

# Socialist Worker

**MOBILISE  
FOR NEW  
LABOUR ACT  
NOW!**

Monthly Newspaper of the International Socialist Organisation (Zimbabwe)  
Registered at the GPO as a newspaper

October - November 2001 \$25-00  
Bookshops \$30-00

**The Crisis in Zimbabwe is not Land or Rule of Law**

**inzara - indlala!**  
**it's capitalism!**

*Family of six (Mother, father and 4 children needs \$19 011-00 monthly*

Rent (3 roomed high density)	\$2 500-00
Electricity & water	\$1 200-00
Transport	\$2 670-00
Health & Education	\$2 550-00
Loaf of Bread x 31	\$1 550-00
20kg Roller Meal	\$ 923-40
4Kg white sugar	\$ 232-65
2Kg salt x 1	\$ 103-70
8 Kg meat	\$1 248-80

*What workers are getting!*

Engineering	\$7 050-00
NEC Plastic Industry	\$6 333-30
NEC Food & Allied Industry	\$7 500-00

**Abuja Agreement Strengthens  
Exploitation of Peasants ... page 3**

# Chile And The Lessons For Zimbabwean Workers Today

On 11 September 1973, the military in Chile launched a coup. In the 6 weeks that followed, 30,000 worker, student and peasant activists were butchered. Tens of thousands more were tortured, jailed or driven into exile. Entire townships were sealed off and starved into submission.

Chile in the years 1970 to 1973 is a mirror of what is happening in Zimbabwe today. Even how capitalism developed is similar to how it developed in Zimbabwe. In the 1850's mining was started. It is the mines that produced Chile's first working class. In the 1890's industrial production (factories) began.

## Background To 1970

The 1930's and 1940's saw a rise in the working class struggles. Two parties - called the Socialist Party and the Communist Party - were formed out of these struggles. But, like the MDC today, they wanted to form a reformist parliamentary alliance with the bosses in the 1950's.

At the same time these same bourgeoisie (bosses) were carrying out increased repression and exploitation of the workers.

In 1958 Jorge Alessandri and in 1964 Eduardo Frei won the Presidential elections respectively. Both Alessandri and Frei passed economic reforms (like ESAP/ZIMPREST). Both lied (like ZANU(PF) and MDC) that these measures would bring benefits and prosperity to workers. Yet by 1968 the Chilean economy was in crisis. There was no economic growth while inflation and unemployment had risen.

Under Alessandri there was a wave of mass workers unrest which was inspired by the Cuban revolution of 1959-61. Under Frei in 1968 unrest again broke out. because when he tried to bring about land reform he was blocked by the judges in the courts - the bosses friends. Frei also tried to bring about wage rises for workers but bosses sabotaged this plan by refusing to agree to no strikes in exchange.

But the unrest that broke out in 1968 was not to fade out. Workers and peasants, frustrated by the lack of reforms, took to the streets and land. In the period up to 1970, farm occupations increased by 300 fold and the number of strikes increased 86 fold.

## Allende Becomes President

This social confrontation was the background to the November 1970 election of Salvador Allende. The driving force that brought Allende to political power was the workers.

But in order to be sure of winning the presidency Allende had to ensure the backing of the bosses party in Parliament - the Christian Democrats. To get their support Allende signed a Statute of Guarantees (like the MIGA investment guarantee that Mugabe signed in 1990) promising to protect the bosses investments and property.

**On assuming power, Allende faced exactly the same obstacles that Alessandri and Frei faced - unelected bosses and judges.**

Irritated and angry, peasants began to seize some farms in May and June 1971. For Allende this presented a serious threat to his compromise with the bosses. In parliament and in radio broadcasts he repeatedly appealed for legal lawful means to prevail for discipline and responsibility (like the MDC calls for 'law and order').

To try to force Allende's government to take more direct action to end farm invasions and workers strike action, the US government imposed sanctions in July 1971. It stopped further aid and demanded the repayment of loans. Only military aid directly to the army, airforce and navy came in.

The ruling class and their middle class supporters watched as Allende paused and vacillated between the two opposing classes of exploiting, oppressing rulers and the exploited, oppressed ruled. Faced with this, and the direct military aid, the middle classes began to get confident and in November 1971 they began their own street demonstrations to attack the government.

Over the next eleven months class tensions between bosses and workers grew.

## Revolutionary Crisis

This tension reached a new high level in October 1972. Lorry owners went on strike - this in a country heavily dependant on road transport. The public aim of the strike was to oppose a nationalised transport system. But this was simply the bosses starting to fight back against the government (like what the white commercial farmers did in Mash West in August). The transport bosses were joined by their middle class friends - lawyers, accountants private doctors, etc. The Christian Democrats refused to discuss the strike with Allende and the government.

Allende and the CUT (Chilean ZCTU) failed to do anything for a week claiming they did not want to upset their allies (like when the ZCTU does not call an indefinite strike because they want to preserve peace and 'negotiate' with the Zanu (PF) government and appease MDC bosses). But workers did not accept this situation. Within hours they formed Industrial Committees and overpowered the armed guards watching the lorries and begin using them themselves. Similarly they smashed open locked factories and shops and re-started them. The bosses strike was broadened by organised groups of workers.

In this event workers determined the result. The ruling class and the right wing were defeated and the workers confidence was renewed. Following a brief calm period of 4 months leading up to council elections in March 1973, mine workers went on strike, still full of confidence and consciousness after October 1972. This renewed energy re-ignited the Industrial Committee. The Industrial Committees called mass public meeting to discuss the way forward for workers and peasants struggles.

## The Tragedy

Since October 1970, the socialist and communist parties, who were pretending to be friends of the workers, had been attacking workers whenever they went on strike or on demonstrations or involved in occupations.

Those who had led the struggles in October 1972 tragically became wound up in trying to convince the Socialist and Communist Party leaders over to the cause of the workers. With a parliamentary party leadership focusing on the next general elections, the Industrial Committee mass meetings failed to come up with a direction on the way forward.

This critical moment shows the necessity of having created a political leadership of the working class with the broadest base that could speak for the highest level of consciousness and the experience of the Industrial Committees. Its task would be to draw together the actual, living, leadership of the movement that would carry it to its logical conclusion - workers power.

Faced with such a situation the bosses began preparing the final confrontation with the working class. They now began talking openly as to whether to launch a "soft" coup sanctions as with the US and EU) or a "hard" (military) coup.

The answer became clear with the vacillations of Allende. In June in a town in southern Chile the army began patrols. Workers were stopped and searched. Known offices and hideouts of worker, student and peasant activists were raided.

On the 29th June the army staged a "practise" coup to see if there would be a response. They drove tanks on the streets of the capital Santiago and killed a few people.

Without a revolutionary party to lead the workers, there was no response on the ground and in the streets.

This was the signal for the bosses. They then began preparing the final details of the military coup. In August 1973 Allende called the military into the cabinet and handed them the ministry of home affairs. He

asked them to restore law and order (like soldiers patrolling the streets of the townships in Zimbabwe and beating up people).

A final chance to stop the coup came when leftist sailors and organisations made a public announcement that the military was preparing a coup. Allende publicly thanked them for their "patriotism" and then asked the military to stop the coup. The response from the military came on 11 September.

On that day reformism prepared its own grave by arguing that the coup was unlawful and unfair. But these nice arguments were no match for tanks and guns.

## The Lessons For Zimbabwean Workers

**ZANU(PF) and the war veterans are preparing to launch a coup if Mugabe loses the presidential elections next year.** Vice President Joseph Msika openly told a High Court hearing in August that war veterans will stage a coup if Mugabe loses. This is why ZANU(PF) is filling the ranks of the army and air-force with war veterans.

In July there was open talk in South African newspapers of a coup being led by Perence Shiri - the butcher of Matabeleland and the one and only commander of the Fifth Brigade.

**The bosses are also preparing for war with peasants and workers.** What the white commercial farmers did in Mashonaland West (in July) and Mashonaland East in September shows how they are preparing - by attacking resettled landless peasants and by slashing arms of war as were found at houses and offices of MDC aides.

The MDC again is preparing for a "soft" coup with the Zimbabwe Democracy Bill and European Union sanctions in an attempt at crushing genuine workers organisations.

We in the International Socialist Organisation are making an urgent appeal to everyone who reads this article and who believes in the struggle of workers, students and peasants to join us. We have branches in Bulawayo, Gweru, Kadoma, Harare and Chinhoyi but we need more branches and members all over the country.

We must organise and co-ordinate a United Front fight against ZANU(PF), MDC and the bosses on all fronts to ensure victory and our survival as the exploited and oppressed.

**SHINGA MUSHANDI SHINGA! QINA MSEBENZI QINA! JAMBANJA NDIZVO! OUR WORLD IS NOT FOR SALE!**

*-by Rosa Zulu*

# Mugabe Government - State Capitalist or Fascist? *By Alex Rossa*

Since independence in 1980 the Mugabe government ruled as a one-party state through a bourgeois parliamentary system. The minority "opposition" was weak and right-wing.

In the early 1980's the ZANU(PF) government unleashed a terrorist war against its only strong opposition - ZAPU under Joshua Nkomo - in Matabeleland and the Midlands with Gukurahundi. This was to show any opposition that Mugabe and his cronies would not tolerate any bourgeois democratic opposition. Subsequently, other minority parties like ZANU Ndonga and ZUM were squashed.

Village politics reigned in the rural areas where the peasantry was "bought over" with handouts of packages of mealie-meal, seed and fertiliser in times of drought and famine. Work for food programmes were also introduced to keep the peasantry in line.

In urban areas workers were controlled by the government through workers committees at work places and through the introduction of the minimum wage. Strike action was not encouraged.

Parastatals and co-operatives, as a means of employment, set up by government with workers tax payments, failed miserably. They were mismanaged and looted by government management as seen in Dairiboard, Ziscosteel, Colcom, Cotton Board and NRZ.

The AAG and black middle class business people were encouraged to buy these nationalised industries. But starting in 1990 with the adoption of the IMF inspired ESAP austerity programme, including the selling of these industries, a way was opened for multinationals to take over mining, agriculture and manufacturing.

Mugabe's government became the caretaker for international capitalism. Mugabe's police and military provided the backup for this rule. The gap between the wealthy and the workers widened. Food inflation from August to mid-September this year ran at over 120% as Mugabe continued with the IMF and world Bank policies. The state capitalist policies of the 1980s were in fact being thrown overboard as the Mugabe government adopted neoliberalism or ESAP, although the repression continued, as seen in the murder and beating of opposition members in the June 2000 elections and the violence on the farms.

This has led some to describe the regime as "fascist." Is this correct?

## How does a state behave under Fascist rule?

Historically fascism is identified with Hitler's state in Germany from 1933 to 1945 and in Mussolini's state in Italy where 6 million Jews, a quarter million trade unionists and socialists were slaughtered in concentration camps and a further 7 million killed when Germany invaded Russia.

We can recognise a group, political party or government as fascist if it substantially behaves in the following ways.

- (1) It targets or attacks trade unions, leftist organisations (like ISO), and parliamentary democracy. It is supported by the middle and ruling classes and capitalists
  - (2) It buys over disillusioned middle classes, workers like war vets, the unemployed and peasantry and builds terrorist para militia groups like Hitler's SS shock-troopers
  - (3) It appeals to youth, especially unemployed youth to build a mass party centred around a personality cult of the leader like a ZANU (PF) MP who compared Mugabe to Jesus Christ.
  - (4) It is racist or targets minority or unpopular ethnic or social groups - like gays and lesbians. It suppresses and limits the role of women - for instance how many women are in parliament or the ZANU (PF) Politburo?
  - (5) It has the print and electronic media completely as Hitler and Gobbels did. ZANU (PF) has its spin doctor, Jonathan Moyo.
  - (6) It is funded by big industry, financial capitalists, landowners or oligarchic states like Libya or Malaysia.
- It is clear that fascism is a real threat to the working class, socialists and to society as a whole. As Leon Trotsky, the Bolshevik revolutionary stated, "... the historic function of Fascism is to smash the working class, destroy its organization and stifle political liberties when capitalists find themselves unable to govern and dominate with the help of 'democratic machinery.'

This was the experience in Italy, Germany in the 1930s, in Chile under Pinochet in the 1970s. Here after the 1960s Zhiu uprisings by workers against the colonial state, a semi-fascist regime was created led by Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front to stop the rising working class movement, leading to a civil war which cost over 40 000 lives. The same happened under Botha's National Party in South Africa in the mid 1980s.

... to page 6 ...

## what we think

# Abuja Agreement Strengthens Exploitation of Peasants

In mid-September the government signed an agreement under the auspices of the Commonwealth in Abuja, Nigeria to "end the land crisis in Zimbabwe."

The Abuja Agreement states that "the land crisis is at the center of the crisis in Zimbabwe," and is linked to the other problems like rule of law and human rights abuses.

It calls for an orderly and lawful land redistribution based on the laws of Zimbabwe. It thus recognizes as lawful the land occupations done by war veterans and peasants on designated farms (now estimated at over 3 000 farms) but calls for the removal of all those on undesignated farms or those in designated farms which do not fall under the criterion set by the government itself, e.g. underutilized land or protected by international or bilateral investment agreements. Further land occupations must stop. In return the former colonial power, the UK is to provide substantial funding, assisted by Australia, Canada, New Zealand to compensate the commercial farmers affected.

ZANU (PF) is celebrating, not only portraying the agreement as a victory, but Mugabe going as far as saying it was always his government's wish to see the white farmers fully compensated! Now Mugabe looks forward to the October Commonwealth conference in Brisbane and can proceed to distribute six million hectares of land ahead of the critical presidential elections, with the blessing of the international capitalist world.

On the other hand, the opposition MDC, is seething! The carpet has been pulled from underneath their feet, by their western masters. Abuja is significantly different from the MDC - supported Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Bill, passed by the USA Senate, which places the lack of rule of law, the farm invasions, violence on the opposition, corruption as the center of the crisis. The Bill threatens sanctions unless there is unconditional restoration of all occupied farms to the farmers and free and fair presidential elections, (as determined by the USA ruling class) and promises billions of dollars to the opposition and their various neoliberal NGO and media supporters.

The MDC is sending a high level delegation to Brisbane led by M. Tsvangirai to try and scuttle Abuja. It argues that Abuja is a trick by ZANU (PF) to gain international breathing space, and violence will remain, because ZANU (PF) needs it for the elections.

We don't support the MDC's neoliberal opposition to Abuja, which like Muzorewa before them, is based on extreme right wing grounds opposed to the giving of farms to peasants. Neither is the central question one of whether ZANU (PF) will not implement the agreement for the violence reason. This fixation of the MDC on violence shows the tragedy of the opposition party in its inability to see that whilst violence no doubt played some role in its defeat in the rural areas, the fundamental reason, was Mugabe's success, through the farm invasions, to outmanoeuvre the MDC on its left on the land question, taking advantage of its obvious pro - commercial farmer stance.

Fundamentally, if he can show that he is delivering on land, Mugabe does not need violence not only to retain but also increase his rural vote, the majority of voters. Indeed, even before Abuja, after passing the Land Occupiers (Protection) Act, the government was already using force to stop further farm invasions, such as with the Mwenzi and the Inqama peasants. Like the British imperialists, the ZANU (PF) chefs tremble at the prospect of the land occupations radicalizing beyond their control.

And that is precisely what Abuja is all about - like Lancaster, it is a compromise document between our neocolonial rulers, sections of the farmers and the imperialists to protect their interests, at the expense of the millions of land hungry peasants.

Given the devastation caused by his neoliberal ESAP programme, Mugabe has irrevocably lost the support of workers and the urban poor, and has resorted to the land question as a desperate attempt to survive. The invasions were necessitated by the need to show some concrete steps towards delivery, given the empty promises of the last 20 years. It is this which explained the considerable and violent extent to which the Mugabe government has been prepared to go over the land question. But the violence provided only secondary benefits such as the then necessary closing off the pro-white farmer MDC from the rural electorate and as a form of protest to the

imperialists for their apparent abandonment of the increasingly unpopular Zanu PF for the new neoliberal upstart, the MDC. Zanu (PF) was showing that it was prepared to go to whatever extent it took, to protect its privileged position as the chief puppet of imperialist interests in the country.

The Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Bill, seemed to show that this strategy was failing. But Abuja shows that the imperialists are now prepared to play ball - in particular the British. As the regime became more isolated, the possibility of a genuine, mass radical peasant movement developing increasingly became real. This would not only threaten the real centers of capitalist agriculture in the country, including those of the absentee British land lords but could also inspire similar movements in South Africa, as the recent land invasions there showed. Moreover the British panicked as their rivals started cutting deals with the regime to protect their own nationals.

By September, the grounds for the compromise deal had been laid, even if this meant the abandonment of MDC. Coming 7 months before critical elections, Abuja amounts to a vote of no confidence in MDC by the western ruling classes. It allows Mugabe to distribute land according to his own laws that state that no compensation will be paid for land unless the British pay up and that those who have occupied farms as of March will not be evicted. There will be no neutral Land Commission, as demanded by MDC, but land will be distributed by government, i.e. read ZANU (PF). As he prepares for the elections, Mugabe will draw appropriate lessons, that even if he resorts to violence - rigging, in the coming elections, as long as he can show that he is the effective force on the ground to protect their interests, the imperialists will recognize his regime.

The large commercial farmers, especially the tobacco farmers and the multinationals running large agro-industrial export earning estates like tea, coffee, beef will not be affected by Abuja. The ones sacrificed are the smaller white farmer, but who will get some compensation from the British funds - although this might not fully do for him, for he knows no other form of life other than farming and probably too old to emigrate. Hence, like the MDC, this section of the white farmers is making desperate efforts to scuttle Abuja, including stage-managed looting and violence on the farms. But this is unsustainable and only plays into the election propaganda hands of ZANU (PF).

Whilst up to 400 000 families will benefit from Abuja, the majority of peasants will not - for Abuja puts a cap on the land redistribution process that had started with the land invasions. The core of capitalist agriculture will remain untouched. Most of the fertile and productive land will remain monopolized by the agriculture capitalists, whilst millions of black peasants remain marginalized in the poorest of land. For after all under the Mugabe laws, the criterion for acquisition of farms is not those which are most productive or fertile, but those which border the communal farms or are underutilized!

Finally, Abuja is a ploy by ZANU (PF) and its imperialist paymasters to hide the real crisis in Zimbabwe. The real crisis is one of capitalism: the massive and growing poverty of millions of urban and rural working people as a result of the disastrous failure of our bosses' system of capitalism in particular the neoliberal policies (ESAP) implemented by ZANU (PF), the capitalists and their institutions like the IMF and World Bank. Stating that land is at the core of the crisis seeks to hide this fact and thus undermine the potential of a worker - peasant united front against capitalism.

We call on peasants and farmworkers to reject ploys like Abuja, and instead organize themselves, seize farms and redistribute land equitably amongst themselves.

At the same time we recognize that mere redistribution of land to peasants, especially based on subsistence agriculture, will not resolve the fundamental underlying problem of the rural areas - namely low productivity and exploitation of the peasants by the local and international capitalist markets. Like throughout Africa the real crisis is one of capitalism. The way forward for the peasants is to unite with their true allies, the working class and smash such system and begin to develop agriculture on modern scientific methods including co-operative and state farms. All land must be nationalized!

By Oscar Simbi

## Marxism and terrorism

As socialist we condemn the terrorist attacks of 11 and any acts of terrorism. However, in their rush to assign blame and demand revenge for 11 September terrorist attacks in US, no politician or journalist bothered to ask a simple question: Why would someone target the US?

The answer is the devastation and misery wreaked imposed on the majority of the world's people by the U.S. in its role as the world's biggest superpower has created the seedbed for the very terrorism which its leaders so piously condemn.

In the last two decades alone, the U.S. has launched military attacks on Grenada, Libya, Panama, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, its role in the Middle East against the Palestinians which has seen the loss of lives of more than a million. Here in Zimbabwe the US policies imposed by World Bank and IMF in their drive for massive profits, has intum seen thousands of workers out of their jobs, rise of unemployment, cutting of subsidies on basic commodities, education and health. Thousands of school leavers are finding themselves without jobs and whilst trying to escape their frustrations to western countries hundreds of them have been returned back on purely racism basis. Thousands of young people are dying from HIV related disease some of them which can be preventable..

Therefore as socialist we reject the hypocrisy which has been taken by George Bush and his war friends. The truth is that for politicians like Bush and Blair one sort of terrorism - the brutal state terrorism of the biggest imperialist powers, the US and Britain is justifies, but the terrorism of those who have suffered as a result is not.

Also at the same we as socialist we condemn the political strategy of "individual terrorism" that arose because of the tyranny and oppression of our rulers - and in turn individual act in despair and vengeance. Our objection to this kind of terrorism is not based on morality but on the grounds that it simply does not work. The ruling class can always replace individuals - the exploitation, oppression and injustices in society are a product of a world economic system of capitalism, not of particular individuals within it, however brutal and obnoxious they might be. Terrorism have very limited consequences. To rid the world of oppression and injustice requires not merely the assassination or bombing but tearing up the roots of the capitalist system itself.

Furthermore and most importantly acts of terrorism represent a desperate attempt by a minority to substitute themselves for mass action and actually demobilise the mass movement. The acts of terrorism are usually carried out in secret only by a tiny minority and relegates the masses to the sidelines and makes them mere spectators of a contest between the terrorists and the regime, rather than participants in their own liberation.

A terrorist assassination or bombing can also introduce deep disarray into the ranks of the working class, particularly when ordinary people are killed or injured. That can create a favourable atmosphere for the introduction of new measures of state repression. Trotsky argues that acts of terrorism belittles the role of the masses in their own consciousness.

The sort of society socialists are fighting for is one where workers themselves take control and run society in their own interests. Such a society cannot be achieved by the actions of a tiny minority, but can only be forged through the mass activity of workers themselves.

Moreover it is through the process of revolutionary struggle that workers begin to throw off all the reactionary ideology of the capitalist system and become, as the socialist Karl Marx put it, "fitted to found society anew" The revolution is therefore itself a crucial part of preparing workers with the confidence in their ability to run society and their lives. Socialist do not deny the working class and the oppressed the right to use violence against their oppressors because the ruling class will not give up their power, wealth and privileges without a struggle.

For socialists that struggle cannot be conducted by individual or elite groups, but only through the collective struggle of the mass of the working class and oppressed. This struggle was started by demonstrations in Seattle, Davos, Melbourne, Johannesburg and Genoa just to mention a few of the anti-capitalist demonstrations and we can win it if we stand united.

## ECONOMIC SERIES

# Explaining the Crisis

by Rosa Zulu

*(This is the first, introductory, part in a series from Socialist Worker explaining the economic crisis in Zimbabwe (and globally). It analyses and makes sense of the mess we are in today.)*

Production is the basis of all organised human societies. It involves the labour of people (workers) in converting raw materials provided by nature - food, metals, rubber, chemicals, etc. This is the basis of capitalism today - what can be generally referred to as manufacturing.

Throughout history, every method of production involves 2 sides; the forces of production and the relations of production.

The **forces of production** are the tools, machines and technology used in production. As society develops the forces of production it increases its production to higher levels and takes human society to higher stages of civilisation.

But under the **relations of production** this is not so. The relations of production are the way in which production is socially organised. It concerns (1) the division of labour and (2) the way in which the forces of production are distributed between the different, opposing, classes in society - workers and bosses.

These two determine how surplus (profit) is obtained and used in society. In the capitalist method of production, there are 2 important classes. A tiny minority, less than 2%, own and control the wealth. The rest produce that wealth.

Because workers are forcibly excluded from a controlling access to the means of production (mines, factories, shops, etc) workers have to go to work for the capitalist bosses (what Karl Marx refers to as wage slavery).

The workers sweat to make profits and wealth but it is the bosses who own and control that wealth and profit made by past and current generations of workers. This is a brief and general basis of how capitalism operates today.

Because it is the bosses who own and control the wealth and profit, they also own and control the process of capitalist production.

Capitalists devote much of the surplus not just to their own consumption (obscene lifestyles of houseboats on Kariba or holidaying in the UK and South Africa) but also to investing back the proceeds into production. Again, as Marx puts it "accumulate, accumulate, accumulate" i.e. accumulate more (profit) to make more (profit). It is this rate of profit that causes economic (growth) booms and slumps (crisis).

To explain the crisis, Marx argues, you must first explain the period before the crisis the boom. The reason for explaining the boom is simple. In order to explain how a pen falls off a table, you must first explain how the pen ended up on the table in the first place.

In a period of boom there is growth. This is triggered by an invention or a discovery. When, just for example, Microsoft invented the computer, it made high profits as it was the only computer maker. When Apple Macintosh joined in, it has to offer workers slightly higher wages and sell its computers for slightly less. To remain in the business and to compete effectively, Microsoft then has to adjust its workers wages upwards and to bring its prices down. When IBM and other "players" enter the market, this process is repeated. Wages and materials rise and prices come down. This can also be said of Nokia, Ericsson, Siemens and Motorola in the cellphone industry or Telecel, Econet and Netone in the cellphone network industry.

As the cost of wages and materials rise and the prices come down, **the rate of profit goes down**. When the rate of profit goes down, bosses then make attacks on the workers to sustain their lifestyles and profits.

The forms of attack include longer working hours and retrenchments. As bosses lay off workers, they threaten those remaining behind with unemployment. As the crisis bites deeper and competing firms close down, the bosses also resort to price rises.

**In the last three months bosses in Zimbabwe have increased the price of foodstuffs by over 500%. Food is a basic human requirement but under capitalism it becomes a profitable commodity. Either you buy it at the bosses prices or you starve.**

This is the general, basic, overview of the crisis in capitalism. It is a system driven by profit, and maintained by a police force and army, to sustain the survival of the stinking bosses.

This is why, from Seattle to Genoa to Johannesburg to Harare, workers the world over have rejected capitalism in the global anti-capitalist protests.

This is why capitalism must be overthrown and replaced by a system of workers, students and peasants needs and not the greedy corporate needs of profit for the bosses. Jambanja internationally ndizvo / yikho!

## The Crisis in Zimbabwe is

# Inzara - indlala It

**I**N mid - September, the ZANU (PF) government and the British imperialists signed their Abuja Agreement, where they state that "the land crisis is at the core of the crisis in Zimbabwe."

On the other hand the MDC is furious arguing that "the rule of law, in particular violence on the farms and opposition" is the center of the crisis in Zimbabwe.

The three are lying and are all united by one goal: namely to lie and hide from workers, peasants, students and the poor about the real crisis in Zimbabwe. The real crisis is what has been happening in the last two months: that is - the savage increases in prices of food, seed, fertilizer, transport and other basic goods; the miserly "increments" given workers with average wages now around \$6 000 when a worker needs \$19 011 a month to survive; the retrenchments of thousands of workers; the 3 000% fees increases and privatisation of accommodation and catering in colleges. In short the most severe ever crisis of capitalism in Zimbabwe, from which the ZANU (PF) government and the bosses supported by the IMF - World Bank are trying to get out of by these massive savage attacks on both the peasant and the worker - the student and the unemployed.

Land hunger is a big problem for millions of peasants. But contrary to the imperialist inspired Abuja Agreement or the MDC pussy-footing on the issue, we call for the working class to demand the immediate nationalization of all land and its distribution to peasants and farm workers without a cent being paid to the commercial farmers. They are the ones who must pay compensation for how they seized land through robbery and murder and a century of colonial taxes that subsidized them and the semi - slave labour (chiibharo) they imposed on locals to develop their farms.

But giving land to the peasant on its own won't solve the problem of massive increases in seed, fertilizer, farming equipment, poor roads, and dams or the resultant subsistence low productivity. Nor most critically, the super exploitation of the peasant by the big capitalist companies, especially the privatised parastatals such as GMB, COTTCO, Dairiboard, CSC or CARGILL, who are paying the peasant much less than the real value of his or her produce and one which is not equivalent to the rise in prices of the things they need to survive or farm. By privatizing the agricultural parastatals at the behest of its IMF masters, ZANU (PF) is in fact murdering the peasant even as it pretends to be his friend by the bits of land it is about to give to some of them.

And ZANU (PF), the real servants of the bosses and the IMF, are doing the same to the worker, student and urban poor through privatisation, giving its own workers miserly 15 percent increments, arresting and teargassing striking workers, refusing a new Labour Act. Bosses are doing the same - massively raising the prices of basic goods yet giving workers peanuts, retrenching thou-

## MDC Provinces - Why the po

On 9 September, at Adelaide Acres, at the MDC Harare provincial congress to elect a new executive there was a massive battle of the poor against those who represent the interest of the bosses. Right-wing elements who tried to stop the meeting were beaten up, as were a number of MPs who were said to be supporting them.

The MDC leadership has imposed such elections on all provinces, saying they were interim. And in all these elections, the result has been the same: the throwing out of workers and ordinary people who had been hitherto in charge of the provinces and their replacement by MPs, middle class intellectuals or business people.

The Harare province had successfully rejected the idea of elections, arguing that they had mandate as they had been endorsed by the districts and were also based on elected ZCTU regions when the MDC was first formed. They further argued that it was dangerous to change the provincial teams, which had spearheaded the successful parliamentary elections, so near the presidential elections. They challenged the national executive itself for either having been elected through a fraudulent process at the congress through which the interim leadership had prevented at least half the positions from being contested for or were still co-opted like the right-wing economic secretary, Eddie Cross.

Unlike Bulawayo, where the middle classes had, through tribalism, successfully smashed the working class dominance, Harare was more difficult because that is where the ZCTU structures had always been strongest and the center of the 1997 - 98 stayaways.

And this is what happened at the congress. After the "rebels" had been defeated, the national representatives were forced to declare the province elected by public acclamation.

But now the party general secretary, Welshman Ncube is still insisting that there were no elections and that elections must still be held. Why this insistence?

It is important for the povo to understand this. Some have cited reasons like power struggles in the party, including tribalism and that the intellectuals want to remove Tsvangirai as president so they take over. So their job is to defend their president.

But we disagree. The reality is that the leadership of the party is united in pushing for the restructuring of the provinces, although the former labour leaders, are afraid to come out in the open. Whilst indeed there are increasing power struggles amongst the leaders they are all united behind Tsvangirai, for they know that without him, they would lose.

Remember it is the ZCTU leadership, led by Tsvangirai himself who invited and imposed these very right wing middle classes from the NCA and FORUM Party into the interim

# is not Land or Rule of Law a It's capitalism!

sands or casualising them into contract workers.

Nhamo ye vashandi, vemumaruwa, vasingashandi nevadzidzi imwe - i capitalism. In particular that as their system goes into crisis not just in Zimbabwe, but internationally the capitalists will seek to get out of it by making the poor pay even more, including even by their blood as we see the American and European ruling class prepare to do now, taking advantage of the bombings of the World Trade Centre in the USA. They will wage war on the poorest of countries to divert attention from the growing international capitalist crisis and create new demand for the recovery of capitalism just like they have done in previous world and regional wars.

And their local puppets will do the same here. ZANU (PF) will try and use the land to divide the peasant from the worker and manipulate them not to see that their main enemy today are the giant agriculture capitalist companies and the capitalist system.

MDC, in its desperate attempt to replace ZANU (PF) as the servants of the rich, will downplay the real problem of land hunger but instead will lie to the urban poor that the real problem is ZANU (PF) and the lack of rule of law - but not the bosses who are paying their workers starvation wages or raising prices of goods like they are mad or the IMF inspired privatisation free market policies that are leaving the student starving and thousands of gov-

ernment out of work.

The British and American imperialists will gladly use both puppets - saying in one breath in Abuja "land is at the core of the crisis" and in another in the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Bill, "lack of rule of rule law" is the problem.

All these representatives of the rich care about is that ordinary people do not realise that capitalism is the real problem that is causing hunger and poverty. And that capitalism and the politicians it uses would not last a day longer if the worker, the unemployed, the housewife, the student and the peasant instead of fighting separate and individualized struggles instead unite in an anti-capitalist united front, in Zimbabwe, regionally and internationally, against the bosses and their governments using not useless institutions like parliament or the courts or so-called heroic leaders but instead relied on their own mass action or self activity of strikes, demonstrations, riots that attack the system where it hurts the most - the source of profits and taxes - the point of production.

This is why the most urgent task of today is Operation Nzara - Izinwala - the united action of all working people, globally, to stop the savage attacks on us by the government and the capitalists. Bring the spirit of Seattle and Genoa to Harare!

## the poor are being thrown out

national executive at the 11 September 1999 launch of the party. It is these people who now head all the key positions in the secretariat and travel with Tsvangirai abroad - the ordinary leaders in the provinces or national executive or even the worker MPs are never included - so why expect such leaders now to start defending the poor?

The truth is that the former labour leaders share the same ideological values with the middle classes: the removal of ZANU (PF) and their ascendancy into power only to deepen Mugabe's ESAP including privatisation as Chiluba did in Zambia. This is shown in the recently launched MDC economic programme, which has been massively welcomed by the bosses and the IMF. Since 1992 the ZCTU leaders have in fact supported such ideas, or "social partnership" as shown in their 1994 "Beyond ESAP" document.

The role of the ordinary worker MPs is not surprising. As the MDC has moved massively to the right it, like ZANU (PF) has come under the control of the rich, who use their money to bribe the masses with "projects" and beer. The ordinary MPs have no such money and have to rely on the richer middle class MPs who are also the ones with access to the donors, and in return they have to support the programmes of such people which includes the removal of the poor from influential positions in the party to be replaced by the MPs themselves or their own puppets. Behind the Harare worker MPs lie the more sinister power of the richer middle class MPs and their capitalist financiers.

If we are to move forward, then such forces have to be smashed. Harare has shown the way. They must now reject any new elections. If the general secretary insists on calling for them, then the province must mobilize the masses from all the districts to come to the venue and teach the right wing middle classes a lesson once and for all.

But that is not enough. Unless the poor and ordinary people start educating themselves on where their party has come from, where it is going and why the rich have taken over, then they will fall into the same tragedy as the university students who were duped at the congress by some of these middle class leaders to fight their own natural allies, the youths and workers of the districts and instead to support the very same persons whom they fought at the NCA Assembly and who are pushing for privatisation.

Just like the middle class MPs hold such seminars, so must the province and districts now start doing the same at their meetings rather than just to do slogans and rumour mongering. Meetings must now be dedicated to training members not only on how to remove ZANU (PF) but also how to fight the bosses and IMF and the middle class - bourgeois enemies within who are no different from ZANU (PF) as servants of the rich.

NCA DRAFT CONSTITUTION -

## Demand Bread & Butter Issues!

**T**HE Drafting Committee of the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) met on 15 September to come up with the final draft of the constitution. The draft will then be released to the public for two months for debate, with adoption being done on 1 December at an NCA All Stakeholders' Conference, and then submitted to government. If it refuses to initiate a new constitution-making process based on the draft, the NCA has said it will initiate mass action.

The ISO delegation at the meeting submitted written proposals based on certain principles. A constitutional process, reduced to the basics, is about how the resources of society are to be distributed and what political and legal formations are created to guarantee such order. The history of constitutional processes has been that constitutions have been used to ensure that the resources of society is monopolized by elite minorities, in terms of class, race and gender to the exclusion of the toiling masses, who produce such wealth. Dictatorial constitutional and political formations were created to protect this order. This was so with the establishment of Rhodes' Southern Rhodesia in 1890 and remains so under Mugabe.

If the masses are to be heard, two things are necessary. Firstly the subordination of private property and profit to social human needs like jobs, housing, health, education and land.

Secondly to realize true democracy and corruption by ensuring that real power remains with the masses rather than elites whether in the form of politicians, traditional chiefs, the elderly, lawyers and other professional classes through mechanisms like a uni-chamber parliament, the right of passing a vote of no confidence in representatives (recall) and the right to rise up, including the right to bear arms, against dictatorial governments.

The NCA draft goes further than previous drafts in recognizing some of these principles, although ultimately it still seeks the protection of the interests of the rich and the propertied at the expense of the masses. The meeting adopted the ISO proposal that were 50% of voters who voted for an MP sign a petition of no confidence such MP loses his or her seat, but only partially accepted our proposal for the right of rebellion against dictatorial regimes, including the right to bear arms. The draft now provides for the right of citizens to uphold and defend the constitution, but not that to bear arms. This was seen as too radical. Yet every bourgeois house in Borrowdale has at least one firearm, whilst the bosses have access to well equipped private armies called security companies. It is the working people who have no access to arms.

Other good points include inclusion of the right to strike, to fair labour standards including a living wage; to housing, education, health care, food, water, and the rights of children, women, war veterans and farmworkers' rights when a farm is acquired by the state. The draft also states that one third of the government budget must be allocated to the fulfilment of the social rights. Judges of the higher courts can also be removed by parliament.

However, there are still major areas of weakness. The one third allocation of the budget to social and economic rights is not enough. We had argued for two thirds and in addition the imposition of specific levies on bosses to fund education, health, housing, rural development and subsidies for basic goods and services like food and transport. The bosses must pay for the crisis of their system. It is meaningless to grant all these social and economic rights if the means for their fulfillment are not adequately provided for in the constitution.

Secondly, the draft gives too much protection to bosses' property. Bosses make profits by exploiting workers, so there is no need to give them special constitutional protection, as is being done by the draft, which like the imperialist 1979 Lancaster House Constitution, only permits for compulsory land acquisition if "fair and equitable compensation is paid within a reasonable time." ISO strongly objected to this clause demanding that all land be nationalized and no compensation be paid to the farmers, with the only compensation to be paid being to farmworkers, and were supported by ZAPU, Left Wing, DP and ZINASU, although the majority opposed them. It would be a tragedy indeed if this position was carried through for it a very retrogressive step when Mugabe has already amended the constitution to state that no compensation should be paid to the farmers for the land unless the former colonial power Britain pays. The British ruling class and the Commercial Farmers Union after Abuja have now accepted the Mugabe constitutional amendment saying Britain has responsibility - yet some want to be more British than the British themselves, arguing that money that should be used to fund health, education, dams etc should be diverted to pay such farmers, most of whom after all have already been compensated a thousand times over by colonialism through the robbery of our ancestors' land, colonial taxes and cheap labour of chibharo.

The position in the draft is meant to appease the western and local capitalist funders of civic society groups, by selling out the peasantry. The tragedy would be that in a situation where Mugabe is already distributing land with the blessing of the farmers and the British ruling class, it would be impossible to go and sell a constitutional document which offers less rights than the current one. If we are serious then we have to go beyond Mugabe by in fact stating all land, agriculture or otherwise and everything on it, shall be nationalized without compensation, other than land used for personal accommodation.

On the issue of democracy, the draft entrenches in a number of provisions undemocratic values to benefit conservative or elitist interests. In particular it retains the concept of a Senate in which that old conservative and discredited institution, chiefs, are given disproportionate power; in which the young adults are not allowed despite being of voting age, just as they are prevented from running for presidential office. Whilst stating that it stands for the rights of women and equality of all human beings, the draft does not provide for full and free abortion rights and facilities for women neither does it provide for the rights of gays and lesbians. It imposes Christian religious values on society by stating that the constitution recognizes the "supremacy of God." In a modern society, if we are to avoid religious fundamentalism like the Taliban, what has to be protected is the right to worship or not to worship of all persons.

We believe the above are important areas that have to be looked at in the draft as we approach the NCA 1 December constitutional conference and call on other groups and progressives to support such positions.

# Stop the War on Our Colleges & Universities

The ZANU (PF) government on behalf of the rich and IMF continues its war against the children of the poor. As the universities opened in August, students were hit with a massive 3 000% tuition – accommodation increments, whilst pay out was effectively frozen. After major demonstrations in Bulawayo and Harare the system tried to bribe the students by a paltry \$5 000 loan.

To divided the students, the colleges are going to be hit next year.

As the students have responded, including in a joint demonstration outside parliament with some striking workers on 29 August and on 20 September the government has reacted viciously. The new education minister, S. Mbengegi announced to parliament that his government had no intention of reversing the privatisation programme and in fact intended deepening it by removing even the little support being given to the students, "because only 25% of students were benefiting, and others paying for themselves."

At the University of Zimbabwe at least five student leaders have been suspended for leading the demonstrations, including ZINASU general secretary, T. Chimedza and I. Mupara, the SEC president being expelled.

The government is using the stick and carrot. They have

promised students loans run by banks. This is just for the likes of UZ chairman G. Gono's CBZ to make money out of poor students, just like they have made millions from NOCZIM and the tendering of catering.

Students must reject the loan business. Once they accept the principle they are done for. The money might come for a year or two then dry up just like the Social Dimensions Fund (SDF) funds dried up in the early 1990s. Such schemes are unsustainable in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries like Zimbabwe. Even in the advanced capitalist countries students are fighting against such schemes because of the massive debt burden they end up with. Here you will be lucky if you get a job, with your parents' meager belongings ending up being auctioned by the banks – just like schools do today with parents who default on levies.

The way forward is for students to unite across universities and colleges, link up with workers in an anti-neoliberal united front – Operation Nzara – Indlala – and strike together at the same time, demanding that the forthcoming national budget provide adequate funding for education just like it must for health, transport, food subsidies. Administration buildings and ministry offices must be occupied until victory. Demand the immediate reinstatement of all expelled and suspended students!

## STUDENTS AGAINST PRIVATISATION

# Build the SAPs

As students engage in these massive battles they must learn from history. Previous battles have foundered on lack of ideological clarity – and waging of individualized battles.

To move forward we require ideological clarity and unity. The enemy of the students today, just like it is for their parents the workers and peasants, is the capitalist system, which when in crisis like now imposes austerity economic programmes, including privatisation, supported globally by the IMF, called neoliberalism, which make the poor pay for the crisis in the bosses' system.

The servants of the rich who implement such programmes, are ruling governments like ZANU (PF) – and where these become too unpopular the rich resort to the opposition parties, as happened in Zambia with MMD and as the MDC hopes to be in Zimbabwe.

But as the battles of Genoa, Seattle, the 1997 – 98 stayaways show, if the oppressed and exploited unite on class lines they can take on the system and beat it. But we won't learn this from the class rooms where ruling class ideas are predominantly taught or from the SRCs which are usually dominated by cowardly, corrupt and careerist student officials, but only from autonomous student ideological clubs, as were the student clubs at UZ in 1988 - 89 like SAS and Society for Modern Scientific Thought, which provided the engine power for the mass student revolts of that era. In such clubs student activists meet regularly to discuss the political economy of oppression and exploitation and how to fight it.

Such clubs have now emerged in various universities and colleges in towns like Harare, Bulawayo, Gweru and Chinhoyi and are called Students Against Privatisation (SAPs) and are affiliated to ZINASU. SAPs are a united front of radical student activists and organisations, who share the burning desire to smash privatisation and neoliberalism but recognize that this can only be achieved by the united front of students with workers, peasants, the unemployed and the poor works in joint struggles.

We invite you to join us or if you want to know more about us write or phone to: PO Box 6758 Harare or Tel. 704209 or 091370554

By John Bomba, (SAPs National Co-ordinator.)

... from page 2 ...

This was the experience in Italy, Germany in the 1930s, in Chile under Pinochet in the 1970s. Here after the 1960s Zhii uprisings by workers against the colonial state, a semi-fascist regime was created led by Ian Smith's Rhodesia Front to stop the rising working class movement, leading to a civil war which cost over 40 000 lives. The same happened under Botha's National Party in South Africa in the mid 1980s.

Although not yet a fascist state, there are growing danger signs of this happening. Mugabe was the "good guy" for British and USA capitalism when he was implementing his state capitalist and later ESAP policies – but from end of 1997 when under pressure from below he started running away from these in particular when he turned to the land owners, the kith and kin of the imperialists, he became the "bad guy", and they seemed to have abandoned him for the "new kid on the block", the labour-backed MDC, forcing Mugabe to take even more desperate measures to survive.

As the presidential elections approach and the crisis of capitalism in Zimbabwe now reaching unprecedented levels, the clash between the working class, the students and the poor not only with the neoliberal Mugabe government but also the bosses increases – and should there be such sharp class conflicts, it cannot be ruled out that the Mugabe government will not resort to full fascist measures like the white middle classes did under the Rhodesia Front in the early 1960s to save not only ZANU (PF) but also the inter-

ests of the bosses and rich. Already leading members of the party like Mutasa and war veterans leaders have declared that ZANU (PF) will go back to war if it loses.

And when it does that it cannot be ruled out that the big capitalists and British and USA imperialists will not only abandon the MDC but actively support the Mugabe government as the most experienced tried and tested suppresser of workers and the poor. Already the Abuja Agreement shows movement in that direction.

### Way Forward

Only the working class can prevent a capitalist state like Mugabe's transforming itself into a fascist one to suppress not only the working classes but also society in general. Workers have to fight the possibility of fascism because they need breathing space to organize themselves, which can only be provided by a reformist bourgeois parliamentary state, where the poor should have the freedom to criticize the government without fear or go on strike or organize into trade unions or political parties.

But as Trotsky argued as fascism approached in Germany, the working class and socialists cannot do it alone. They and their organisations have to unite with other progressive groups in society in what are called united fronts to smash fascism – although they must not liquidate themselves in such alliances but "march separately and strike together." These are the questions the working class must be clear about and in the end working class acts shall decide where and Zimbabwe shall go.

## where we stand

### SOCIALISM

Capitalism is a system of exploitation which generates inequality, crisis and war. Although workers create society's wealth, it is controlled by the ruling class for its own selfish interests.

Socialism can only be built when the working class takes control of social wealth and democratically plans its production and distribution to meet human needs, not private profits. This will eliminate all class divisions in society.

Stalinist countries like China, Cuba and n. Korea, just like the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, are not socialist. They are a variant of capitalism called state capitalism, controlled by the state bureaucracy. We support the struggle of workers against every dictatorial Stalinist ruling class.

### SOCIALISM FROM BELOW

The working class, is the most powerful and key class in the struggle for socialism. We stand for the revolutionary alliance of workers with all other oppressed social classes in particular with peasants and the urban poor but under the leadership of the working class.

Socialism can only be attained by the mass self-activity of workers. We place emphasis on all methods of struggle which increase the confidence and unity of workers as class such as strikes and demonstrations.

We support trade unions as essential to the fight for workers' economic and political rights. To make the unions fight for workers' interests, ordinary union members must organise themselves independent of union officials.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

Reforms within the capitalist system cannot put an end to oppression and exploitation. Capitalism must be overthrown through a workers' revolution.

Contrary to what is said by the middle class opposition parties, institutions like parliament, the army, police and the courts are not neutral things that can just be taken over by workers. They are there to protect the ruling class against workers, peasants and the poor.

Reformists fight for reforms as an end in themselves, whilst we accept reforms only in so far as they increase the confidence of the working class in order to smash the entire capitalist system.

To pave the way to communism, the working class needs a new kind of state – a democratic workers state based on workers' councils and workers' militia.

### INTERNATIONALISM

Workers in every country are exploited by capitalism, so the struggle for socialism is global.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries and oppose everything that turns the workers of one country against those of another country, such as patriotism and nationalism.

We oppose imperialism and support all genuine national liberation movements. We oppose all immigration controls.

We are internationalists because socialism depends on spreading working class revolutions around the world.

### OPPOSITION TO OPPRESSION

Capitalism divided the working class using sexual, tribal, racial and national distinctions. The specially oppressed groups within the working class suffer the most under capitalism.

We oppose the oppression of women, blacks, minority tribes-ethnic groups, and lesbians and gays. We fight for real social, economic and political equality of women including access to safe, free abortion facilities. We call for an end to discrimination against gays and lesbians.

We support the right of all oppressed groups to organise for their own defence. Their liberation is essential to socialist revolution and impossible without it.

### REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a mass revolutionary socialist party. We are in the early stages of building such a party through involvement in the day-to-day struggles of workers, students and the oppressed. The International Socialist Organisation must grow in size and influence to provide leadership in the struggle for working class self-emancipation.

If you like our ideas and want to fight for socialism, then join us!

*Socialist Worker is your paper - Buy it, read it, sell it!*

Subscribe Today!

### Annual Rates

	Zimbabwe	Africa	Elsewhere
Student	Z\$40	US\$15	US\$20
Individual	Z\$65	US\$20	US\$30
Institution	Z\$100	US\$25	US\$50

### JOIN US!!

Help to build a fighting socialist alternative to the bankrupt parliamentary parties.

NAME:.....

ADDRESS:.....

.....

PHONE:.....DATE.....

Send this form to I.S.O. P.O. Box 6758, Harare or P.O. Box FM 727, Fama, Bulawayo or P.O. Box RMK 3 Rimuka Kadoma.

## workers speak out! Vashandi vanotaura! Omsebenzi sikhuluma!

Send your reports to the Editor, P.O. Box 6758, Harare by the 15 of every month or phone 091 370 554 or 704209

### Nurses & Doctors Strike

**T**HE just ended strike by Nurses and Doctors paralysed the medical system. Yet while the government claimed the strike was causing deaths, the government itself refused to deal with the wage demands.

**Instead, while the strike action was on, the government announced the finalisation of the commercialisation of government medical stores as it squandered billions on its continuing war in the DRC and in importing police riot vehicles from Israel.**

The public health delivery system has totally collapsed with there being no drugs in large hospitals like Harare Southern (Gomo) as the government continues its war on the poor and workers. The workers in this sector have also seen meagre wage rises.

While the government claims that people die when medical workers go on strike, thousands more die as a result of the non-functioning health delivery system.

This is the result of capitalist policies which demand that governments stop funding social services and divert the money to buying arms and military interventions to protect and enlarge the bosses' properties as in DRC.

All workers in all social sectors have been fighting government for better wages and working conditions. But each "solution" from the government and bosses has been short-term. This clearly shows that we shall continue suffering as long as capitalism exists which calls for profits first. Capitalism is the real root of the crisis but this can be done away with if we, as workers, unite and fight our common enemy.

The fate of nurses and doctors does not deserve to be tackled by them only because it affects everyone. Every worker must stand up and support them and demand subsidised drugs in hospitals. We must also demand that (1) every pregnant worker is given free drugs to stop the transmission of the HIV virus to the baby, (2) the commercialisation of government medical stores is reversed, (3) government set aside foreign currency to import drugs and (4) everyone who earns below \$ 16,000 or is unemployed gets free medical treatment.

Now is the time for us to fight for our rights. The government, and the bosses who control them, are not affected by this because they go to private or overseas doctors and can afford the drugs. This problem affects workers only so only we can solve it. Now is the time we should have zero tolerance for capitalism.

Let us begin this fight by uniting government and "private sector" workers by convening outside parliament for a new harmonised labour act so we can jointly confront the common enemy.

by Mike Sambo

## Rank and File Movement: CWUZ's Young Workers.

Faced with massive casualisation of labour, retrenchments, contractual employment and diminishing job security, what should we do as workers? Trade union leaders have been blamed for failing to address these issues. Some have even been booted out of office. But is it really a question of leadership? It would be folly to lay the blame on the leaders. Workers themselves should shoulder most of the blame. There is usually very minimal worker participation in trade union activities, rendering the leadership powerless.

In a landmark move, the Commercial Workers' Union of Zimbabwe (CWUZ) has taken steps to address the above-mentioned concerns. The union leadership has moved to stimulate rank and file self activity through what is called the Young Workers. This is an organ within the union comprising all workers below the age of 35 years, which seeks to articulate the rights and interests of the young and future workers given such concerns. It is imperative that this is done in view of the crisis the capitalist system is facing today. Of notable interest is the fact that the ISO had also taken similar steps by helping militant workers to form RAF (Rank And File) committees at shopfloor level, to coordinate with the union leadership.

Workers must understand that the trade union is not the leadership or office staff but the members, the workers themselves. So when we accuse the trade union of being a failure we are merely referring to ourselves. Trade union leadership cannot succeed without the

workers' participation. Let us take this opportunity therefore to reinforce the efforts of the CWUZ by participating in the Young Workers' organisation. Every individual worker must take it upon himself to go to the union offices to acquire more information. Workers' committees should also play a pivotal role in this process.

The Labour Bill will be going to parliament in a few weeks and the Young Workers' concerns are some of the major issues contained in it. It is therefore incumbent upon every one of us to take drastic measures to ensure that the amendments put forward by the ZCTU are adopted and passed. The fundamental issue is for us to UNITE in the process. Splinter unions will not help but worsen the situation. Neither will political parties. We must be careful not to be used for other people's means. Workers must also not have any illusions about a change of government for the WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE goes (if not INTENSIFIES) beyond that. Thus we have to mobilize amongst ourselves with the full knowledge that nobody is going to grant the workers freedom but the workers themselves. The challenge facing the CWUZ leadership now is for them to go all out and, for starters, educate the workers on the contents of the Labour Bill, and help chart the way forward.

Qina Msebenzi Qina!

T. ZIKHALI.

### Struggles in Printing Industry

Workers in the Printing, Packaging and Newspaper industry are represented by the Zimbabwe Graphical Workers Union (ZGWU). But the union "leaders" have, over a number of years, betrayed the workers they are supposed to represent.

**This has resulted in over 90% of union members withdrawing their subscriptions to the union.**

All workers in the large and established companies in the industry have shunned membership of, and payment of subscriptions to, the union due to the totally incompetent union "leaders". These workers are at companies that include Natprint, Saitrama, Hunyani, Interpak, The Herald, Tregers Plastics, CPL, Daily News and Statprint. In a desperate bid to cling to their leadership posts, the union leaders are trying to get support and subscriptions from small new companies in the industry. This is where workers are not aware of the union leaderships history of failure to sustain their small office in Caspi House thus destroying the purpose of trade unionism.

Among the ZGWU executive's failures are: (1) Failure to bargain on behalf of members and negotiate for better working conditions in line with internationally recognised standards. (2) Continued use of the bankrupt colonial era constitution of the defunct Graphical Association. (3) Failure to represent workers on the smallest rights regarding work grades, contracts of employment, summary dismissals of workers by the bosses, and the non-consultation of workers before collective bargaining. (4) Failure to observe even the bankrupt constitution in regard to elections, annual general meetings, apprenticeship training, financial accountability and transparency, and terms of office. There are several other reasons to list but this will comprise a volume close to a small novel.

An interim committee composed of, and chosen by, workers committee members from various companies in the industry has been put in place. This committee is coordinating workers through holding meetings. Its task is to facilitate the realisation of workers demands to establish a realis-

tic, informed and powerful representation at trade union level. This interim committee has formed structures and the basis for the formation of principles that will guide workers in their struggle and some are summarised below. Workers in the industry have realised the need for an immediate need for a revolution. Workers committees have held a series of meetings and have resolved to take a new dimension.

Withdrawals of union subscriptions is not a solution but detrimental because in-house negotiations have a legal restraint in case of a binding collective bargaining agreement being in existence. Our resolution is to remove the bankrupt union leaders and put in place dynamic, zealous progressive and vibrant leaders to co-ordinate the fight over the worsening impoverishment of workers in the industry. Trade unionism is the only tool for workers unity and we can speak with one voice to influence decisions that affect us be it at company, national or parliamentary level. This is the reason for circulating petitions calling for the ousting of the union leaders.

**We have called for a meeting of workers from Harare, Gweru and Bulawayo to be held on 29 September in Harare.**

The need it to promote workers power from shopfloor level. We believe that no force on earth can silence the voice of the workers because we are the producers in the economy. Workers in the printing industry are re-building our union to brace for a fight against the capitalist selfish bosses who rate profit before health, safety and lives of the worker.

Old style leadership will not do in these times of hardship. If raw material prices go up then bosses pay. If workers demand a better wage then the bosses threaten to close down. For how long shall we stand and watch events destroy us workers.

No to splinter unions! No to workers division! We speak with one voice! **Shinga Mshandi Shinga! Qina Msebenzi Qina!**

H Masadza  
Interim Secretary General

### Struggles in engineering workers

**T**HIS year's ineffective wage and salary negotiations have seen massive uprisings amongst the workers. Basically NEC or union bargained effectively with the worker at heart. To say the truth this year negotiations were not supposed to be based on percentages but on the poverty datum line, the level at which a worker can sustain life under the current hardships.

This happened in most unions where unionists were beating their chests for having achieved a 100% increment, but that is 100% of peanuts. The final figure did not even reach half the poverty datum line. This very thing happened at NEWU. Of course union leaders managed percentage increment, which was a job well done, but considering what a worker was getting previously, life would become unsustainable for him. They managed to raise salaries from \$3000 to \$7050 per month, far below the \$14500 the ZCTU had called for. This means no joy for the worker in the engineering sector.

They also agreed to stagger the increments with \$8125 being the new minimum with effect from January 2002. Workers rose against this agreement considering the current rate of inflation. Even given the ZCTU's proposed \$14500 by January workers would need a cost of living adjustment. This saw workers from all engineering companies going on a rank and file organised strike demanding an amount of not less than \$10000 this year. This was supposed to be an indefinite strike which would continue until the bosses yielded to the workers' demands, unfortunately the bosses broke-off the strike. This they managed by firing the militant workers like at Craster International, which employs about 500 workers, where bosses locked up gates and fired nearly everyone. The rank and file activists in the Willowvale area then organised a solidarity meeting at Craster International to force the bosses to get back all the workers. However this was disrupted by riot who sealed off the area and prohibited anyone from assembling there. This resulted in workers resorting to bourgeois legality through the courts, but this is proving to be the wrong path given the length of time it might take. The only thing the workers can do to free themselves is to engage in self activity like massive mobilisation for an all out strike in the engineering sector. This would go on until all workers at Craster and other companies like Warup and Tandem are taken back to work.

By M.Sambo.

# Socialist Worker

## Bombings in the USA

# No to Bush's Drive to War!

**S**OCCIALIST WORKER shares the horror felt across the planet at the devastation and suffering unleashed in New York and Washington D.C on September 11, where 6000 people died. We condemn these acts of terrorism and we stand in solidarity with the working class in US particularly public sector workers and students who have borne the brunt of this atrocity. They have performed the most dangerous tasks in rescue.

But our solidarity with the victims should not blind us to the absolutely breathtaking hypocrisy of George W. Bush, Tony Blair, Ariel Sharon and other imperialist spokespeople and their lackeys like Mugabe in the always-accommodating capitalist media. It is not true to describe the outrage in the US as the greatest act of terror of all time. Many acts of governmental terror have far surpassed it.

While the world is hoping for peace, George Bush with

the support of Tony Blair and other leaders are already talking and preparing of unleashing a war that will claim lives of more innocent civilians in far greater numbers. The target is Afghanistan already wrecked by two decades of wars sponsored by the superpowers, in particular the USA itself which created, trained and equipped the Islamic fundamentalists who now run that country, the Taliban and Osama bin Laden, a spawns against the USSR-backed regime.

These bourgeois rulers are trying to use a horrific tragedy to advance their own agenda - to use a war abroad to crack down on democracy at home, most likely initially aimed against the growing anti-capitalist movement, which brought the world's rulers to a standstill in Genoa recently.

But even more sinister with the global economy going into recession, the world's rulers might push for war to create new demand, stop the slide into recession and

provide the motor engine for recovery as capitalists have done throughout the 20th century. Indeed capitalist governments throughout the west are taking advantage of the tragedy to dish out billions of dollars to various businesses like the airlines, even as such business sack thousand of workers. Yet they have refused to commit a fraction of that amount to cancel the murderous 3rd world debt or to fight AIDS.

So we call on the workers, students and poor people of this country to join other working people to oppose the mobilisation for war by the international imperialists, backed by their various 3rd world lackeys including those in ZANU (PF) who have already rushed to show solidarity with their USA counterparts and are likely to offer more hoping to avoid the impending Zimbabwe Democracy sanctions.

If the war starts let's mobilise for demonstrations at the USA and UK embassies also denouncing the IMF and World Bank.

## THE UNIVERSITY OF WORKERS AND STUDENTS

# Marxism 2001: 24 November 2001 Crisis of Capitalism - Todya Marara Here?

*Panel of speakers include socialists, trade unionists, students from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia and Ghana and UK giving views on: -*

- ◆ The Crisis of Capitalism - What is the Socialist Alternative? ◆ NCA: Whither the Constitutional Movement?
- ◆ The anti-capitalism movement - From Seattle - Genoa to Southern Africa?
- ◆ The Land Question in Southern Africa ◆ Trade Unions and Politics: - Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa
- ◆ Trotsky Speaks: - Permanent Revolution ◆ Women in Struggle: Zimbabwe, South Africa and Zambia
- ◆ Revolutions in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Lessons from the Past: Russia 1905; Spain 1936; Chile 1973; Iran 1978 - 79.
- ◆ The Rise and Fall of Stalinism: Why did the "Communist Bloc" Collapse? ◆ Student struggles: Past and Present
- ◆ The 2002 Presidential Elections and Beyond: Can a revolution occur in Zimbabwe?

\* Entrance Fee: \$30 - employed: \$15 unemployed and students " Accomodation available for those outside Harare

## 8.00 am -6.00 pm at Stodart Hall, Mbare

further details contact: Marxism Team 2001 P.O. Box 6758 Harare, Tel: 704209/091370554