, quite contrary to the democratic traditions of the labour movement internationally.

Firstly, the Minister of Labour may interfere in the internal elections within trade unions when union leaders are chosen. Among his powers, he may ban freedom of speech in a union election by prohibiting "any person" from conducting a campaign in a particular way

and "misrepresenting" the issues. Do workers not have the brains to make up their own minds through the discussion of issues?

Secondly, the Bill will compel registered unions to admit as members all workers in the particular industry or undertaking, without having any choice in the matter. Thus for example, strike-breakers and informers may not be barred by their fellow workers from union membership.

Finally, and perhaps worst of all, are the provisions for state control of union finances. The right of union members to decide and manage their own financial affairs democratically will be completely denied by the Bill. The unions may not even decide how much they will levy as membership dues. This will be for the Minister to decide.

If the Minister so wishes, he can decide how many organisers unions may employ, and what property, if any, they may purchase.

When 'stop-order' or 'check-off' facilities have been negotiated between union and management, the Minister can interfere and "prohibit or modify" these arrangements. He may even order that dues deducted should not be paid to the union.

He can compel unions to supply him with **any** information he requires for the purposes of controlling their financial affairs. He may order and control **all** matters relating to the spending of union dues.

"Political purposes"

The Bill will also ban completely the use of union dues "for political purposes". This goes even further than the Industrial Conciliation Act in barring workers' organisations from political activity.

There is nothing, of course, to bar employers from using their vast private means and company funds to finance capitalist politicians and political campaigns.

This provision of the Bill is so wide that it would probably even prohibit a union from spending money to campaign for a change in the labour relations law!

Fixing of wages and conditions.

The Bill shows an obsession with fixing everything by Ministerial command, and a deep-seated fear of allowing anything to be determined by the organised workers through struggle against the bosses.

"Collective bargaining" is made entirely subordinate to the powers of the Minister.

The Minister will have unrestricted power to regulate and control employment.

"Without prejudice to the generality of his powers", the Minister may make regulations on a whole list of specific items. He can fix minimum wages, benefits, working hours, leave, and **all** working conditions.

He can also fix **maximum** wages and benefits—and it will be a criminal offence, punishable by two years' imprisonment, not only for any employer to pay, but **for any worker to receive**, more than the Minister lays down!

Zimbabwean workers have already had an 18-month taste of a wage freeze. There will be nothing in the law to prevent the Minister from imposing a permanent wage freeze!

The Minister's regulations override any collective bargaining agreement between the unions and employers. More than this: the Bill allows for direct interference by the Minister in the process of collective bargaining itself.

For example, when union representatives have negotiated an agreement with management and have to take the draft back to their members for approval, they must **first** take it to the Minister for **his** approval! What more blatant interference could there be in the internal democracy of unions?

Whenever the Minister refuses to approve an agreement, it becomes the "duty" of the union and the employers to agree to changes that will satisfy him. If they fail to agree, the result can be a binding order on them to comply, with criminal penalties for refusal.

At any time in the future, the Minister may decide to intervene again to require that a registered agreement be amended. There is no democratic check or limit on these powers.

Next, the Bill maintains the system of industrial councils and industrial boards, although these are to be given a name change. They are now to be called "employment councils" and "employment boards".

In one respect, employment councils will no longer carry with them the problems and dangers of the past. The policy of one industry/one union will mean the final demise not only of "splinter unions", but also of the separate white unions which formerly dominated the labour side of industrial councils.

However, in another respect, the danger for the labour movement is made worse. It will now be the "duty" of unions and employers on an employment council to take joint steps to enforce not only collective bargaining agreements but also government regulations within the industry!

The trade unions will have no independent machinery under their control for investigating and enforcing wages and conditions, but will be implicated and involved with the employers in joint steps to enforce, for example, a wage freeze on trade union members.

In the case of employment boards, which will recommend the wages and conditions in industries not covered by an employment council, there is no provision in the Bill for workers to elect any representatives to these boards. There will be no change in the way they are composed, and no reason for workers to expect any more satisfactory treatment from employment boards in future than they have received from industrial boards in the past.

Settlement of disputes

The main characteristic of the Labour Relations Bill is the constant interference of state officials in every aspect of the relations and the struggle between workers and employers. This is carried to quite ridiculous lengths in the machinery provided for the "settlement of disputes".

There are only two circumstances in which workers with a grievance may directly go on strike or take other collective action. The first is when they walk out to avoid an "immediate threat" to health or safety.

The second is when there is an "immediate threat" to the **existence** of a workers' committee or certified trade union.

Otherwise, whenever there is a dispute, workers have no legal alternative but to call in a "labour relations officer" from the Department of Labour. And if workers do not do so, "any person involved" in the dispute could, e.g. the employer.

In addition to labour relations officers, there will also be: "Hearing Officers", "Regional Hearing Officers", a "Chief Hearing Officer", a "National Labour Relations Board" and a "Public Employees' Relations Board", and finally the "Zimbabwe Arbitration Tribunal".

All the officials and boards, as well as the Zimbabwe Arbitration Tribunal, are to be made up of government or state appointees. Neither workers nor workers' organisations have any right to elect or appoint any of them.

The Bill provides wide-ranging powers for all these officials, and a maze of complicated procedures which only lawyers will be likely to find their way through. **The whole machinery is designed to take issues out of the sight, and beyond the control, of workers and trade unions themselves, and to allow them to be dealt with bureaucratically behind closed doors.**

The various labour relations officials and boards can make **final** decisions, binding on the parties, without even conducting an open hearing.

Urgent issues can readily be delayed. Disputes can be shunted from one official or body to another. At any time—regardless of the wishes of the parties—the matter can be referred to **compulsory** arbitration.

The Bill provides for an involved sequence of appeals, which will be virtually impossible to carry through without the aid of lawyers, and which will therefore prove hugely expensive to the trade unions. Once entangled in these proceedings, a trade union could find itself ordered to pay not only its own legal costs, but those of the employers as well.

Indeed the Bill will prove a paradise for the professional tricksters on the legal staff of the major companies which dominate employment in this country. It is full of loopholes, procedural niceties, and

vague terms which could be exploited to the advantage of the bosses.

Ban on strikes

The Labour Relations Bill will make it practically impossible to go on strike legally, or to take any other form of collective action against the employers.

Strikes are to be illegal unless a labour relations officer has been called in to deal with the dispute. Then they continue to be illegal while the machinery for the "settlement of disputes" is at work. Then they are illegal again when one of the state officials or boards has made a "determination" of the issue, or if it has been sent to compulsory arbitration.

In any case, strikes will be illegal if the matter in dispute is covered by regulations or by a collective bargaining agreement. So, for instance, there can be no legal strike against the maximum wage or other regulations affecting workers which the Minister lays down.

And if it were possible to imagine any occasion for a strike not already illegalised by these restrictions, **all** strikes will be illegal unless ten days' written notice of the intention to strike has been given to the employer!

On top of that, only a certified trade union may ever authorise a strike and, as we have seen, a certified union takes very big risks in overstepping any of the provisions of the Bill.

As a final fish-net to catch the would-be striker who has made it past all the hooks and lines already mentioned, the Bill will make strikes illegal if a state official, by means of a "disposal order", has ordered it to be **suspended** (for up to ninety days!) or **terminated**.

When it is illegal to strike, it is also in most cases illegal to threaten or recommend a strike, or any other "collective job action". This is so widely defined that it would prohibit also a boycott, or a 'go-slow' or even a refusal to work overtime (if the aim was to pressurise the boss).

It will always be illegal under the Bill for a worker to get up at a factory or union meeting and propose that strike action should be taken.

The Labour Relations Bill, in other



Bus strike, 1982. Minister of Labour Kangai addresses workers in Harare, shortly before approving their sacking by management.

words, effectively abolishes the right to strike.

In short, the approach of the Bill to the labour movement in Zimbabwe is this:

The right to trade unions? Yes—but only under state control, and as long as they obey the state's bidding.

The right to **use** trade unions as a weapon of struggle against the bosses? No, never and in no circumstances.

Isn't it obvious that the workers of Zimbabwe—if they knew the provisions of this Bill and all their implications—would reject it out of hand?

Punishment

Clearly the government does not expect that the workers will be pleased with this Bill. Not only has it taken care not to ask workers for their opinion—it has written into the Bill the most heavy-handed punishments for infringements of the law which are no doubt expected.

"Any person who contravenes any provision of this Act or any determination, direction or order made in terms of this Act shall be guilty of an offence." So says the Bill. And the

penalty laid down will be a maximum fine of \$1000, a year in prison, or both. This will apply unless another punishment is specified for a particular offence.

In the main, **more severe** punishments are specified: for example, a maximum \$2000 fine, 2 years' imprisonment, or both for going on strike or for failing to comply with the terms of a collective bargaining agreement. (Actually the Bill threatens strikers with **twelve years'** imprisonment—but that is reported to be a "typing error" and will probably be changed.)

It is possible that workers, workers' committees and trade unionists could be prosecuted even for technical infringements of procedures laid down in the Bill. The whole life of the unions will be made a matter of intolerable uncertainty and subject to the discretion of officials completely beyond their control.

Controls on the bosses

At the same time, the Labour Relations Bill also lays down a number of very significant controls in an attempt

to curb the grossest forms of exploitation and oppression of workers by the bosses.

For example, failure to pay the minimum wage or to provide the minimum conditions laid down will constitute a criminal offence, as will racial, religious, etc., discrimination against workers.

There will be a legal requirement for notice, or pay in place of notice, when workers are dismissed. And it will be offence for an employer to delay payment of wages and benefits due to a worker when the job is terminated.

When minimum wages are raised, an employer may not dismiss any worker "solely" on the grounds of having to pay the higher wage.

In all cases, however, it will be left entirely to state officials to enforce these controls by taking action against employers who breach them.

The government's reluctance thus far to enforce the existing minimum wage laws by prosecuting employers will give Zimbabwean workers cause to doubt whether these provisions in

the new Bill will be energetically enforced. On the other hand, there has been no hesitation in prosecuting workers, for example, for striking.

For the rest, the legal controls on the bosses contained in the Bill seem designed merely to prevent them taking 'unfair' advantage of the fact that the trade unions will face them in the arena of struggle with both hands tied behind their backs.

Thus, if strikes are to be prohibited, so are lock-outs.

If trade unions must be registered and certified, so must employers' associations. If trade unions are to be prevented from taking any independent action against the employers, then at least the employers must not be provocative and must not obstruct workers from joining these bodies.

Even as it is, the employers have been bleating their dislike of the controls upon them in the Bill. And of course, it is these protests which have received the publicity in the SA press.

Apparently, however, the bosses have received assurances to their satisfaction either that these provi-

sions will be amended, or at least enforced with sensitive regard for their needs.

Compromise with capitalism.

Why is it that a government which was enthusiastically elected as a champion of liberation and democracy, and which proclaims the need for "the socialist transformation of Zimbabwe", has drafted such a law—a law which, far from liberating workers and their organisations for the struggle against the capitalists, aims instead to bind them hand and foot?

As other articles in this issue show, the programme of social reforms promised by independence has been derailed by the government's failure to break with the capitalist system.

In fact, it is this compromise which has led the Zimbabwean government to draw up a Labour Relations Bill like this.

Compromise with capitalism means compromise over democracy. It means that the democratic tasks of the Zimbabwean revolution cannot be fulfilled. Instead, the democratic rights needed and demanded by the working class are now under further attack.

Why is this so?

If big companies and rich people are to keep their farms, mines, factories, banks etc., which dominate Zimbabwe economically, it follows that they continue to hold the whip hand when it comes to investment and economic development.

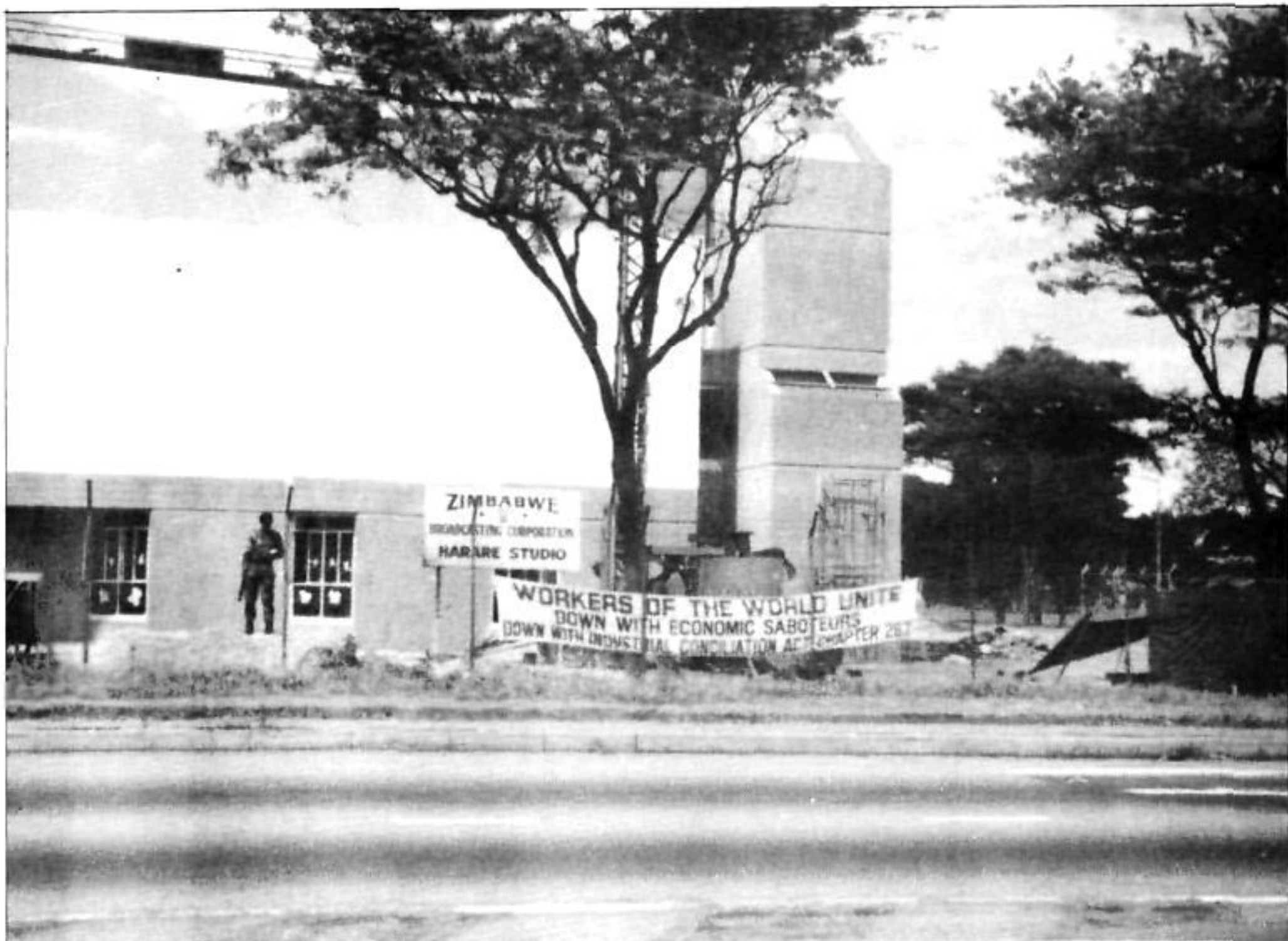
What could be more calculated to scare off foreign and local capitalists from investing than a labour movement which grows from strength to strength and asserts its power to end low wages and attack exploitation at the root?

The logic is merciless. A government which wants to entice capitalist investment must offer to maintain "labour peace". Labour peace can be enforced under capitalism only by strictly controlling the workers' organisations and by using the trade union leaders as overseers to induce docility in their members.

This is precisely what the Zimbabwean Labour Relations Bill aims to do, in all its attacks on the

The Bata shoe factory, where 803 workers were put on short-time in June this year. Everywhere workers are paying the price of the government's compromise with capitalism.





democratic rights of workers and their organisations.

This shows how false is the idea of "two stages" in the liberation struggle—the idea that a democratic society can be built without overthrowing capitalism.

Yet the government cannot dispense with trade unions entirely—and not only because, as has been proved in South Africa and is now being proved here, it is impossible to prevent them. In the last analysis the Zimbabwean government needs trade unions for its own defence.

Although the government has compromised with capitalism, it is not a government of the capitalists. It was bitterly opposed by them. They now seek to be its "friends" only because they have no choice.

It is a government manned by the nationalist petty-bourgeoisie which is too small and weak to impose its authority on society. It depends on the support of working people for its existence, for its defence against imperialism and against reaction at home.

Supported by the workers, it is

nevertheless not a workers' government. It is a government with bonapartist features—i.e. beyond the outright control of either the capitalists or the working class. It balances and manoeuvres because it can find no stable basis amidst the instability and limitations of capitalism in Zimbabwe. It is trapped between the conflicting pressures of capitalism and of the people whom capitalism impoverishes and exploits.

The nationalist middle-class in office wish to be free of the pressures of imperialism; wish to liberate the nation from poverty; but fear above all to lose their petty-bourgeois privilege, status and opportunities for self-enrichment to a revolutionary working-class movement—the only movement which can lead the people out of this impasse.

This is the essence of the government's "socialism"—and of its equally famous "realism" at the same time. "Socialism" when it looks to the workers for support against the claims of imperialism, big business and the international banking system. "Realism" when it looks to the

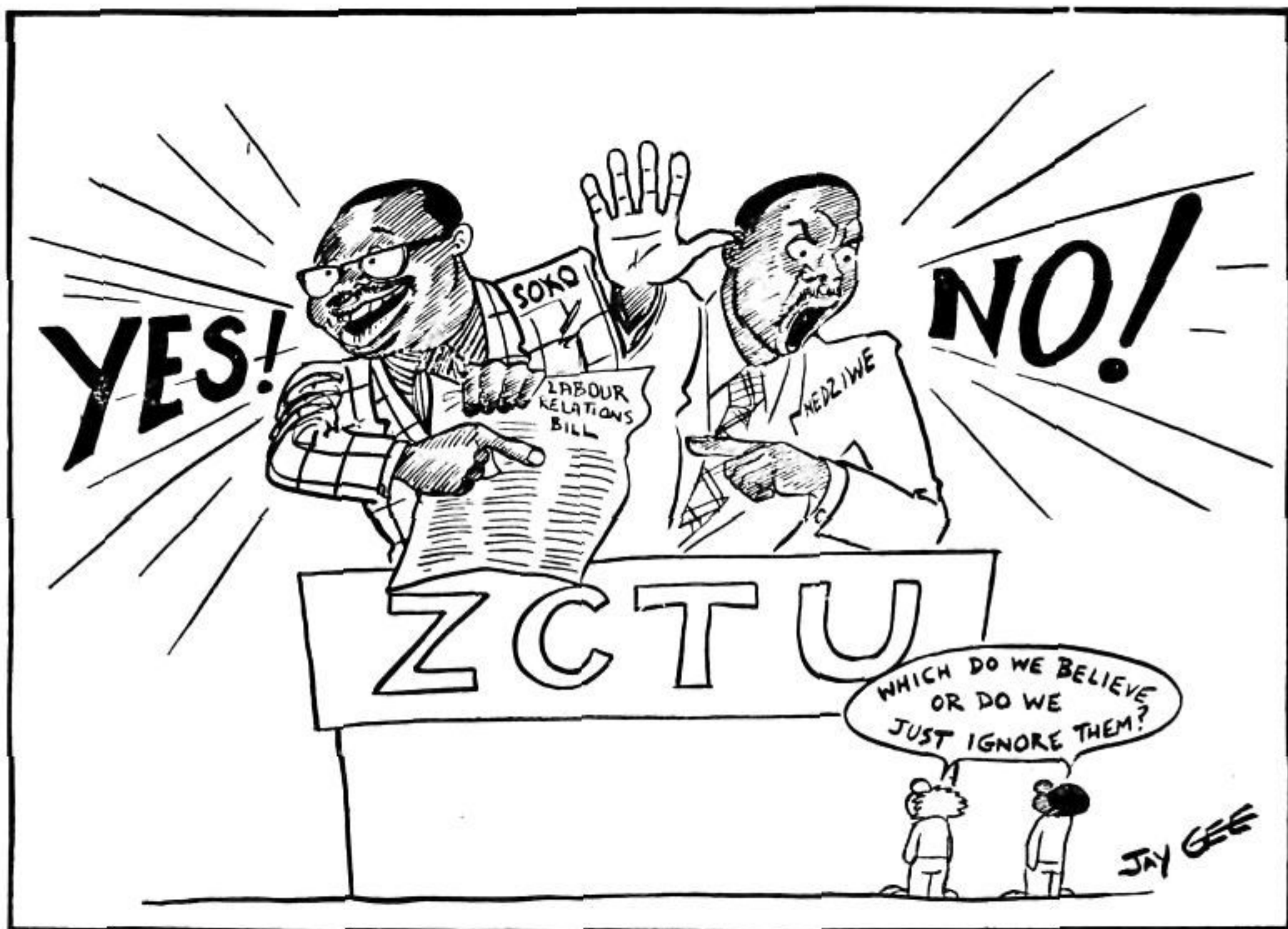
capitalists for aid, and for support against the working class.

It is one thing to juggle these contradictions on political platforms. It is another thing entirely to carry them into the central arena of the class struggle, into the field of "labour relations", and to attempt to frame them into law. The result, as the Labour Relations Bill shows, can only be an abomination.

Basically, the Bill is an attempt to do the impossible: to substitute the state and government officials for the struggle between workers and bosses which is inevitable under capitalism.

Intead of the state merely balancing "above" the class struggle, it now prepares to plunge itself into the thick of it. By insisting that it alone shall represent labour in the conflict with capital, and capital in the conflict with labour, it can only draw upon itself the fire of both.

By wage-fixing and, inevitable, wage-freezing, it will take upon itself, in the eyes of workers, responsibility for low pay and workers' poverty in Zimbabwe. By curbs on exploitation—but without expropriating the ex-



Harare Sunday Mail, 10 April 1983.

plotters outright—it will lay itself open to perpetual charges of causing the capitalist crisis and obstructing development.

In dealing with disputes, to the extent that it approaches “neutrality” it must alienate everyone; to the extent it proves partisan, it must upset the class balance so carefully contrived.

Upper hand

Realistically, however, no equilibrium in the class struggle lasts for long. In Zimbabwe, despite the sudden strike wave after independence, it is undoubtedly the capitalists who have the upper hand. They exert a remorseless pressure on the new government, while the workers’ organisations are only beginning to awaken from a long sleep.

As government ministers have

found, in a reversal of the biblical saying, it is the rich who are with them always, while the poor can only now and then muster a voice to be heard.

The working people, largely unorganised, weighed down by illiteracy, still loyal to the government they elected, not yet sensing their latent power, could temporarily be fobbed off with vague promises and empty slogans.

Not so easily could bankers and investors, exchange rates and export deals be fobbed off. The economic pressures are never silent, nor do they sleep.

Numerous facts to prove the pressures of capitalism upon the government are given elsewhere in this issue.

The real state of affairs is shown plainly in the remarks of Mr Frank Mills, President of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, when interviewed on TV on 12 June.

He disclosed that, at the recent CZI conference at Victoria Falls, no

fewer than 18 Ministers and Deputy Ministers in the government attended; that relations between the employers and the government were entirely to his satisfaction; and that consultations between the industrialists and the government are taking place at ministerial level on average every three days! (Trade union leaders, on the other hand, are ‘summoned’ to see the Minister).

“Exploitation”, as far as Mills was concerned, doesn’t exist in Zimbabwe, and he could see no problems in reconciling business interests to the government’s “socialist” objectives. Nor would he express any opposition to the Labour Relations Bill.

The more far-sighted capitalists in Zimbabwe recognise their dependence on the intervention of the state in “labour relations”—to shield them against the struggle of the working class.

Economically, the capitalists are powerful. But, politically, they are suffering from an incurable weakness. They have no reliable

social base in Zimbabwe which could withstand the power of the working people once risen to their feet.

Two-thirds of the economy is in the hands of foreign monopolies. There is no real black Zimbabwean bourgeoisie. The nationalist petty-bourgeois who now scramble for self-enrichment are upstarts, really, in the world of capitalism—hardly objects of admiration among the people, and even comic in their puffed-up self-importance. Vulnerable to any **united** mass pressure from below, they are by no means a reliable social platform for capitalist rule.

It is with the apparatus of the state—the administration, courts, police, army, etc.—that the capitalist class is forced to seek the closest integration. The failure of the revolution to dismantle the old Rhodesian state machinery has left a dangerous weapon in the hands of capitalism in Zimbabwe.

The state machinery has changed in colour, but in its class essence remains a capitalist state. Its new personnel—both former guerillas and those who were merely onlookers in the liberation war—accommodate themselves with remarkable ease to the inherited system and 'traditions' of government.

Nevertheless, the capitalist state itself has no firm social foundation to rest on in Zimbabwe. Increasingly it must become the focal point of class conflict and instability.

It is the main source of status and power, and the vehicle of self-enrichment, for the new elite who chafe against the dominance of the big bourgeoisie. At the same time, since this state is the main defence of private property against the workers, the bourgeoisie must keep their uneasy peace with it and deepen all the time their political dependence on it.

On the other hand, to discipline the working class and hold it back, the governing elite strives to integrate into the state machinery the official leaders of the trade unions. Yet, all the while, underneath, the insoluble crisis of capitalism cripples reforms, drives down living standards, and forces the working class into struggle for survival.

All this prepares the ingredients for new explosions of the class struggle—sooner or later for mass confrontation between workers and

the state, for divisions within the ruling party and the state, and for mounting conflicts within the unions between the rank-and-file and those leaders who resign themselves to class collaboration.

Therefore the Labour Relations Bill will lead to the very result it is designed to avoid. Instead of being a recipe for 'labour peace', it will turn out to be the opposite, and plunge the state all the more directly into the class war.

Revolution continues

The Zimbabwean revolution was driven off the road by its leaders before it had run its course—when the vital task of overthrowing capitalism still lay before it. But the revolution is far from dead.

On the contrary, every week brings new signs of the awakening of *workers and youth to the need for their own class organisations and a scientific understanding of their tasks.*

What lies ahead is a period—possibly an extended period—of building a mass, democratic labour movement as a necessity for successfully moving the revolutionary struggle forward. The building of the trade unions will be the cornerstone, and the first priority, in this.

But workers in Zimbabwe can only succeed in building a powerful trade union movement by struggling constantly for the **independence** of the unions from the state, and for **democratic control** of the unions by the workers themselves.

In July 1917 Lenin wrote:

“The basic rule, the first commandment, of any trade union movement is not to rely on the ‘state’ but to rely only on the **strength of one’s own class**. The state is an organisation of the ruling class.

“Don’t rely on promises. Rely only on the strength of the unity and political consciousness of your class!”

This was written, not during the reign of the Tsar, but during the Russian revolution when an allegedly “socialist” government had entered into compromise with the capitalist class. Lenin’s advice to the workers of Russia applies with undiminished force to Zimbabwe today.

Surely it is the duty of the trade union leaders to explain to workers the dangers in the Labour Relations Bill, and mount an effective campaign against it. The Bill should be resolutely opposed also by every democrat, not to mention every socialist, inside and outside the *ruling party*.

And if, despite this, the Bill becomes law, need it prove fatal to the workers’ movement?

In the past, workers in many countries have been able to overcome all sorts of legal obstacles put in the way of their organisations. In Europe, during the last century, there were laws prohibiting trade unions altogether. But they were pushed aside.

The experience of the working class movement through its long and eventful history has been this: **What is written by the power of workers’ organisation proves to be stronger than the law.**

In Zimbabwe it will be no different!

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Mashonaland Tobacco: HIGH PROFITS, LOW WAGES

At Mashonaland Tobacco Company the capitalists have shown themselves a failure in society. The workers who make profits for them are people with no hope for the future. Most workers have remained on the same level as they were ten years back.

There have been only slight changes since independence.

Most of the boss boys and bosses of this company have remained the same. They are called Chimimbas (big stomach) and Muchandikwanas (you will surrender to me) as a result of forcing workers to work harder like slaves.

The capitalists have now been forced to pay the government minimum wage weekly, whereas before they paid less than the minimum wage and paid it after a fortnight to make the money look more.

Three quarters of the MTC workers are employed seasonally. One person, for example, will work as a casual for ten years or more. He is employed and discharged every year, exploited by the bosses when needed and thrown in the gutter in winter.

Even the quarter of workers employed permanently are cheated. There is a regulation for MTC that says if one does not work up to a certain date in December then one does not get a bonus. So a day before the day due for bonuses one is told to go for an unpaid leave and to report back soon after Xmas or New Year. This may happen for years to the same person.

Most of the MTC employees are foreigners (mainly Malawians) who are always victimised by being threatened to be fired because they will have nowhere to go. The black bosses are just another group of oppressors who always employ their

By J. Mutasa

relatives who they know will never complain against them. So the relatives who are employed there stand as watchdogs for the boss-boys.

It is very hard to organise a strong workers' committee or trade union because of divisions and favouritism. In most cases the divisions occur between Zimbabweans and foreigners, and the white man's favourites. Those who try to organise strong committees are always fired at the end of each season.

The working conditions at this company are very uncomfortable. I will mention a few hardships that workers face:

1. A man stands at a toilet to issue

toilet papers, which is very unhealthy because the paper he is supposed to give is very small. There is no soap provided for washing one's hands.

2. Workers contribute some money for the food they get. But the food that is provided is very poor: a cup of tea and a piece of bread in the morning. The pieces of bread are first put under steam-smoke to make them soft as they buy stale bread.

At 10am a cup of mahewu is given. If you miss it, you don't get any. A plate of sadza at 1pm with two or three pieces of meat, sometimes with some boiled beans. Again, if you miss this 30-minute lunch, then you won't get sadza. Here again the capitalist at MTC has failed to feed his labourer who daily makes profits for him.

To show that workers at MTC work hungry, many of them go to the cooks to ask for the favour to get some makoko—some hard scratchings of sadza that remain in the pot. They even buy them from the



organise!

cooks. Some even come to the extent of fighting for them like boarding school pupils.

3. Those who work on machines and on belts are kept standing on the belts all day. No chairs are provided as they say it will make us sleep. This is very serious because some go diz-

zy and faint. They are told to go and pour cold water on their head and be back at the machine.

4. The different kinds of tobacco are bad for breathing and have a nasty smell. Workers are not provided with anything to prevent the hard coughs and flus they get from this day by day.

5. No worker is allowed to read a newspaper—even during breaks. We are not allowed to read about the struggles of other workers in Zimbabwe and elsewhere. We are not allowed to read of the huge profits MTC make while their workers slave in misery for a pittance.

Fight redundancies — BUILD WORKERS' LINKS!

Workers at L.H. Marthinusen, a GEC-owned company well known in Southern Africa, are fighting against redundancies and for better conditions. A worker gives his view of the struggle for workers' unity in the factory.

“Workers are still divided in our factory between support for the General Engineering and Metal Workers Union (GEMWU) and a splinter union. Some have joined the

opposition union, but now they have found the leaders have eaten the money, and they are not welcome at the factory.

“The workers are very interested in union schools and will be prepared to join the GEMWU if changes can come through workers' education.

The basic problem we face is that of retrenchments. The management has demanded that about 45 workers should go because of a drop in orders.

“They introduced the idea of voluntary redundancy with two

weeks' pay. If the workers accepted they would be put on pension immediately.

“Many workers wanted to discuss this. But when the Department of Labour came to investigate the redundancies, they just told the workers' committee they agreed with the employers. They accepted their arguments without even seeing us!

“There was a big fight as the workers took the Labour official through the factory to prove the work was still there with enough orders to need all the workers.

“The management are now making an offer to the workers that they should sacrifice their bonuses and profit-sharing to pay for the jobs of the others. This has been turned down by the workers.

“All the workers should join the GEMWU in order to become strong enough to fight against redundancies and fight for a wage increase.”

One of the priorities in organising is to link up with workers employed by L.H. Marthinusen in SA.

Workers in the Metal and Allied Workers Union in South Africa, fighting against redundancies, have put forward the demand for a 40-hour week without loss of pay. By joining together behind one demand, workers can build the strength to win these battles.



workers

Nothing done about workers' complaints

Workers at Non-Ferrous Metal Works in Harare complain about poor health conditions at work and job insecurity. This firm is based in Durban and has other factories in South Africa, Sweden and elsewhere. It is not prepared to make the necessary investment in safer conditions for its workers.

The factory, the only one of its kind in Zimbabwe, supplies lead for the battery factories, as well as smelting brass, copper and aluminium.

"The factory is very crowded", a Non-Ferrous worker said, "and there is a continually polluted atmosphere, but the management does not care. When we explain how the place could be made safer, they just say 'you know nothing'.

"The management are supposed to water down the dust, but this isn't

often done and they are never prosecuted. Many workers are coughing and we are meant to have a medical inspection every week."

Despite complaints and visits by a factory inspector who insists the factory should be moved to a new site, nothing has been done.

"He has told the management that the factory should be closed down, but what will happen to our jobs?" the worker asked. "The management has disappeared to South Africa and we are not sure of our future".

The wife of one of the managers pays the workers "every so often".

Non-Ferrous workers are interested in the conditions of workers in South Africa and elsewhere. An important task of Non-Ferrous workers and others in the struggle for better and healthier working conditions and job security is to make the links between the workers in different countries as strong as those of the bosses who oppress them.

LYONS MAID STRIKE

In April 1983, 150 Lyons Maid vendors went on strike in Harare for three days demanding to be classified as employees of the company and paid a wage.

At present they are considered 'self-employed' and paid on a commission basis. One of the vendors speaks here of why they went on strike:

"We were getting 19c commission for every \$1.00 of ice cream sold. Then the managers put it down to 13c for every \$1.00. So we went on strike for three days.

"The officials of a union, the Department of Labour and management negotiated but after three days we got nothing. Instead, 12 of us were fired because management said they were the leaders who organised the strike.

"Now they have no jobs. But we are all looking for other jobs because we cannot live on 13c commission.

"Last week I only earned \$7.00

Some of

All the unions listed here are registered and all, except the Bulawayo Municipal Workers Union, are affiliated to ZCTU.

Associated Mineworkers of Zimbabwe

President: Jeffrey Mutandare
4th Floor, St. Andrews Hse., Samora Machel Ave., Harare.

Building Workers Trade Union

General Secretary: Edward Niekesa
306/7 St. Barbara Hse., Cnr., of Baker/Moffat Str., Harare.



organise!

after six days' work. It is worse in winter when it is cold. Some days I don't make anything at all. We cannot continue like this, everything has gone up in price.

"Management realised this and put up the price of ice cream. At the same time they dropped our commission, saying we'd make more now that the price of ice cream had been increased. But people cannot afford to buy the ice cream now, so we are making even less.

"We demanded a wage—like the vendors get at Dairyboard, the other ice cream company—instead of commission.

"After the strike I tried to get a job there, but they don't employ women so I couldn't get it."

By refusing to meet the workers' demand, the management of Lyons Maid is acting illegally. **In 1981 a magistrate's court and a subsequent industrial board meeting ruled that ice cream vendors should be classified as employees by Lyons Maid.**

Struggles like these are important to all workers—as long as the bosses



of any company can get away with such practices, all bosses are encouraged to try the same. But if the workers can win, this also is an encouragement to other workers.

Such struggles must be publicised by the labour movement. Workers in the different food industries must support Lyons Maid workers in their demand to be paid a wage!

the main unions in Zimbabwe

Bulawayo Municipal Workers Union
General Secretary: Mrs V. Naube
Office 101/102, Cabs Building,
Lobengula Str., Bulawayo.

Commercial Workers Union of Zimbabwe
General Secretary: Alfred Makwarimba
P.O. Box 3922, Harare.

General Engineering and Metalworkers Union
General Secretary: David Chimusoro
16 Albion Rd., Cameron, Harare.

Harare Municipal Workers Union
General Secretary: Thadeus Mapfumo
Office 12, Community Centre,
Mbare, Harare.

National Union of the Clothing Industry
General Secretary: Charles M. Pasipondua
139 Lobengula Str./13th Ave.,
Bulawayo.

Railways Association Workers Union
General Secretary: Anderson J. Mhungo
Box 2276, Bulawayo.

Transport and General Workers Union
General Secretary: R. Conzo
202 Dublin Hse., Victoria Str.,
Harare.

Zimbabwe Posts and Telecommunications Workers Union
General Secretary: Dobba Gonye
168 Sinoia Str., Harare.

Zimbabwe Textile Workers Union
General Secretary: Elphegio C. Soko
Box UA 245, Union Ave., Harare.

Equal education opportunities for all!

Since independence there have been big reforms in education in Zimbabwe. But the government's compromise with capitalism (explained in the article on pages 15-29) means that the money is not available to provide a decent education for the children of all working people. This article examines the present situation in the schools.

The government of Zimbabwe has stated that "education is the birth-right of every child irrespective of race, colour or creed and the government is determined that every youngster in our country will have access to schooling." (Harare *Herald*, 18/4/83)

In the three years since independence the government has made considerable progress in providing access to education for the majority of black Zimbabwean children.

Primary school enrollments have increased from 819 586 in 1979 to 2 182 000 by January 1983. The number of primary schools has risen from 2 401 in 1979 to 3 805 by 1982 with an expected increase to 3 894 by the end of 1983.

Secondary school enrolments have increased from 66 215 in 1979 to 224 609 by 1982 with an expected increase to 340 000 by the end of 1983.

There has also been a huge increase in the number of secondary schools: from 177 in 1979 to 730 in 1982.

Besides providing more urban schooling for black children, government policy is to extend educational facilities in the rural areas especially, where schools were non-existent under the pre-independence white governments. The 1983 expansion programme includes 41 secondary schools in rural areas, and virtually all schools damaged during the war have been made operational again.

But now this expansion is being curbed, although demand is expanding.

In answer to a question raised in parliament about what is being done to overcome the shortage of school

**By Ferial
Abdurahman**

places at all levels, the Minister responsible, Dr Mutumbuka, said that "the government no longer had responsibility for building primary schools. It was now the responsibility of the local authorities, including district and rural councils, municipalities and interested persons to provide primary schools." (*Herald*, 11/4/83)

Translated into day-to-day reality, this means that the parents of children living in high-density suburbs (i.e. townships) like Seke (with the third-largest black population after Harare and Bulawayo), or like Mbari (formerly Harare), and in the rural areas or communal lands, have to contribute in terms of money and labour to the building of much-needed primary schools. Local authorities will have to raise rents and rates to find the revenue to provide more primary schools.

A case in current controversy between the government, the municipality, and on the other side the inhabitants, is in the recently-completed suburb of Warren Park.

Warren Park is a high density suburb of 9 000 inhabitants near to Heroes' Acre (on which \$9 million was spent) about eight kilometres from the centre of Harare. Residents of Warren Park are worried that they still have no schools, creches, or better health facilities.

A 15-year old boy who travels by bus to Highfield, about 10 kilometres

away, for school, complained: "I have to get up at 4am every day to go to central Harare, then take a bus from there to Highfield. It takes me two hours or more to get to school. When I get to school I'm tired and hungry because I don't have time to have breakfast in the mornings."

On 19 January this year a headline in the *Herald* exclaimed: "NO SCHOOL SHOCK FOR WORKERS' CHILDREN". About 300 pupils—children of domestic workers—were barred from attending Greystone Primary, a formerly group A school in a low-density suburb of Harare.

The children had been registered at the school and parents had been given permission by the Ministry of Education and Culture to transfer their children to nearby formerly group A schools. Despite this the headmaster told parents that their children could not attend the school because there were no facilities for them.

A spokesman for the domestic workers said, however, that the children were not allowed to attend the school **because their parents did not own property in the area and had no residential and other rights.**

Group A and B schools

Under the Smith government primary and secondary schools for white children were termed Group A schools. Black children attended group B schools. (Peculiarly enough, the Ministry of Education and Culture still uses these terms).

Group A schools are situated in attractive locations in low-density suburbs. Schools are well provisioned with science laboratories, home economics blocks, libraries, extensive playing fields, halls and ample classroom space, well furnished.

Group B schools have been put up in high density suburbs or townships in much less attractive areas. The schools often lack halls, libraries, laboratories and even enough desks and chairs for pupils.

Sports fields are usually dusty clearings between school buildings. In one school in Seke of 1 600 pupils there was only ONE science laboratory.

With a big increase in the numbers attending school, has the quality of education been improved for the majority of black workers' children? A general answer is—not so!

Pupils in Group B schools are far from satisfied with the present educational system. They complain of the lack of facilities: "Our classrooms are too hot and small for forty of us to learn in."

Equipment

"We never do experiments on our own because there is not enough equipment, and we can't use the lab when we want to because we use it as another classroom."

"We don't have enough textbooks so we can't take them home to do homework or extra study."

Group B schools have a two-session system. The morning session runs from 7am to 12.25pm; the after-

noon from 12.30pm to 5.20pm. Students say: "We barely keep awake in the afternoons because of the heat."

"I don't like this hot-seating. All children should go to school in the mornings, they're not so tired then. We can't learn properly in the afternoons."

Children of workers earning the minimum wage or below find it difficult to stay at school or be fit enough to learn. In a discussion on changes in education they would like to see, one pupil commented: "Our government talks about socialism, I don't know what that means because we're not any better off. Our school uniforms are very expensive and my father finds it hard to pay for uniforms and the 0.50 cents school fees every term, because my father does not earn much and we are four children in our family."

Another pupil told us: "I don't have enough cents every day to buy something to eat from the tuckshop. Many days I'm very hungry and my teacher does not understand when I can't answer questions in class."

The two-session or 'hot-seating' system is not practised in Group A schools. Heads of these schools do not allow this to happen. At the beginning of the first term in 1983, 'No Vacancy' signs were put up at eight Group A secondary schools in

Harare.

"We are full like anybody else and we have a long waiting list," said the headmaster of Chisipita Secondary School. (*Herald* 19/1/83)

Minority

A minority of black children whose parents are salaried or who earn much more than the minimum wage find their way into the Group A schools. As pointed out earlier, their parents have to be owner-occupier residents of the suburb the school is in, or non-domestic white-collar workers resident in flats in the area.

It is questionable whether even this small black elite mixes easily with their white peers in the group A schools. The ethos of the former Rhodesian and British colonial educational system is still very much prevalent in these schools.

Only recently, in 1982, have new history textbooks been introduced in primary and secondary schools. The curriculum in secondary schools is still geared to the British O-level and A-level exam system.

Little change has taken place in the attitudes of former Rhodesian white teachers. There might be concessions made towards the 'reconciliation' policy of the government but a



socialist programme is hardly what these teachers would subscribe to.

Formal education methods rejected in Britain ten or fifteen years ago are still practised. Therefore it is doubtful whether the black minority in the group A schools will rise above the low expectations of teachers with colonial attitudes.

Teacher quality

Overcrowding in the group B schools is a result of the shortage of teachers and facilities.

The shortage of teachers has been tackled by an increase in the yearly intake of trainees from 684 for primary and 237 for secondary colleges in 1979 to 2 570 for primary (276% increase) and 687 for secondary (190% increase) in 1982.

Despite this, there is a time lapse of four years before these trainees can fill the gap of teacher-shortage. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and Culture have recruited teachers from abroad. Proper screening of these expatriate teachers has not been carried out by the Ministry.

In most group B schools trainee teachers are employed on a term-to-term basis to help alleviate the shortage problem. Some B schools even use 6th-formers to help staff the school. In most rural areas untrained teachers, with O- and A-level education only, are staffing schools.

Real changes needed

Under the present system many black teachers in group B schools are critical of the situation. They remark: "The Ministry keeps saying all children have the right to go to school. Where must we put these children? Our school here has 1 500 children on roll. We've turned away 200 second-years because we haven't enough places, even though we squeeze 40 children into small classrooms."

Comments on the two-session system are bitter: "Before independence we had smaller schools and fewer children in school. Now we

have too large schools with a two-session system. Teachers in the morning session hardly see or speak to those of the afternoon session. We don't discuss school problems with each other as we used to, there's little time for that."

"We are practising apartheid in education in all black schools, never mind the disparity between group A and B schools. The brighter children are put in the top streams and come to the morning sessions. The head will make sure they get enough textbooks and the trained teachers, whereas the lower streams are in the afternoon sessions and they are not properly provided for."

The majority of black children are not going to experience the equality in education, which the government has pledged, until the inferiority of Group B schools has been eliminated.

The two-session system in all-black schools must be done away with so that these children can enjoy the benefits of facilities with more space and time to overcome the educational backlog imposed by former white regimes.

Discrimination against low-paid workers' children should be ended. No child should suffer the humiliation of being barred from access to a school.

But real socialist policies, aimed at bringing the country's resources under the control of the mass of working people, will be needed to place these changes on a lasting basis.

The capitalists and the ruling elite will pressure the government to preserve privileged education for their own children. That is why workers should campaign actively through their trade unions, and through Zanu and Zapu, for a single system of education that will provide adequate facilities for all children.

Teachers should play an active role in the struggle of the working class to transform society and should link their organisation firmly to that of the workers in all other sectors. Sharing in the hopes and daily struggles of the mass of working people will enable them to make their best contribution to fashioning the critical faculties of the future citizens of Zimbabwe.

Crisis in

Local government has been undergoing a crisis. There have been spontaneous revolts against rent increases.

The government has been forced to act against "disloyal, criminal and treasonable" councillors (in the words of Mugabe) because they have "caused despair and disillusionment" with local and national leadership. It has passed a law under Smith's Emergency Powers Regulations Act giving the President the power to suspend individual councillors or whole councils.

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the poor record of local authorities since independence. When the whites-only councils were replaced by councils with Zanu or Zapu majorities, workers had high hopes that their newly-elected representatives would attend to their needs.

But little has been done to improve living conditions in the high-density suburbs where most workers live. Councils have raised rents without consulting the residents, and allegations of corruption and nepotism have frequently been made.

Personal power

Many workers suspect that councillors are more interested in personal power and their own bank balances than in representing workers' interests. One of the first important acts of many new councils was to raise their members' allowances from about \$100 to \$400 per month!

Since most councillors are professionals or businessmen, this is just pocket money for doing a few extra hours of work a week. The minimum industrial wage is only \$105 per month!

Although nearly all black councillors were elected on a Zanu or Zapu party ticket, some were imposed by higher echelons of the party against the wishes of the local branches. Many are opportunists who on-

local government

By
Frank Watson

ly jumped onto the party bandwagon in order to get elected. But once elected, the local party branches were powerless to keep them in check.

In Chitungwisa, which has its own council although it is actually a massive dormitory suburb of Harare, there have been persistent allegations of corruption and nepotism, especially in the allocation of houses and the appointment of staff. So far no investigation of these allegations has been made public.

A councillor in Harare told the residents that if they gave the council money to improve the toilets in the houses to municipal standards, they would be able to buy the houses from the council.

He sent out his supporters, called "thugs" by the workers, to collect tens of thousands of dollars.

As a worker from his ward revealed: "Instead of giving the money to the council, he bought himself a supermarket and an expensive car. When the people found out, they were very angry and demanded their money back.

"They demonstrated outside his house and wanted to assault him. They also wanted the mayor to sack him from the council. Even now they want him to be suspended because they say he doesn't represent them.

"When they voted for him they thought he was honest. Now they know he's dishonest. But he's still on the council. The matter is now with the Minister of Local Government and Town Planning and maybe the minister will suspend him."

In Kariba, resentment against the new council simmered for many months. After independence rents were increased by about 35% without explanation. Residents also complained of favouritism in the allocation of housing, that councillors spent the town's money extravagantly, and that they tried to block

residents' complaints to Zanu provincial officials.

In December 1982 the resentment reached boiling point. There was a demonstration against the council and for the next two months there was a rent strike with many refusing to pay any rent until the Minister responsible intervened. The strike ended only when the minister went to Kariba and pressured the council to resign and make way for new elections.

There were also protests at rent increases in Mutare in March 1983. Women in the high density townships were determined not to pay any increases and continued to pay the old rents.

Instead of talking to the people who elected them, the council merely sent round a circular demanding that everyone pay the higher rents. This action so infuriated the women that they picketed the municipal beerhalls which, like in SA, are an important source of income for the municipalities. They refused to talk to the mayor, stripped him down to his underpants, and demanded to see the Minister!

Eventually the Minister came and he was forced to agree that the residents could continue paying the old rents. But he said he wasn't able to do anything about other complaints, which included lack of communication between the council and the people and generally poor municipal facilities.

Crisis

The crisis in local leadership has involved Zapu as well as Zanu councillors. In April 1983 the former Binga District Council chairman was given a four-year jail sentence for embezzling \$400 of council funds.

After the successful rent protests in Kariba and Mutare, it was clear that workers were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with their local councillors and were prepared to take in-

dependent action to reverse unpopular decisions.

But the government, although calling itself a peoples' government, was not prepared to give more power to the people to control their elected representatives. Instead, it passed the law enabling the president to suspend councillors. This in reality makes councils responsible to the president and the Minister, taking power further away from the people.

The first 'victim' of the law was the mayor of Gweru, Patrick Kombayi. Although an unscrupulous businessman who has amassed considerable wealth, he is a demagogue whose radical-sounding statements, sometimes crudely anti-white, had whipped up a local following.

Ironically, he was dismissed because he was unpopular with the party hierarchy rather than with his electorate.

Democratic control

The new law, while it may remove some excesses, will not solve the problem. **What is needed are measures to ensure that residents can control the running of their towns.**

- Residents must demand:
- *Election of all public officials;
 - *The democratic right to recall any councillor or other officials who have lost the confidence of those who elected them;
 - *Councillors to make regular reports to their wards;
 - *No extra allowance for any councillor earning more than the average industrial wage, except necessary expenses democratically approved;
 - *No further rent increases;
 - *An end to rent-racketeering by landlords;
 - *Immediate improvement of municipal services in townships;
 - *For an end to the capitalists' control of our towns: for nationalisation of banks and monopolies under workers' control and management!

Hospitals — “Five-star hotels” vs overcrowded barracks

One of the most welcome reforms since Independence has been the introduction of a free health service for people earning less than \$150 per month. This was made possible by a big increase in the health budget.

But many more changes are essential as can be seen when comparing the two major hospitals in Harare—Harare Hospital, formerly for African patients and Parirenyatwa Hospital, formerly for whites only.

Both are now open to all races. But in reality Parirenyatwa Hospital has remained the hospital serving the elite — now black and white — while Harare Hospital serves the working class, the unemployed, the rural peasants coming for treatment in town and their families.

Harare Hospital is overcrowded. In the neonatal unit up to four newly-born babies may share an incubator while in the children's ward it is not unusual to find two children sharing a bed. There was a case last year of a child with typhoid sharing a bed with another child for a week before his condition was discovered.

One nurse said she had seen cases where black workers were actually turned away from Parirenyatwa Hospital and sent to Harare Hospital because the sister decreed Harare Hospital to be more fitting to the patient's status.

Parirenyatwa Hospital, with whole wards lying empty, was described as a “five star hotel” by Dr Ushewokunze, former Minister of Health. But this is the case only for private patients attended by one of the many private practitioners working there. Workers seeking admission encounter many problems. As a general-hand said “People spend hours waiting in casualty and sometimes doctors just don't come.”

Working conditions for staff at Parirenyatwa Hospital and Harare

By Mercia Fredericks

Hospital vary too. Nurses are overburdened at Harare Hospital trying to cope with overcrowded wards. Doctors are expected to work three weekends in a row every month at Harare Hospital while at Parirenyatwa Hospital doctors only work one weekend a month.

The drought has caused an influx of the rural population into Harare. The outpatient department at Harare Hospital is straining at the seams with long queues daily. Dr Munyaradzi, Minister of Health, blames this increase on the “abuse” of the provision of free health services.

Is the Minister perhaps suggesting that the workers should not use these facilities? Free health services are not a privilege, but a right for working people who previously suffered, unable to pay for medical treatment. They are simply making use of facilities which they should always have had access to.

Despite the big improvement in public health care it is very far from being able to serve all medical needs of working people. Private medicine available mainly to the rich is actually growing. Old divisions according to colour are being replaced by class divisions.

While the government is attempting reforms by increasing the health budget, it is being held back by the IMF and the World Bank who are giving big loans on condition that the government cut its spending on health care and other social services.

Workers need to struggle for good health facilities in urban and rural areas, for the abolition of private medicine and a nationalised and planned health service under the democratic control of working people.

INQABA NEEDS CASH!

To step up the campaign for socialist policies in the workers' movement, resources are needed.

The bosses put millions of rands into spreading lies through the press that they own.

The cost of printing and distributing *Inqaba* is met completely out of sales and donations from readers and supporters.

Inqaba supporters should ensure that our journal always changes hands in return for money, no matter how little.

Many demands are made on workers' inadequate pay packets. But for an independent workers' press to develop, it can only rely on the rands and cents of workers themselves.

Free distribution would mean having to look to rich benefactors for support, who inevitably would try to exchange their money for a say in policy.

It is essential also for comrades to set aside and contribute weekly as much money as possible into a fighting fund for our political activities. *Cash consciousness is a vital part of political consciousness.*

Supporters organising discussion groups round *Inqaba* should take regular collections for the journal. When they meet, supporters from different areas should discuss how to use funds in the most effective way.

Developing political control over the cash we raise is an essential part of organising to build the mass workers' ANC of the future.

To readers and supporters abroad we appeal also for regular donations, to help the ideas of Marxism gain a mass hearing in the labour and youth movement in SA.

Letters and donations from outside SA should be sent to:

INQABA YA BASEBENZI,
BM Box 1719, LONDON
WC1N 3XX



MONONO'A BONA — MASAPO A RONA

One of the few growth industries in our country today is working out new constitutions. One of the more ridiculous of these schemes was recently proposed by Pretoria Professor Johann du Pisanie.

What SA needs, this expert tells us, is a "compound republic" consisting of "various concurrent governments, each with limited jurisdiction."

What he means is Bantustan, Coloured, Indian, and white governments, and mixed-race urban governments. In other words, not a "compound republic", but another bosses' republic of compounds.

There would be, he says, "no single centre of ultimate authority". But wait a minute, learned professor. You also say "The national government's jurisdiction will be limited to those affairs that are truly common to all citizens"; and the "jurisdiction" of each "government" will be "enforced" by an "independent judiciary".

But who is going to select these judges; who will pay them; and how are they going to "enforce" anything on anyone without police, prisons, etc—in other words, a "single centre of ultimate (capitalist) authority"?

The more the workers flex their muscles, the more the employers—or at least the more intelligent ones—start talking about reform.

"The message that comes through most clearly", D. Baker, managing director of Anglo-Alpha, says, "is the importance of building positive in-house relationships between management and the workplace."

But now and again one of the less intelligent bosses lets the cat out of the bag—like Mr Lou Davis, Executive Director of the building industry federation:

"I as an employer am in business to make profits. I'm not there for altruistic reasons, forget it...That's capitalism, we're not talking socialism now, we're talking hard bloody facts, pal."

But what about "positive in-house relations" between workers and bosses? To quote Mr Davis again:

"(Workers) are a lot more stupid than you or me, they don't understand...There's no way I'm going to put my capital in for somebody to tell me how to run my business..."

Mr Davis may put things more bluntly than the more

polite 'liberals' would like—but how many of them are prepared to 'let their businesses be run' by the workers who produce their profits?

The working people in SA are struggling every day to make ends meet. The bosses and government tell them that there is not enough money to pay them decent wages.

But is it true?

In February 1983 the salaries of the Bantustan chiefs were *per week*:

Chief Patrick Mphedu (Venda): R937 plus R115 tax-free allowance

Chief Lucas Mangope (Bophuthatswana): R658

Chief Lennox Sebe (Ciskei): R573 plus R231 tax-free allowance

Chief Kaiser Matanzima (Transkei): R533 plus R160 tax-free allowance

Chief George Matanzima (Transkei): R515 plus allowance

These 'gentlemen' do not belong to any known union. Where does the money to pay them come from? There is nothing mysterious about that. The money is from the sweat of all workers—who are told there is not enough money to pay them decent wages.

In April, six candidates competing to be the US Democratic Party's presidential candidate in 1984 submitted themselves to voting by 4 000 delegates at a convention in Massachusetts.

A quarter of the delegates, including nearly all the trade union delegates, voted for a 'candidate' not represented among the six.

They wrote "jobs" on their ballot paper.

With millions out of work as a result of capitalist crisis, "jobs" is the candidate which every US worker would vote for, but which neither of the capitalist parties will be able to provide.

American workers can find an outlet to their frustration only by establishing a Labour Party based on the trade unions.

“The only strategy that the guys have not accepted yet is to just sit in the plant and take the plant over till they’ve resolved the dispute. This strategy was developed by the GM workers in the United States in 1936...”(Freddy Sauls, NAAWU general secretary, October 1982).

In this article a US worker writes on the story of those sit-ins.

HOW US LABOUR



BUILT MASS UNIONS

In the winter of 1936-37, the town of Flint in the US state of Michigan was the scene of organized labor’s most triumphant moment.

The workers in Flint occupied the auto plants for 44 days and set off a wave of sitdown strikes that were to challenge big business and shake US capitalism at its very foundation.

During these years factory occupations became a means by which workers forced the bosses to recognize their rights to collective bargaining and union representation. The sitdown strike was a tactic reflecting the collective strength and initiative of the rank and file.

In order to fully understand the impact of the sitdown strikes it is crucial to examine the historical context in which they occurred. All workers can learn the lessons of the united working class in action and its power to confront any and all opposition.

By Marcy Barnett

United Auto
Workers, USA
(personal capacity)

In the years of the Great Depression, beginning in 1929, organized labor reached its lowest point. Membership of the American Federation of Labor (trade union federation mainly of craft unions—*Editor*) had dropped to two million, approximately 10% of the workforce. There were 15 million unemployed (up to a third of the workforce).

Those who still had work were forced, often by the AFL leadership, to accept wage cuts of 10% or more. The 8-hour day was threatened while open shops and company unions were used by the bosses to further exploit the workers.

The fantastic gains made through the determination and militancy of the working class in the first two decades of the 1900s were quickly be-

ing whittled away—while the leadership of the AFL sat back and watched.

The attacks on labor were a consequence of the slump of American capitalism and the world economy. From 1929-32 world production fell by 42%. Trade decreased by 65%. There were millions of unemployed throughout the world.

In the United States banks were failing daily (5 000 in all), industrial production dropped by 48.7%, and the national income fell from \$81 billion to \$39 billion within three years.

The hungry masses were on the streets. ‘Hoovervilles’, the tarpaper shantytowns, became the home of millions of working class families.

While the crisis of capitalism grew worse, the unemployed, the homeless, and the destitute began to fight back. They organised and marched through the streets, signalling the mood of the masses and causing

much alarm to government and business.

In the spring of 1933 the Democrat Franklin D. Roosevelt took office as President of the United States. Backed by the leadership of the AFL, his administration was the only hope of saving American capitalism from its slow demise.

But FDR was no more a friend to labor than his predecessor, Herbert Hoover. His "New Deal" policy was basically a means to recover business, stabilize the system, and stop the growth of rebellion, which the capitalists feared would soon turn to revolution.

FDR's first step was to get banking and industry back on its feet through the National Recovery Act (NRA). The program amounted to a series of codes, price and wage fixing and limitations on competition. The NRA was controlled by and served the interests of the capitalists. Much of the decision-making power came from employers' associations and industrial combines.

The NRA also included a number of job relief programs providing big business and government with cheap, unorganised labor, paying a maximum wage of \$45.91 per month.

"Not enough"

As the Unemployment League said, it was "not enough to live on and just too much to die on".

Workers often hear that the "New Deal" government gave labor its rights to organise. That myth is based on a piece of legislation passed under the NRA claiming to have legalized workers' rights to collective bargaining. In fact labor got that legal right through the previous (Hoover) administration.

In reality FDR's first two terms in office, the years 1933-38, were marked by some of the most brutal confrontations between government and organised labor. Hundreds of workers were killed during those years, and there were continuous arrests and firings of union activists.

FDR's concessions to Labor were only the result of the tenacity and pressure of the organised workforce. Throughout his term demonstrations

and riots continued. The "New Deal" was yet another rotten deal thought up by capitalists to increase their profits through the continued exploitation of the workers.

As the economy upturned and stabilized, the working class became more confident and began to reclaim what had been lost during the depression. Their vigor and determination exploded into unprecedented heights, and was reflected in the emergence of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).

During this period the AFL was rapidly declining. The leadership provided no direction for the rank and file. There were millions of workers demanding union recognition and rights. They were prepared to face any confrontation with the bosses, and they would do so with or without the Federation.

One such group was the Toledo Electric Auto-Lite workers. They called a strike in February 1934. The AFL quickly responded by demanding mediation through the National Labour Board (a provision under the NRA) and sending the workers back to their jobs.

However, they could not dampen the fighting spirit of the workers. Again in April they struck. Hundreds of thousands, including many unemployed, came out in support of the Auto-Lite workers.

The Government sent in the military. Six workers were killed and scores of others wounded. But the workers fought back. Finally, after two months, the company capitulated and recognised the workers' union as their sole bargaining agent, while also increasing wages and improving conditions.

There were several other strikes that year which illuminated the class conflicts that were about to break American society open. 15 000 members of the International Longshoremen's Association on the west coast went on strike and crippled the entire coast. Two workers were killed and labor responded with a two-day general strike. The Longshoremen settled their contract within 11 days.

In Minneapolis the Teamsters' Union closed down the entire city for one month. The textile workers also moved to action. Within a month strike waves swept through the northern and southern textile mills.

500 000 workers in these mills walked off their jobs.

A total of 1,5 million workers in different industries were on strike in the year 1934. The state machinery went into motion, but could not stop the might and will of the workers.

At the 1934 AFL Convention the Executive Council reported: "there was a virtual uprising of workers for union membership. Workers held mass meetings and sent word they wanted to be organized". But the AFL, in its narrow framework of craft unionism, still refused to lead the struggle forward.

In 1935 the mineworkers' leader, John L. Lewis, demanded that the Federation begin the task of organizing industrial unions involving the mass of the workers in each industry. The Convention would have none of it. Three weeks later Lewis and other union officials announced the birth of the Committee for Industrial Organizations, and sanctioned themselves as an official committee within the AFL.

CIO

In November 1936 the AFL began expulsions of all unions who had associated with the CIO. Thirty unions in all (representing a million workers) followed the CIO out of the AFL. In 1938 the split was formalized with the official naming of the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Lewis played an instrumental role in the formation of the CIO. However, it should never be forgotten that the CIO was a rank-and-file movement, which took off at lightning speed because of the crisis of capitalism and the intensity of the class struggle. Lewis seized the opportunity, but he did not create it, and in years to follow he along with other union officials would act as a fetter on the entire movement.

The United Auto Workers joined forces with the CIO in 1936. Conditions for auto workers under the NRA had grown increasingly bad. Wages had been slashed to 20 cents per hour, speedups had become intolerable, while firing of union activists was sanctioned by FDR's industrial code.

The General Motors workers were demanding union recognition, the

end of piece-work, a 35-hour working week, time and a half for overtime, reinstatement of activists who had been fired, a seniority system (giving greater job protection for workers with longer service—*Editor*), and a contract that covered GM workers nationwide.

GM was stalling and the first series of sitdowns occurred. They happened quite spontaneously. Workers sat down from Flint to Kansas City. Throughout the entire GM empire operations came to a halt.

The strategy had been tested earlier that year by rubber workers in Akron, Ohio. They occupied the plants and paralysed the industry. Their demands were met within 33 days.

The workers discovered that by being inside the plants rather than walking out, their bargaining power was vastly strengthened. Inside meant they could block all strikebreakers and scab labor, they were not isolated and threatened by the police, which

was often the case on the picket lines, and they were sheltered.

But most importantly, they were protected because they occupied and had control over the very thing a capitalist strives to protect. As long as the factory was in the hands of the workers they were in a very powerful position.

The leaders of the CIO and UAW were calling for moderation from the workers. They wanted to make one more attempt at negotiations. The workers agreed.

But three weeks passed and negotiations were at a standstill. Then the workers in Flint moved into action. They pulled the power switch and took over Fisher Body No.1 and No.2. They would not be moved until GM bargained in good faith.

2 000 workers occupied these plants for 44 days. GM sought a court injunction against the strikers stating that they were illegally trespassing.

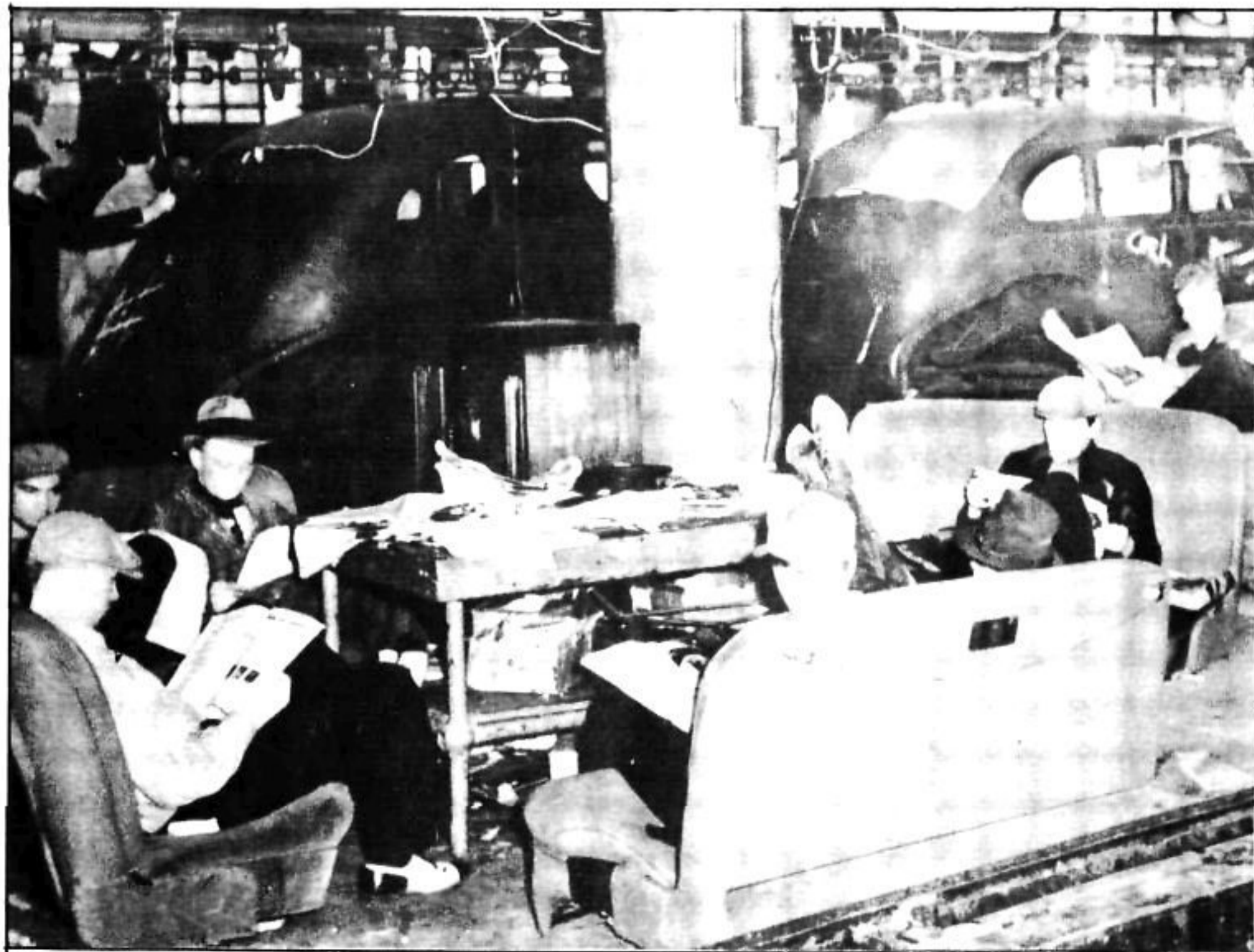
But the strikers would not succumb

to legal threats. They waited. They were well organized. Precision and discipline on the assembly line had taught them well. Committees were set up including security control, food, education, sanitation, tracking down rumors, coordinating with the outside, recreation etc.

While the strikers were inside there were thousands of workers and their families outside, forming mammoth picket lines around the entire plant. They brought food and other necessary provisions, and shielded them with their mass numbers from police attack.

After two weeks of relative quiet GM ordered the heat in the plant shut off, and sent in the state militia. For hours a battle ensued. Finally the men inside turned a fire hose on the police and soaked them with freezing water, forcing them to withdraw. The heat was turned back on to prevent the pipes freezing and machinery being destroyed.

As the weeks passed GM attempt-



During the sit-in at Flint, Michigan

ted another strategy, using the Governor of Michigan as their mediator. He brought a message to the UAW that if the men would evacuate the plant, GM would negotiate. All was agreed. But, as the men were half way out of the plant, word was brought that it was a hoax and GM was hiring strikebreakers. The men rushed back into the plant!

Then FDR intervened. Speaking of patriotism and respect for private property, he guaranteed that once the workers left the plant GM would bargain in good faith. The workers still did not move.

Finally the National Guard (the military—*Editor*) was sent in. They encircled the entire plant. The strikers knew this was the decisive moment.

A strategy was soon developed. 400 workers were to be sent in to occupy Chevrolet No.4, a strategic point where automobiles were assembled. Kermit Johnson, one of the organizers of the occupation, later reported in *Searchlight*, publication of the UAW Chevrolet Locals in Flint:

“Plant 4 was a huge and sprawling, a most difficult target, but extremely important to us because the corporation was running the plant, even though they had to stockpile motors, in anticipation of favorable court action. GM had already recovered from the first shock of being forced to surrender four of their largest body plants to sit-down strikers. They already had the legal machinery in motion that would, within a short time, expel by force if necessary the strikers from the plant. If that happened, we knew the strike would be broken, and the fight for a union in General Motors would be lost.”

With the help of the Women's Emergency Brigade and other pickets, a violent diversion was created at Chevrolet No.9, allowing the men to seize Chevrolet No.4.

Another court injunction was issued. The following day the workers sent a telegram to the Governor:

“Unarmed as we are, the introduction of the militia, sheriffs, or police with murderous weapons will mean a bloodbath of unarmed workers... We have decided to stay in the plant. We have no illusions about the sacrifices which this decision will entail. We fully expect that if a violent

effort is made to oust us many of us will be killed, and we take this means of making known to our wives, to our children, to the people of the State of Michigan and the Country that if this result follows from an attempt to eject us you (Governor Murphy) are the one who must be held responsible for our deaths.”

By this time six weeks had passed since the first occupation at Fisher Body No.1. The day of the showdown came. Thousands of workers throughout the Mid-West came to Flint in solidarity with their brothers.

The strikers expected severe retaliation. However, the troops did not fire on the workers. The combination of the Governor's fear of political demise if these workers were shot down, and GM's reluctance to destroy a \$50 million empire, finally forced the Corporation to capitulate.

After 44 days of plant occupations in Flint, and a total of 140 000 of GM's 150 000 production workers sitting down in plants all through the country, a contract was finally agreed upon. All the demands that the workers fought for had been won—including an agreement to rehire all strikers and union activists.

Courage

The courage of these workers in their struggle for union recognition and decent working conditions became the symbol of the tenacity and the power of the working class. During these years hundreds of thousands of rank and file workers “sat down”. The CIO rose to its height, within four years organizing 10 million workers. By 1946, 37% of the American workforce was organized.

During the next three decades of undreamed of economic growth and political stability, the American worker achieved the highest living standards in the world. Contrary to what is generally put out by capitalist propaganda, however, this was won only on the basis of the struggle and sacrifice of the 1930s, which created the organization through which the working class was able to advance its position.

The US ruling class, fearing the post-war power of the Stalinist

regime in Russia, launched into a frenzy of anti-Russian ‘cold war’ hysteria from the late 1940s onwards. The CIO leadership, who soon merged with the AFL bureaucracy to form the present AFL-CIO, capitulated to the ensuing ‘red scare’ aimed against all socialists and radicals in this period.

As a result, the CIO was plagued with splits and purges. Leading activists were forced to compromise and conform or face expulsion. The CIO's commitment to organize the unorganized was forgotten as unemployment reached an all time low and working conditions continued to improve with a minimum of pressure from the unions.

Full circle

As capitalism continued to provide the goods, American workers less and less saw the need for strong, active unions. But, with the return of worldwide capitalist crisis over the last decade, the wheel has in many ways turned full circle since the 1930s.

In 1983 just 20% of the workforce are organized in America. There is 11% unemployment. Many of the gains made since the 1930s have been taken away by the capitalists. Thousands are on the streets. They have lost their home, are hungry and have no medical care.

The storm is brewing once again. In September 1981, 500 000 workers under their union banners marched on Washington, the nation's capital. The American worker is not prepared to give up the tremendous gains of the last 30 years: gains that many of their brothers and sisters had given their lives for.

Unions throughout the country are already beginning campaigns on new organizing drives. The unions will again be transformed, as in the 1930s.

More and more the call for a party of labor, based on the trade unions, is being taken up. The great traditions of American labor will be reclaimed and the mighty working class will rise to its feet with the strength of millions.

Threatening world capitalism in its main power base, the resurgence of the US working class will be decisive in the battle for the socialist transformation of society world-wide.

BRITAIN MARXIST MPs ELECTED

On 9 June, when the British general election results were announced, P.W. Botha was one of the first government leaders internationally to congratulate Thatcher on the Conservative victory.

Although Labour lost what has been the most significant general election in nearly sixty years, British workers have taken a huge stride forward by electing for the first time in generations two Marxist MPs—supporters of the ideas of *Militant*, Marxist paper in the British Labour and trade union movement.

Inqaba interviewed one of them, Dave Nellist, Labour MP for Coventry South-East, and extended our warmest congratulations to the newly-elected Socialist.

After the record of the Tory government, which has turned the recession into a slump here because of its monetarist policies; with over four million unemployed, cuts in education and health spending—why did Thatcher win the election?

Well, the Tories' vote actually fell by nearly 750 000 since 1979, and a majority of the electorate voted against them, which proves there wasn't an upsurge of support for Tory policies.

Labour's programme contained many points which workers almost universally supported—measures to reduce unemployment; to increase wages, pensions, house-building, etc.

But, despite that, the Labour vote fell by three million. The major reason for that was the lack of confidence amongst working people that Labour's leadership would carry through these reforms in the teeth of severe opposition from big business.

Workers have long memories. The last Labour government (1974-79) was also elected on the basis of promises of reforms. But within a couple of years the leadership bowed to the pressure of big business and started reversing the reforms—restraining wages, cutting public spending and allowing unemploy-

ment to rise.

Working people are sceptical that a Labour government would pursue a different road in 1983 from that of the 1970s.

Secondly there was the role played by the mass media, which are 100% pro-capitalist. In this election they aimed an unprecedented stream of venom and distortions against Labour. They highlighted all the political differences in the Labour Party and the weaknesses in its programme, while papering over anything that could damage the Tories.

In particular the Tory press have concentrated attention on the Labour leaders' attempts to expel rank-and-file activists from the Party, and their expulsion of *Militant's* five editors. This again created the impression among working people of a leadership that was not seriously intending to attack the Tories and their system.

Nevertheless it's almost certain that Labour would have won the election on the wave of anti-Tory feeling that built up until the Falklands War in early 1982.

Then the whole situation was changed by the Tories' success in the war and their deliberate exploitation of jingoist sentiments among the politically backward sections of the

population, bringing back memories of the 'good old days' of British imperialist power, and creating the illusion that this government could perform miracles.

Again, it was the absence of a clear socialist campaign against the war by Labour's leadership that allowed the Tories to benefit from a war they had actually blundered into. So with Thatcher consciously manipulating the 'Falklands spirit', many voters felt they should give the Tories a second chance to lead the country out of the crisis—since Labour didn't seem to be offering any serious alternative at all.

What about the SDP-Liberal Alliance?

The Social-Democratic Party and their so-called Alliance with the Liberals was a deliberate creation of the media to split the Labour vote. It was designed as a 'one-election party' to prevent a Labour government coming to power that would have been under strong rank-and-file pressure to carry out socialist policies.

The vote which it got in some senses shows the volatility that has entered British politics. It indicates that there is a growing number of people rejecting both Toryism and Labour's reformist policies, who have been conned into believing that the Alliance offers an 'alternative', and could later be attracted to the ideas of Marxism for genuine change.

What can workers in the UK and internationally expect from the Thatcher government?

The 1980s are going to be a decade of unparalleled ferocity in the attacks of the capitalist class on the living standards and organisations of working people. With the system now staggering from recession to reces-

sion, wealth has to be transferred out of the pockets of workers into the pockets of the bosses for capitalism to survive.

This Tory government will be in the forefront of such attacks. They will aim to reduce workers' living standards, they will try to cut wages, social services, education, health, and so on.

Since the trade unions are the only organisations standing in their way and defending workers' living standards, they will introduce further laws designed to curb the ability of the trade unions to resist the attacks.

Internationally the Thatcher government, along with Reagan in America, will continue the massive and horrendous expenditure on armaments which is a tremendous burden on working people throughout the world.

In addition the Thatcher government will strive, together with other capitalist governments, to maintain the super-exploitation of the colonial and ex-colonial peoples. In the interests of their multinational paymasters they will try to prevent the emergence of democratic governments in countries such as South Africa and Namibia.

The defeat for Labour is therefore a setback not only for British workers but for working people throughout the world.

But there are always two sides to a coin. The struggles of British workers to resist the Tories' attacks will also have international effects. Workers in Britain who fight against closures, wage cuts or the destruction of trade unions, will find sympathy and support among workers in other parts of the world, who are often

working for the same companies.

A growing tide of struggle among workers in Britain and internationally could be linked together. Capitalism is organised internationally—more and more workers will also see the need to struggle together internationally for a solution to their common problems.

Now that you have been elected to parliament, how do you see the role of a Marxist MP?

Firstly we must have no illusions that the everyday problems of working people are going to be solved by fine parliamentary debates.

The British parliament is known as the 'best club in the world'. During my first few days there I was amazed by the wall-to-wall oil paintings, the crystal chandeliers, the fine clothes and the accents of Tory



During the election campaign: Dave Nellist discusses with GEC workers

Photo: John Harris

MPs—the symbols of money and privilege.

The first job of a Marxist MP is to expose to ridicule and destroy in the minds of working people the idea that parliament or the Tory government has a God-given right to put five million on the dole, to put fourteen million people on or below the official poverty line.

A Marxist MP has a responsibility to continue to take part in the day-to-day struggles of working people. To be there at six o'clock in the morning on the picket lines; to share the wages which are paid to an MP with the organisations of the labour movement—to take only the wage of a skilled worker for personal expenses and use the rest, which amounts to thousands of pounds, to aid the struggles of working people.

Thirdly and most importantly, a Marxist MP has the responsibility to generalise in the minds of working people the individual struggles they are entering into—the occupation of a factory against redundancies, attempts to start a union in an unorganised workplace, fights by council tenants against rent rises and so on.

We have to demonstrate that each and every of these struggles is caused by the concerted attack of the capitalist class against the working class as a whole. We must constantly drive home the lesson that only the working people, when they organise together in their millions, can defeat this system.

The prime job of a Marxist MP is therefore to generalise the struggles of working people and point out the need for the socialist transformation of society.

Do you think the right wing in the Labour Party will pursue their witch hunt against Party activists who support the ideas of *Militant*?

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest fears of the ruling class in Britain today is the rise to prominence of Marxism within the Labour and trade union movement—especially now it has invaded their bastion, parliament itself.

The right-wing labour leaders have a similar horror of genuine socialist ideas. They echo the Tory press in their smears against Marxism, claiming that it is 'the left' which lost Labour the general election.

A week after the election, for instance, TUC chairman Frank Chapple said the trade union movement had to choose between "survival" and "socialism". In other words, his advice was to throw the ideas of socialism overboard.

In fact, the experience of the election has demonstrated the exact opposite. Even the media admit that Labour's old right-wing leaders have no credibility whatsoever. In Coventry South-East and in Liverpool Broadgreen, on the other hand, far from putting off workers we have managed to win parliamentary elections on Marxist ideas.

In Broadgreen there was a swing of almost 5% to Labour, one of the highest in the country. In Coventry South-East we recruited over a hundred new members to the Labour Party in four weeks, making us the biggest section of the Party in the area.

One feature of the election campaign which had an enormous effect among working people, and sent a shudder through the right-wing leaders, has been the commitment by myself and other Marxist candidates to live on the wage of a skilled worker.

On that basis alone some will try to renew the witchhunt against supporters of *Militant* in the months ahead! Because if there is one thing the right-wing leaders fear, it is the loss of their careers and comfortable life-styles.

They fear that the wider a hearing Marxist ideas get among workers, the more demands will be placed on them for active struggle against the Tory government.

So Chapple's remark is undoubtedly a call for new attacks on the basic socialist traditions on which the Labour Party was founded. But I am absolutely confident that the ranks of the movement will continue to beat off these attacks. I think any witchhunt will only rebound on the right wing, and will result in a wider audience and even greater support for the ideas of Marxism.

What role do you think you can play as an MP in supporting the struggle of SA workers?

Over the last ten years as a member of the Labour Party, as a shop steward and as a union organiser in

the factories where I've worked, I have often been concerned with workers' struggles in other countries.

When I worked for British Leyland some years ago I helped to organise boycotts of goods which were being made for use in SA. I've also spoken at regional and national conferences of the Labour movement on the need to build up concrete links between workers in Britain and Southern Africa who are facing the same bosses and the same capitalist system.

Now I have the opportunity as an MP to reach a far wider audience of working people with precisely the same ideas. I intend to concentrate especially on trade unionists working for companies in Britain which have subsidiaries in Southern Africa, and argue the case with them that they should form links with their brothers and sisters in Southern Africa, and aid them materially and politically in building organisations which can overthrow the apartheid regime.

But perhaps the most important point for comrades in Southern Africa to ponder is the other side of this same coin. Because capitalism is organised internationally, and bound by a thousand threads from country to country, the struggle of the British labour movement to end the domination of capitalism in Britain has enormous implications for the struggles internationally.

I believe the greatest contribution the British working class can make to the liberation of the workers in Southern Africa, or any other part of the globe, is to carry through the socialist transformation of Britain. Ending the involvement of British imperialism in Southern Africa would lift a huge burden off the backs of working people there.

A genuinely socialist government in Britain would be able to offer financial, material and political support to working-class organisations in Southern Africa, and back them in their struggle to overthrow their oppressors. We have more in common with workers throughout the world than any of us have with the bosses in our own countries!

Therefore the slogan of a Marxist MP today must be the same slogan put forward by Marx and Engels over a hundred years ago: Workers of all countries, unite! We have nothing to lose but our chains, and a world to win.

The argument of Labour right-wingers that Militant supporters are "unelectable" in Britain, was shattered also by the victory of fireman Terry Fields in the Liverpool Broadgreen constituency.

Completely against the national trend; against vitriolic smears by the capitalist press; and after a dirty scare campaign by the enemy parties, Broadgreen elected a Marxist M.P. with 18 802 votes.

The BBC calculated that this new constituency would have fallen to the Tories even in the 1979 election—yet Terry won a 3 800-vote majority for Labour.

This was done by a vigorous campaign carried by hundreds of canvassers to every worker's home and workplaces in the area.

Sceptical of reformist "easy answers" which have failed in the past, voters responded to the explanation of a fully-fledged socialist answer to capitalism in crisis.

Particularly appealing to workers was Terry's promise to accept only a skilled worker's wage, and give the rest of his M.P.'s salary to the labour movement. One road sweeper was so enthused that he stuck up leaflets on lamp-posts throughout the city—including other constituencies!

Below: Terry Fields addressing a factory-gate meeting during the campaign.

VOTE LABOUR

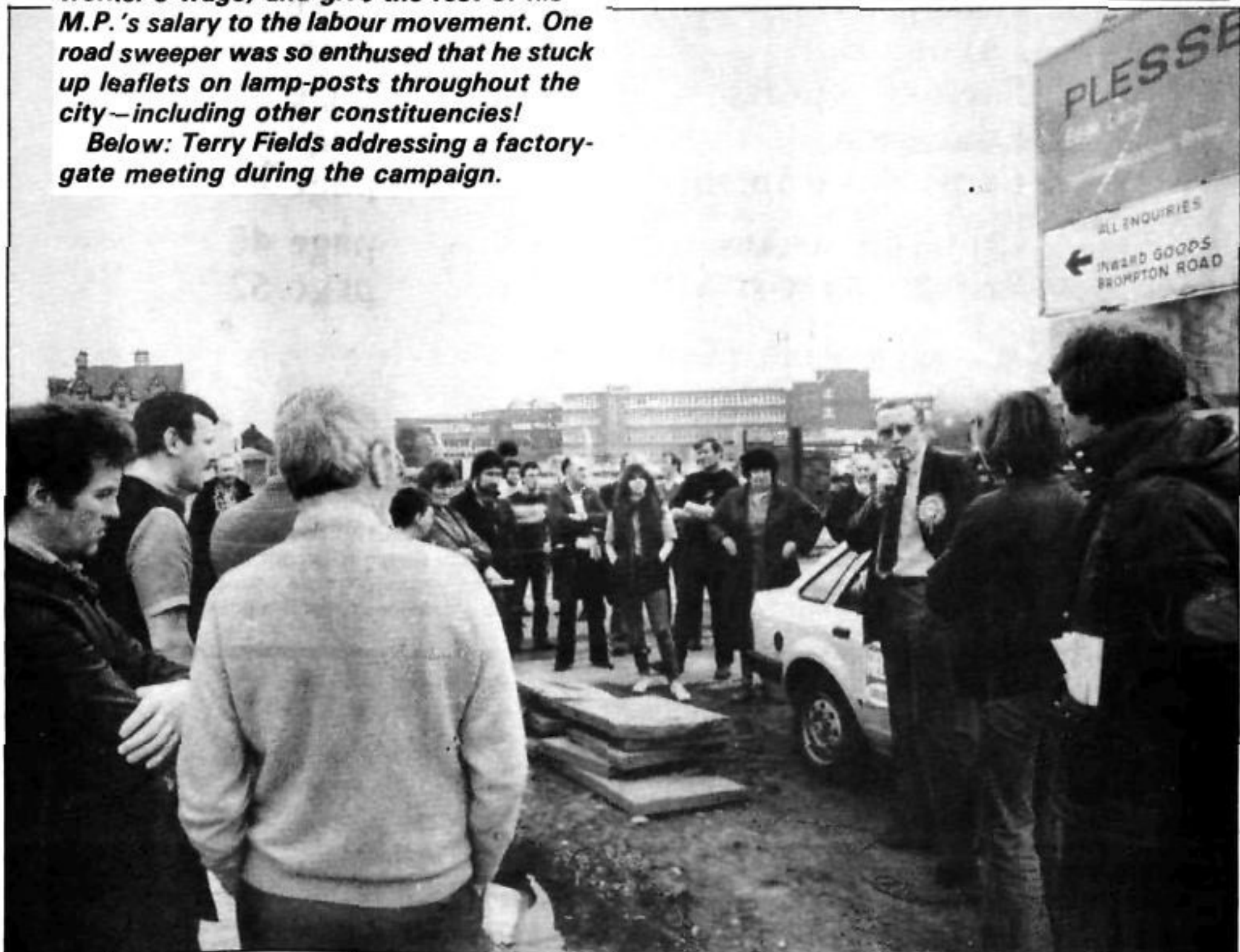
FOR A WORKERS' M.P. —



— ON A WORKERS' WAGE!

VOTE FIELDS

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For security reasons, fictitious names have been used by writers of articles in this issue of INQABA YA BASEBENZI. In every case, however, care has been taken not to give a misleading impression of the background and experience of the comrade concerned. Details about writers are provided only when security considerations make this possible.