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# Socialist Worker

**MOBILISE FOR 15  
FEBRUARY DEMON-  
STRATION AGAINST  
DICTATORSHIP &  
NEO-LIBERALISM**

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**crisis in zimbabwe**

## No to dictatorship!

## No to neo-liberalism!

**T**HE repression against the opposition activists in Zimbabwe continues to rise. Since the signing of the massively repressive so-called anti-terrorist law, the Public Order and Security Act (P.O.S.A) by Mugabe on the 18th January we have witnessed further crack down on democracy - harassment, disruption of opposition meetings, beatings and arresting of activists, journalists and socialists.

Socialist Worker totally condemns the introduction of semi-fascist laws by Zanu - PF government. Mugabe and his Zanu PF cronies are doing this for political survival in the forth coming presidential elections

The Zanu PF government is now preparing for a multi front attack on democracy and is preparing a fight in the elections and streets. Cases of political violence are on the increase - Border Gezi trained youths and soldiers have caused havock in the townships. The Army Commander issued a statement early this

month that the army is not prepared to accept a President who was not part of the liberation struggle. This statement

is meant to give confidence to Zanu (PF) militias and the war veterans of fighting since they have already said the same.

*general strike is the answer to rigging and violence*

# international news

## ANTI - NEO-LIBERAL DEMONSTRATIONS IN ARGENTINA

**A**RGENTINA is another example of the havoc wreaked by capitalism and is also a showpiece of what the people can do through their collective power. In response to a biting economic crisis the people of Argentina booted five presidents out in one week.

Argentina has a crippling debt of \$US140 billion and massive unemployment emanating from a serious economic depression. **In the middle of such a stinking crisis the IMF advocated further attacks on the poor by calling for cuts in government spending on social services and slashing of government workers salaries and pensions.**

The country has been rocked by massive demonstrations from which important lessons can be learnt. The most important lesson from Argentina is that power lies with the workers. The events in Argentina demonstrate we do not need ballot boxes to remove a brutal government.

The state tried in vain to crush the uprising by mobilizing for violence with the police and the army brutalizing demonstrators. But this did not dent the spirit of the people - the response to the shootings and killing was massive. Millions marched in the streets banging empty pots and pans as a sign of their hunger. Workers, students, the unemployed and other groups were all on the same side of the barricades with government institutions occupied, sellout trade union leaders denounced, Parliament besieged and the presidential palace and ministers' residences occupied. Demonstrators attacked shops and seized food, banks, the source of worker's poverty, were set alight.

Met with such resilience from the masses, the first president packed up and the government collapsed. Four followed in quick succession.

It is important to realize that the struggle to end hunger is not just a question of overthrowing one government after the other. The task of the day must be the smashing of capitalism. The failure of consecutive

presidents to bring food on the table must eventually lead to the challenging of the whole system.

The weakness of the uprising in Argentina has been its failure to culminate into a class struggle. A battle between labour and its allies on the one hand and capitalism must be fought under the ideological leadership of the left. The left has a challenge to channel the anger in the streets into a strong force to defeat capitalism. Neo-liberalism cannot provide change that millions of people seek and it has to be crushed.

A mere glance of the groups in the streets exposes its inherent weaknesses. There were thousands of workers and alongside them were also large numbers of the unemployed. There were also shopkeepers, street vendors, and small business people whose lives had been devastated by the economic crisis. Broadening the church were considerable numbers of the better off middle classes who felt threatened by government measures restricting how much they could withdraw from their bank accounts.

The presence of all these groups with conflicting interests dilutes the movement. This was even manifested in the slogans chanted in the streets, instead of challenging capitalism the root of the crisis, they ended on denouncing corrupt ministers and banks, while big businesses were not challenged. Nationalist doctrines that preach state and 'patriotic' employers intervention in the interest of the workers cannot end the crisis.

The only solution lies in an all out onslaught on capital; big businesses, the banks and IMF. For such a task need for revolutionary organization cannot be over emphasized. The bitterness in the streets must be linked with the collective power of the workers in the workplaces. Workers must struggle to take over centers for economic power from below and replace the anarchy of capitalism with democratic planning for the needs of the masses.

by Briggs J. Bomba

## CAN A COUP HAPPEN IN ZIMBABWE?

# Lessons from Nigeria 1994

**T**HE ARMY COMMANDER, GEN. V. ZINAVASHI, RECENTLY DECLARED THAT THE ARMY WOULD NOT ACCEPT AN MDC VICTORY. THIS AMOUNTS TO A VIRTUAL COUP DECLARATION. THESE STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN REPEATED BY OTHER ZINUPF OFFICERS. MUGABE HIMSELF HAS SAID "MDC WILL NEVER RULE THIS COUNTRY!" SHOULD WE TAKE THESE SERIOUSLY?

THE MDC LEADERS INCLUDING PRESIDENT, M. TSVANANGIRI ARE TELLING THE WORKERS AND THE YOUTH NOT TO WORRY. THEY HAVE FAITH THAT THE WEST WILL INTERVENE, WITH TSVANANGIRI REPEATEDLY CALLING FOR SANCATIONS. BUT THEY ARE WRONG. SINCE 1997 MUGABE HAS BEEN MILITARIZING THE ENTIRE STRIKE MACHINERY. THE PASSAGE OF POSA AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE BORDER GUARD MILITIA FORCES SHOW HOW SERIOUS THE REGIMES.

BELOW SOCIALIST WORKER OPINION MAY 2000 ARTICLE BY LUKE B. HUKA. LOOKING AT HOW SUCH A VICTORY WOULD BE BY THE FORMER MILITARY LEADERS ALLOWED THEM TO SMASH THE SINGLE DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN NIGERIA IN 1994.

ALTHOUGH military rule in Nigeria only ended in 1999, it could have been much earlier. In 1993 a massive democratic movement led by workers nearly succeeded in overthrowing the brutal military dictatorship of General Babangida but was sold out by the cowardly trade union leaders and middle class opposition parties.

By the late 1980s there was mounting pressure for democratic elections from a cross section of Nigerian society. The leading political parties that emerged to lead this movement although drawing workers and other segments of the poor were led by the rich classes, such as Chief Moshood Abiola, then one of the richest men in Africa.

As pressure increased Gen. Babangida was forced to call elections in 1994, although these were highly flawed designed to favour parties supported by the military. Abiola won although 70% of people did not vote.

Gen. Babangida refused to accept a win by Abiola and annulled the elections. Workers and the urban poor responded by massive spontaneous strikes and demonstrations in all the major towns demanding that Abiola be made president. The regime was shaken to its roots.

However, at that crucial moment the trade union leaders and the reformist leaders led by Abiola sold out. As strikes and riots swept the country Abiola called on the fighting to stop saying negotiations and international pressure must be given a chance. He refused to return to Nigeria personally and instead spent his time shuttling between Washington and London.

The leaders of the main trade union federation, the Nigerian Trades Union Congress followed the cowardly "advice" from Abiola. Scared they called off the strikes.

But the 50 000 member NUPENG workers union in the crucial oil industry struck solidly, continuing the strike for several days despite the betrayal by the TUC leaders.

But the die was cast. The sell - out by the TUC leaders and Abiola gave the military the breathing space they needed. The army re-organised with another coup taking place and Babangida replaced by Sanny Abacha, an even more ruthless rightwing soldier.

Abacha immediately instituted a ruthless crackdown in which hundreds of workers and activists were killed or jailed. The uprisings were suppressed and the army remained in power for another six years.

Abiola himself was detained and later died in July 1998 in prison, possibly murdered by the military. The jailed workers were only released in 1999, when military rule ended.

Workers in Zimbabwe must learn from this history. The working class must not leave the leadership of the democracy movement to the rich and their middle class lackeys, including reformist trade union leaders, who are cowards and have bankrupt ideas about talking to dictators rather than mobilizing to fight back.

The way forward is to build underground workers' militia and mobilize for an all-out general strike to smash the dictatorship.

# what we think

## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 2002 - THE CRISIS OF REFORMISM

With elections looming thousands of ordinary Zimbabweans are already disillusioned and have no interest in voting. 12 months after the MDChange became the official "opposition" in Parliament, the mood for change experienced in June 2000 has evaporated. The question that must be asked is why has this happened?

The answer lies in the power that Parliament has and the nature of reformist parties themselves like the MDC.

Firstly, Parliament has no real power. It has power in name only. The food shortages are the best example of this. When price controls were gazetted, food shortages began to occur. After a brief appearance, essentials are in short supply. Companies and farmers are hoarding foods and fertilisers on the controlled price list.

Parliament does not have the power to force capitalists to produce under certain profit margins. The bosses only reason for being in business is to make profits. This is why companies close down when they make losses or unacceptable levels of profits.

The state (government, Parliament, Police) exists to protect the interests of the bosses. That is why ZANU(PF) embarked on the ESAP programme. It benefits the bosses and their interests. ESAP was introduced without being debated in Parliament. That is also why they have passed the POSA and wanted to pass the Labour Relations Amendment Bill to smash strikes and stayaways.

When the bosses put up the prices of school uniforms, water, electricity, food, they do not consult Parliament. When workers are fired or when bosses refuse to employ permanent workers, bosses do so on their own without consulting anyone.

It is the unelected bankers, industrialists, share-holders who cause the economic mess that we are in. It is this insane chase for profits at the expense of workers welfares that causes unemployment and inflation. Parliament has no power to stop inflation or

retrenchments. Rather Parliament protects insane capitalism.

Secondly, parties like the MDC do not believe in workers power. The MDC is now openly a bosses party advocating bosses policies in its Bridge economic policy document. It calls for a more vicious type of ESAP where everything will be totally privatized including primary and secondary education.

Parliamentary parties do not want to do anything that causes bosses to lose profits. Parties, like MDC and ZANU(PF) want to be the managers of capitalism and to keep workers in place. They are agents of the bosses. This is why the MDC has come up with its bankrupt slogan, "Vota Mushandi Vota". This is why the Labour Bill is the only Bill that has failed to be debated in this parliament because both parties are afraid of the proposed amendments by organised labour which challenge their neoliberal agenda. Neither Tsvangirai or Mugabe are talking about the Labour Bill in their campaigns. Without being supported by mass action like a general strike, the Bill is not going to come before parliament.

The MDC does not want to fight for workers. During the debate on the POSA, the MDC made big concessions to ZANU(PF). This is because if the MDC comes to power it will need those same laws to oppress workers.

We in ISO do not believe in Parliament. Our member, Munyaradzi Gwisai, is in Parliament only to use it as a platform for propaganda for struggles outside that pigsty, not because we believe this talk shop has any power. We have used this house to publicise the struggle of workers such as the Labour Bill.

Our aim is to build an organization that intervenes in struggles as and when they happen so that these struggles be directed in the direction of workers victory over capitalism – workers power. If you believe in this struggle, join us.

*By Rosa Zulu*

## No to dictatorship! No to neo-liberalism!

*from page 1...*

Besides its campaign of terror, Zanu PF has now introduced semi-fascist laws to crush any resistance to this in a multi-faceted attack. (i) Denying free and fair elections by the amendments to the Electoral Act; (ii) Smashing press freedom, the right to demonstrate and assembly through the Public Order and Security Act and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Bill; (iii) The movement of resistance to Mugabe, Zanu PF and their neo-liberal policies was started in 1997 by strikes, demonstrations and stayaways of workers and students. Fearful of this power Mugabe has now thrown away the Labour Relations Amendment Bill and continue to outlaw all strikes and stayaways through his presidential powers. He has also privatised colleges and universities and expelled militant student activist leaders.

The only way to smash this two headed snake that Mugabe is creating is to attack it on all fronts at the same time, uniting all forces under attack in a democratic and transparent united front

without domination of any one group. We reject the gospel by MDC of peace and reliance on the courts and western sanctions.

The crisis that we are facing today has not only been caused by Mugabe but also by the IMF, World Bank i.e. U.S. and E.U sponsored neo-liberal agenda which has brought massive poverty to workers, students, the unemployed and ordinary people. We need to revive the tradition of 1997 - 1999 in dealing with this arrogance. It is obvious that parliament is a toothless dog and going to the courts will not achieve much as Chidyauusiku will be waiting for us there.

If we are to ensure that the struggle to remove Zanu PF dictatorship does not result in its replacement by just another set of puppets of imperialism as happened by Chiluba in Zambia we have to start now by combining the struggle against Zanu PF for political democracy with the struggle for economic emancipation of the working people against ESAP, neo-liberalism and imperialism. Join the demonstration against dictatorship and poverty on Friday 15 February 2002. *by Tafadzwa C.*

## CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE

Dear Comrades,

The Zimbabwe crisis throws important light on how neo-liberalism and tyranny happily co-exist and indeed sustain each other.

It demonstrates convincingly, if anyone still needed convincing, that a failure or refusal to learn from this and unify the struggle for democracy with the struggle against ESAP policies dilutes, disorients and ultimately can derail opposition to ZANU-PF & Mugabe. This disorientation and derailment has been the sad story of 'democratic' opposition movements in Africa since the otherwise inspiring pro-democracy wave at the beginning of the 1990's. Once the 'main enemy', i.e. brutal authoritarian incumbents (like Mugabe) was removed and the 'main goal' thereby 'realised', it seemed impossible to deepen and develop the movement further without threatening the weak foundations of the newly-won 'victory'.

Anyone who wants to understand the retarded development of an anti-capitalist movement in Africa and the protracted under-development of the social movement generally must learn and constantly remind themselves and others of this tragedy. In Ghana, this historical deadweight is playing out as farce – with the electoral victory over the Rawlings incumbency apparently 'necessitating' the abandonment of any democratic opposition to the new government in order not to 'threaten democracy'.

Under the MDC's problematic leadership – characterised, by its embrace of neo-liberalism and alliance with international capital – this history is tragically about to repeat itself in Zimbabwe.

But tragedy is only one of the possible outcomes. The resolute pro-democracy position, combined crucially with implacable anti-capitalism of the advanced minority of Zimbabwe opposition forces (such as ZINASU elements and the ISO) and the unmistakable class instincts of the rank and file workers who are agitating for mass action can lead the way to other, more positive outcomes. We find it instructive that this democracy-from-below element is already exerting 'practical leadership' on the stance of the NCA.

We are encouraged by your resoluteness and, just as much, by your tactics – fighting for rank-and-file workers leadership within a radicalising

united front milieu that is not prostrating itself before the MDC's leadership (as exercised through its parliamentary/electoral focus, its media presence, its control of the Labour bureaucracy or its Popular Front politics). Your comment about the economic situation provides objective proof that the brunt of attack is being borne by ordinary workers. This confirms and justifies the vital and indispensable role of those – like yourselves – who are consistent fighters for the political and social leadership of that class.

Even whilst 'MDC Ndizvo' is degenerating into only a 'half-truth' (or even much less), 'Shinga Mushandi Shinga' is just as surely being elevated into the pre-eminent and defining (even if still obscured) truth.

We completely agree that fighting for workers mass action and independence within the united front, is the key not only to genuine successes of the opposition, but also to the political leadership of the workers and to any regroupment that will occur within the democratic opposition and the social movement.

We would very much welcome more information and analysis on the situation. You must be terribly busy and stretched but it may also be that it is precisely this cauldron that requires the comrades to spell out in as comprehensive a fashion as possible the situation, nature, role and inter-relationships of the class forces and political fractions in Zimbabwe today. Now, we imagine that such literature must be almost 'life-and-death' necessity for the workers, both on the land and in the factories. We too and other socialist-internationalists will benefit immensely from such a work (and can be a fund-raising tool for you). You may already have developed such an article, the elements are certainly present in the various issues of your inspiring Socialist Worker newspaper..

You've described the much more difficult environment for producing and distributing SW, but we are also reminded of the analysis and critique (by Cliff, Harman & others) of the failure of the Portuguese left as regards their publications (among others) during the upheavals of 1974-75.

Once again, we salute you all! ISO (Z) has long been a model of inspiration for us in Ghana. We wholly endorse Callinicos' statement about your unparalleled role in inserting and developing revolutionary socialism within the workers movement in Zimbabwe and Africa.

In solidarity & with warmest fraternal greetings,  
**Alhassan Adam & Gyekye Tanoh**  
for: Coordinating Committee, ISO (Gh)

### NEOLIBERAL IMPERIALISM

## Zambia: Bitter Lessons for Zimbabwean workers

**A**S global capitalism is deeply entrenching itself within our society the poor sink deeper into poverty whilst the rich "struggle" to pull their growing tummies along.

Zambia is one country that has been hit by neoliberalism. The elections in which the MMD just narrowly retained the presidency through L. Mwanawasa shows that.

Mwanawasa, Chiluba's blue-eyed boy won despite the fact that over 70% of those voting voted against him. The opposition only lost because it split its vote with over 10 opposition candidates running. But the MMD was soundly defeated in the parliamentary and municipal elections, showing the masses' anger with ten years of a vicious neoliberal ESAP programme under the corrupt Chiluba regime.

#### **Kaunda started neoliberalism**

The MMD rose on the basis of working people's rebellions against the neo-liberal and authoritarian agenda of the UNIP regime. During his 27 year reign Kenneth Kaunda ruled Zambia with an iron fist. He outlawed all political parties, other than his UNIP, which enabled them to plunder the country of over US\$60 million through the nationalised manufacturing and copper industries (INDECO and ZCCM).

In 1981, as the economy got into severe crisis as copper prices dropped, the government introduced an IMF – inspired ESAP programme. Within 10 years Zambia had accumulated \$US 8 000 million in foreign debt whilst inflation was running at 400%.

Economic hardships between 1983 and 1989 forced isolated struggles by students and some workers, especially the miners. But when the price of mealie meal shot up by 100% in July 1989 there erupted massive strikes, riots and demonstrations by workers, students and the unemployed, very much like the ones we saw in Zimbabwe in 1997. Over 30 people were killed by the army but this did not stop the rising movement led by the workers, especially the miners led by Chiluba, who was also the leader of the Zambia Congress of Trade unions.

The MMD, led by Chiluba, emerged out of these struggles, winning the first multi-party elections in 1990. This signaled the emergence of a precedent that shook the other dictators on the continent and one that could

have laid the foundations for a massive fight-back against neoliberal capitalism in Africa.

#### **Chiluba was no different**

But ten years and two terms of Chiluba did not provide the salvation that workers and the poor hoped for. As the UNIP ship sunk, its chefs like Mwanga and Tembo fled and joined MMD, were Chiluba warmly embraced them, sidelining trade unionists. Under the guidance of the west, who also quickly embraced the MMD, Chiluba started an even more vicious ESAP programme than Kaunda selling off to multinationals virtually all the parastatals including the copper mines.

Not surprisingly poverty grew massively, as did corruption. Today Zambia is one of the poorest countries in the world ranking 143 out of 175 on the global scale. 80% of Zambians live in absolute poverty. Today Zambia's key export earner, the copper mines, face extinction as their owner Anglo American has announced plans to sell them leaving over 10 000 miners starvation and the economy collapse.

It is anger against this betrayal and poverty that made so many people turn against not only Chiluba but anyone else in the opposition who was tainted by the MMD brush like Generals Tembo and Miyanda, who had successfully led the revolt against Chiluba when he tried to impose himself for a third term.

However, the tragedy of Zambia like throughout Africa, has been the lack of a revolutionary socialist party, that could have lent leadership and direction to the massive struggles against neoliberalism and dictatorship. In the absence, disillusionment and apathy has reigned leaving the door open to other middle class neoliberals like Mwanawasa and Mazoka, to take the masses for another jolly ride like Chiluba did and as Tsvangirai promises to do in Zimbabwe.

The key imperative in the region therefore today is the construction of a regional socialist movement uniting the workers of the region, especially Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa in combined struggles against capitalism, the root cause of misery and dictatorship.

By Fela J.Z. Sibagobe



# Mugabe is no friend of workers and peasants – he introduced ESAP!

**F**ACED with critical elections Mugabe has declared that he has abandoned ESAP, which was introduced in 1988, reversing the state capitalist or command economy that had been in this country since the 1930s and falsely labeled “socialism” by Mugabe after 1980.

ESAP entailed removing protection of local companies from the giant multinationals, devaluation of the currency, privatisation of parastatals to remove subsidies and price controls on basic things used by the masses and peasants like education, health and agricultural goods and services. Allowing bosses to fire and retrench workers at will or turn them into contracts. Workers were not allowed to go on strike. The market was to rule. This is what is called neo-liberalism and was being pushed by the global capitalists led by the IMF throughout the world as “globalisation.”

There was no democracy in the introduction of ESAP. Neither the masses nor the rubber stamp parliament were consulted, but were promised that whilst they might suffer in the first few years of ESAP, things would grow much rosier later as a result of new investments, more exports, more jobs and lower inflation.

ESAP was imposed by a small clique of our rulers comprising ZANU (PF) chiefs like Mugabe, Bernard Chidzero and Eddison Zvobgo, local industrialists like then CZI president Eddie Cross (now MDC economics guru) and the international capitalists led by the IMF and World Bank. For his role Mugabe became a darling teaboy of the west, doing their errands during the Gulf War, Somalia and Kosovo and was duly rewarded with the Africa Freedom from Hunger Award.

## ESAP HAS BEEN ECONOMIC DISASTER

★ In 2001 the economy declined by –7% compared to 5% in the early 1980s whilst the external debt increased from 43.6% of GDP in 1991 to 80% in 1998.

★ In the period 1991 – 98, investment declined from 23.5% to 17.1% whilst export growth was a mere 2.1% against a target of 9% per annum. Interest rates sky-rocketed to over 60% benefiting only the banks but squeezing out industry thus manufacturing’s share of GDP in 1997 fell to less than 16% for the first time since 1960 compared to an average of 25% in the 1970-80s.

## THE MASSES HAVE PAID DEARLY FOR ESAP

The above failure of ESAP has resulted in the most severe decline in the living conditions of workers and the peasants in the history of this country, which is why Mugabe is hated so much today. 86% of Zimbabweans are now officially categorised as poor and 61% as very poor as opposed to less than 47% before ESAP. Inflation is at 112% compared to less than 20% before. The consumer price index for food rose from 112,6% in 1991 to 515,9% in 1996.

Unemployment is over 70% with 200 000 jobs massacred were it was 26% in 1984. Today 8 out of 10 workers in Harare are contract workers. Real wages have collapsed with the current minimum wage of industrial workers less than \$7 000 a month where the Poverty Datum Line is over \$20 000. The health sector has collapsed with one in four Zimbabweans AIDS / HIV positive.

Peasants have not been spared. The removal of credit and extension services and the abandonment of the centralised crop purchasing system has resulted in a massive drop in agriculture output and brought the food shortages we see today. This has been made worse by the movement to cash crops and failure of ZANU (PF) to distribute land to peasants. Thus the strategic grain reserves have declined from an average of 26% of total production in the 1980s to that of 20% in the 1990s.

**ONLY WORKING CLASS MASS ACTION CAN SMASH ESAP**

**ALTHOUGH** officially ended in 1995, ESAP continued under various names. Firstly as ZimPrest and after 2 000 as the New Millennium Economic Recovery Programme. Under the current budget the government promises to fast track privatisation of parastatals whilst university and college students have seen fees go up by over 3 000%!

With its back on the wall ZANU – PF has made small retreats such as controlling the currency, price controls and land re-distribution, it essentially remains an ESAP party dominated by business people. Simba Makoni, the successor to Chidzero and blue-eyed boy of the IMF remains in charge of finance.

Should ZANU (PF) win the elections, it is obvious that given the current massive economic crisis and its continued adherence to neoliberalism as shown in the latest budget, Zanu PF will proceed to unleash an even more vicious and brutal ESAP programme than the original one, including massive suppression of workers, students and the poor. This is one of the main reasons it has introduced the Public Order and Security Act, (POSA) and seeks to amend the Labour Relations Act to ban all strikes and stayaways. That way Zanu (PF) hopes it will be forgiven by the west for its current partial retreat from full scale ESAP and also finish off its rival teaboy, the MDC.

Just like the 1997 – 98 strikes, demonstrations and stayaways forced Mugabe to make a partial retreat from ESAP, the same mass action today can ensure that this time we finish the job we left half way through then when our movement was hijacked by middle class neoliberals into the useless parliamentary reformist road under the MDC. This time we must go all the way, including the smashing of the Zanu (PF) dictatorship and its neoliberal ESAPs and join the global anti-capitalist movement to smash the root cause of all misery, namely the global capitalist system.

# MDC PROMISES MORE OF THE SAME ATTACKS!

**O**RINARY people must be under no illusions as to what to expect from an MDC government. Its recently released economic blueprint, BRIDGE, is just another vicious neo-liberal ESAP programme that has been given the thumbs up by the IMF.

In its MDC's 6 Point Plan for a Better Future, the party promises the povo food at affordable prices, affordable education and basic health care including AIDS care.

But BRIDGE shows the opposite. If implemented this programme is going to worsen conditions for workers, students, the unemployed and the poor whilst giving capitalists massive bonuses.

Firstly under BRIDGE will be de-regulation of the financial markets. The dollar will be devalued to market levels. MDC shadow Finance Minister, T. Mashakada has indicated at least 200%, whilst interest rates will be de-regulated to market rates.

The second key aspect is privatisation. Targeted will not only be the remaining parastatals like N R Z, ZISCOSTEEL, ZESA and PTC but other basic services such as health and education.

Eddie Cross, the key man behind BRIDGE and who in the late 1980s as the president of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries was along with Finance Minister Bernard Chidzero, one of the key architects of ESAP, says –

*“We are going to fast track privatisation. All fifty government parastatals will be privatized within a two year time framework, but we are going far beyond that. We are going to privatize many of the functions of government. We are going to privatize virtually the entire school delivery system. And you know, we have looked at the numbers and we think we can get government employment down from about 300 000 at the present to about 75 000 in five years.”*

## Plan Unworkable

Unless mitigated by sufficient external financial aid, the impact of these measures will be disastrous. The cost of fuel and electricity, which are currently being bought at the official market rate will multiply at least four times, sending up the cost of everything else including transport, food and health, contrary to the 6 Point Plan. Secondly, starved of affordable credit from banks, many more industries will close down adding to the thousands of jobs lost from the privatized parastatals.

The MDC gurus recognize the inevitable further suffering that will be entailed by their BRIDGE – but argue that this will only be

in the short-term and that after this the social programme of jobs, affordable food and education will be implemented.

They also believe they will get the necessary external funding, especially from the IMF, as a reward for removing Mugabe. Further they argue that the West would be prepared to give the MDC programme a chance because the MDC commands the support of the masses and will be able to stop them from revolting as they did against ZANU (PF) in 1996 – 98, even though the early phases of BRIDGE will entail suffering.

But all this is naïve. In the first place, these promises of external funding were also given to ZANU PF but never materialized, even though ZANU (PF) implemented most of the things that the West demanded. Neither did Zambia get such money despite Chiluba kicking out Kaunda and executing one of the most brutal ESAPs yet to be seen in Africa. Today Argentina, a much more important

economy than Zimbabwe sinks into massive crisis whilst the IMF stands by.

So why should little Zimbabwe expect any better, moreso when there is global recession threatening?

The hard truth is that neo-liberal programmes like ESAP and BRIDGE cannot stop the inevitable crisis of a system

based on unplanned production for the benefit of the greedy few and imperialist plunder of 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries. This is why the masses were not consulted when ESAP was introduced and why today BRIDGE has been made by a so-called team of technical experts without the involvement of the MDC rank and file.

BRIDGE is just another name for ESAP. The masters and the victims remain the same – the capitalists and the working classes – what simply changes twumbwasungata (running dogs), namely from ZANU (PF) to MDC.

So the struggle must continue, even if the MDC wins the elections. The masses must reject any arguments that the new MDC government needs time to correct the economy – the only time they will need is to loot.

But the real solution is a global socialist revolution that ensures the resources of this world are collectively used for the benefit of all and not for the profits of the few. And this is why capitalist parties like the MDC will not offer any real alternative to the suffering and poverty of the masses. What we need is to build revolutionary socialist movements to lead the struggle for international socialism. We invite you to join us.

# POSA is Fascism aimed at Smashing Workers!

The Public Order and Security Act (POSA) has been rightly referred to "as a savings bank of the most repressive colonial legislation."

Zanu PF is following its masters in the west, who took advantage of the USA September 11 bombings to ram through laws suppressing civic liberties aimed at the growing anti-capitalism movement.

In the immediate short-term POSA is meant to suppress the opposition ahead of the elections.

But in the long - term and most importantly POSA is meant to protect the capitalist ruling class from the strikes, stayaways, demonstrations and ultimately socialist revolution of working people. Such rebellions get closer and sharper by the day as workers, students, the poor and peasants rebel against the vicious neoliberal programmes like ESAP and BRIDGE that our rulers are imposing as their capitalist system goes into crisis.

Just like its predecessor the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act was passed in 1961 after the massive workers revolts of ZHII, the first POSA bill was introduced in 1996, i.e. after the first major working class revolts against ESAP and the Zanu PF dictatorship, namely the November 1995 anti-police brutality riots and the 1996 government strike.

It is because POSA is ultimately aimed at smashing workers' uprisings that MPs of both bourgeois parties in parliament, Zanu (PF) and MDC, the private press and the western world did not raise as much noise about POSA as they did against the much more softer Access to Information Bill. The Comment of the bourgeois **Zimbabwe Independent** of 1 February admitted as much whilst we saw the spectacle of the UK foreign minister, Jack Straw and USA secretary of state, Collin Powell convening a press conference on the Information bill but never said nothing about POSA.

## 4 Key Objectives of POSA.

### ◆ To smash Revolutions & Stayaways

Its an offence to apply pressure or threaten to apply pressure against any government policy or law via boycotts, campaigns, stayaways or civil disobedience. **Punishment:** 20 years jail without option of a fine.

- For insurrection, resistance to any law enforcement agency or to procur by force the change of any law or policy of the Government , accompanied by or threatened use of weaponry including a grenade, petrol bomb, firearm, gas welder and where there is a risk that such act might result in the killing of a person, damages any property, inflicts financial loss on any person or disrupts an essential service

- **Punishment:** Death penalty or life in jail where the act results in death of a person or Life in jail where there is damage to property, financial loss to bosses, or disruption of an essential service.

## International Socialist Organisation Meetings

If you like what you have read or want to know more about us, you are welcome to our weekly meetings as follows:

### Harare:

Town/Mbare	Tuesdays - 5.30pm
GView/Budiriro	Sundays - 2.00pm
Poly/Belvedere	Attend Town/Mbare

### Bulawayo

NUST	Wednesdays 5.30pm
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Kadoma	Saturdays - 10am
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Gweru/MSU	Fridays - 5.30pm
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Chinhoyi	Thursdays - 5.30pm
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For details on venues and topics, write to P.O. Box 6758 Hre, or phone 704209/091370554 or [isozim@hotmail.com](mailto:isozim@hotmail.com)

### ◆ To ban strikes and stayaways

- If you publish or communicate a statement which is untrue and which: incites public disorder or adversely affects the economy, defence or undermines confidence in the Police, Army or Prison Service, or interferes with an essential service such as transport, communications, generation of electricity / fuel / water generation or health service.

- **Punishment:** Fine of up to \$100 000 or 5 years jail or both.

### ◆ To control Demonstrations & Meetings

- If you fail to give police 4 days notice before holding a meeting. **Punishment:** - Fine of \$10 000 or 6 months jail or both and compensation of anyone with property damaged. Excerptions are for educational, recreational or "genuine" trade union meetings or those of a club which are not of a political nature.

- Police have power to prohibit a demonstration for up to 3 months.

- Disturbing the peace of the public, invade the right of others, utter words or distribute any sign that threatens to provoke a breach of the peace. **Punishment:** Fine of up to \$100 000 or 10 years jail or both and

where the police kill someone using reasonably justifiable force in dispersing an unlawful meeting such killing shall be lawful.

### ◆ To protect Mugabe and Zanu PF

Making a statement that engenders feelings of hostility towards or causes hatred, contempt or ridicule of the President or any abusive, indecent, obscene or false statement about the President.

- **Punishment:** Fine of up to \$20 000 or 1 year jail or both

by Oscar Simbi

## HELP US RAISE \$100 000

## Socialists under attack from POSA

THE Zanu PF regime is not wasting time enforcing POSA. Scores of opposition activists have already been detained and meetings disrupted. Socialists are also being targeted. On Monday 28 January our Socialist Worker/Industrial zone organiser, Elliot Madzivanyika ( 49 ) was ambushed in Mbare by Zanu PF militia and severely assaulted for distributing Socialist Worker. He was then handed over to the police on fabricated charges of insulting the president. In court he was remanded out of custody to 13 February after paying a heavy bail.

Another I.S.O. member, Jokonia Maopa (30) is also facing similar charges, after being captured and handed over to the police by Zanu PF thugs on his way to an ISO meeting in the same suburb.

The comrades stand liable to severe penalties of up to 10 years in jail or \$50 000 fine. We are planning to lodge a constitutional appeal against POSA in the Supreme Court.

We need money and material for lawyers, fines and to mobilise action. Help us raise \$100 000 by March 2002.

**Donations to ISO - Box 6758 Harare or phone (04) 704209 or 091 370 554**

# *crisis in education*

**E** DUCATION is under attack! The government is pressing ahead with the ESAP agenda of introducing tuition fees designed to kick out the children of workers and peasants out of colleges and universities. ZANU(PF) has shown its hypocrisy once again by announcing that it would be dumping ESAP.

The new fees system will have devastating effects on students from poor backgrounds. There have been casualties already as many potential students have been deterred from applying to colleges and many more will drop out. Its horrific to think of the many workers who will be laid off if the government is allowed to go ahead with this murderous privatisation program.

These are the early stages of a deep reaching neo-liberal agenda to massacre thousands of poor students out of colleges. If these fat cats are not stopped they will go further and privatize the whole education delivery system. Banks like CBZ and Metropolitan who have offered to advance loans to students are not in this for charity. These are profit-making entities and government has chose to abandon students to the greedy speculations of these profiteers. Business sees rich pickings to made in taking over many aspects of the education sector. It also wants a two tier education system - an elitist well funded university sector for a rich minority. But for the majority they must be locked out since graduates on the market are sufficient for the interest of capital.

## **TAX THE RICH TO FUND EDUCATION**

At a time when the standards of living for the majority have become unbearable, there are big businesses which are making obscene profits. Most banks and such other financial institutions are declaring profits in hundreds of millions if not billions of dollars. The government must introduce a tax on corporate profit and set up a education fund from

## **Ministry of Labour a puppet of capitalists**

The Ministry of Labour that workers once saw as their saviour has now teamed up with bosses in oppressing workers. Instead of protecting workers the ministry has introduced unfair labour laws that expose workers at the hands of bosses.

80% of the total workforce in the industries are now contract workers and are at the same time receiving peanuts as wages.

Why contract workers? Is it because employers want to give many individuals chance to work? The truth is that capitalists do not care for us but are more concerned about their profits. Contract worker assures them maximization of their profits. The government has now also joined the private sector in contracting its employees and giving them wages far below the minimum wage.

Both capitalists and the government use their legal instruments to legalise their exploitation of workers. Contract forms are drafted to suit themselves without even considering the contract worker. Depriving workers their rights to equality and freedom is discrimination. I feel all Zimbabwean workers are equal before the law and have the right to equal protection and benefits before the law.

Fair and safe labour practice must be strongly practiced. Workers must demand a new Labour Act that makes sure that workers should not be employed as contract workers for more than 3 months. Both contract and permanent workers must enjoy minimum wage that is in accordance with the inflation rate. All workers must be covered under pension schemes, medical aid and other benefits like transport and housing allowance. Unfairly dismissed workers should have access to labour courts, which should grant them fair hearings.

Due to increasingly unemployment rate and desperation workers have now humbled themselves against their bosses. They no longer have security from the ministry of Labour and also their unions. Unions are taking monthly contributions from workers for nothing without representing their cases.

Workers we must continue with the fight for a new Labour Act soon after election no matter who wins. We must not give them time to honeymoon.

*By Roy Madhiri*

which students can get grants. These profiteers must be taxed to pay for the education of the majority.

The interest rates will be increased arbitrarily by the banks. The conditions to get the money are barbaric. Analysis of one's behaviour etc are factors meant to deny student activists access.

Repayment is to be 3 months after graduation. In 3 months very few students will have secured employment. There is no provision for the annual reewao fo the contracts. The government has abdicated responsibility totally. It cannot even guarantee the loan. Every student has to provide a surety. This is the person who actually guarantees the loan. Students from poor backgrounds just can not provide someone in a financial position to undertake this and many will be excluded.

## **MASS NON PAYMENT AND ACTION – BUILD A UNITED FRONT**

There must be mobilization at a national level to boycott the loan deal with banks and to fight the whole system of fees and call for restoration of grants. Let's start mobilising for nonpayment of the loans. Mass nonpayment must be backed by mass action, demonstrations and occupations joining with other oppressed sectins, critically the workers. Students must know that the challenge to this battle is coming at a unique historical time. We are faced with a crucial presidential election - a time at which the ruling party has intensified attacks on democracy and civil liberties. POSA and others are all machinations to stifle basic freedoms which must be met with utmost defiance. Students must join the fight for democratic rights to kick out Zanu PF. But ZINASU and the students must not give Tsvangirai a blank cheque as happening now. Critically we must enure that the issue of Fees becomes a critical element of these elections. We must demand that Tsvangirai and MDC committ themselves to:

reversing within 30 days the privatisation of education, create a special education fund based on a special levy on employers and the banks to guarantee all students free tertiary education including a living allowance reinstatement of all suspended / expelled student activists repeal all repressive education legislation and a new act and constitution to guarantee academic freedom and autonomy.

And should they fail to do so or Zanu PF gets back into power, war on the opening of universities and colleges on 18 March.! Jambanja for the right to education and democracy.

**by Briggs J. Bomba, Co-ordinator SAP & ISO (SU)**

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## **JOIN US!!**

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

NAME:.....

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**Send this form to I.S.O. P.O. Box 6758, Harare or P.O. Box FM 727, Famaona, Bulawayo or P.O. Box RMK3 Rimuka Kadoma**



## **workers build rank and file movements (RAFs) in your unions**

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

### **PRINTING INDUSTRY**

# **Reflections rejects the 54% increment peanuts!**

**Below we reproduce a letter by the Reflections Interim Committee to the Chairman of the Printing and Packaging NEC on 5 February, over the recent wage increments.**

"We wish to point out that in the recent collective bargaining for salaries and benefits increments for the year 2002, the Zimbabwe Graphical Workers Union again committed itself to negotiation against the will of the majority of the workers in our industry. We say this because:

1. The few workers who attended a meeting called by the union before the start of negotiations advised the union not to accept the employer's proposal of 54 to 62% which was eventually agreed upon.

2. Administration staff have again been left out in the just concluded exercise and they continue to suffer unfair representation.

Further the signed collective bargaining agreement is contrary to section 35 of the Labour Relations Act which requires the consultation of all union branches before the conclusion of an agreement.

The agreed percentages ... are another manifestation of betrayal of workers in the industry... Come July this year printing will fall to less than half the other trades like construction, mechanical and electrical. How really do you expect workers ... to cope when you award them an increment of 54% when the official inflation rate is 112%?

The signing of these increments is yet another treacherous act by a union leadership that has lost all mandate, moral or legal to represent workers... and why we have applied to the Ministry of Labour for its immediate dissolution. We therefore reject these unlawful and inhuman "increments" and call for an opening of negotiations to ensure that workers get increments consistent with the inflation rate.

Our second area of concern ... is over the rewriting of the collective bargaining agreement (S.I. 147). After labour forums convened by Reflections late last year the following demands came from workers:

1. The involvement of Reflections in the negotiations as it now represents the majority of workers in the industry.
2. Fresh negotiations for July increments as a corrective measure to

## **TEXTILES – BUILD A RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT**

**M**EMBERS of the The Zimbabwe Textile Workers Union are angry with their their leaders.

In bargaining this year, the leaders agreed to a staggered increment system, that left workers at the minimum level getting less than \$7 000 in January 2002 when the poverty datum line is over \$20 000!

In fact textile workers only got above that through the national statutory increments which forced all employers to grant workers a minimum of \$8 900 by October last year. So if the textiles bosses didn't have the money, where are they getting it to pay now?

The bosses were lying that business was weak. Otherwise why did big companies like David Whitehead Textiles force workers to work throughout the Christmas and New Year holiday periods? Or bribe workers committee members by sending them on an all expenses paid holiday in scenic Shurugwi.

The problem in the textile union is not on eof lack of militancy. During last year's, the union secretary general, Silas Kuvheya was kicked out of a union labour forum in Harare for agreeing to the sell out deal. This January in Kadoma at David Whitehead, when management with the connivance of union president Mamombe, started renegeing on a 10% allowance increment agreed previously, the workers struck for over 30 minutes demanding to be address dby Mamombe and the bosses.

To move forward and make the union leaders more accountable worker militants in the big companie slike David Whitehead and in major towns need to network and form a Rank and File (RAF) committee to clean the union of deadwood and replace it by new leaders, from among themost militant anand courageous workers to take on the textile bosses.

previous years of union shortcomings which have seen printing industry fall in remuneration from second to aircraft engineering in 1996 to the present predicament.

3. Inclusion of clerical and administrative grades in the CBA and complete overhaul of the grading system of factory staff in view of technological advancement.

4. Provision for contract workers who work 6 weeks in 2 months to be deemed permanent as has been done in the agriculture industry.

5. No permanent job to be done by contract workers in opposing casualisation of labour and unfair dismissals without packages.

6. Contract workers to be paid x 1 ½ and casual workers x 2 the rate of permanent staff of the same grade to become the law of the industry.

We request an answer in writing at the soonest and no later seven days from date of this later. We reiterate that the present union executive has lost all morale or legal authority to represent the workers. We remind you that at a Conciliation meeting between Reflections and the ZGWU executive held at ministry's offices at Compesation House on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2001, the union leaders admitted to the labour relations officer to a variety of contraventions of the union constitution and Labour Relations Act such as:

- a) they last organized a "general meeting" in 1998;
- b) they last had their books audited in 1991
- c) The union membership has declined at an alarming rate since 1991 of over 80%.

Given the above we have since requested the ministry to immediately initiate accreditation proceedings for the dissolution of the union in terms of section 39 of the Act.

We therefore advise that should you go ahead with the re-writing of the CBA (SI 147) and continue to deal with the unlawful ZGWU executive and continue ignoring the demands of the majority of the workers in the printing industry currently voicing their concerns through REFLECTIONS then resort to mass action shall be inevitable including not only occupation of the NEC and union buildings but also a general strike to paralyse the entire industry.. IN the circumstance we will therefore not take any responsibility for any disruptions that may be occasioned to this very important national event but yourselves should be answerable.

**H. Masadza - General Secretary, Reflections "**

### **SOLIDARITY FROM ENGINEERING WORKERS**

#### **To: All workers and ISO worker activists**

I would like to salute you all in your efforts to have a liberated worker in this country.

While at the same time I would have loved to be with you physically, it's my spirit that I have send there.

The National Engineering Workers Union (NEWU) as a union is pretty happy to work hand in hand with you as usual and would give you the much needed support since we have one vision – that a worker might be freed from chains of oppression by industrialists (imperialists).

I therefore call upon all workers to rise up and raise a standard that will counter all spears and arrows raised against them such as: -

- 1) casualisation of labour;
- 2) the proposed labour bill by government
- 3) child labour, commonly on farms
- 4) privatisation of government institutions;
- 5) government sponsored – bogus trade unions
- 6) untimely closure of companies
- 7) unrealistic wages

United we Stand! Divided we fall. We as workers, we no longer say "Shinga mushandi Shinga," but we now say "Penga mushandi Penga" which literally is equal to say "Jambanja Ndizvo!"

**Brother in arms - Chamisa, President NEWU**

# Socialist Worker

## GENERAL STRIKE

# IS THE ANSWER TO VIOLENCE & RIGGING ... NOT SANCTIONS

**A**S the elections approach, the opposition has been moaning about how ZANU-PF will be rigging the elections and violence.

The crisis in Zimbabwe has reached its worst in history – so deep that bosses are now desperate to stem the tide of workers actions in the face of inflation at over 112%, unemployment at over 70% and basic food shortages. On their behalf Zanu PF has passed the draconian POSA. The Army commander has made a virtual coup declaration should MDC win.

The response of the MDC has varied from naive dismissals of the generals' threats to stupid appeals for sanctions and western intervention. The party chefs are actively discouraging their rank and file from fighting back in the streets the encroaching fascist regime. They have done the same with their supporters in the unions and civic society, with everyone now just being told to wait for the elections and not do anything that can rock the boat.

We urge workers, students, the unemployed and the poor to reject these naive and very dangerous ideas.

We reject the call for sanctions. The USA, UK and EU rulers are no friends of democracy. They massacred thousands in Afghanistan and are gunning for Iraq and Somalia. They support repressive regimes from Uganda, Rwanda to Saudi Arabi and Israel. They and their local "teaboys" like Zanu PF have imposed vicious neoliberal policies like ESAP that have brought so much poverty to the poor of this world. Now when the working classes rise up they impose draconian "anti-terrorist laws" to suppress them, where they would have failed to bribe off the movements as they did in Zambia and Serbia.

**THE** only force that can stop the Zanu (PF) thuggery and electrify people ahead of the elections is mass action, in particular a general strike, done before the elections. Such action would send a powerful and unmistakable message to the generals and Zanu PF to stop the violence and not be tempted to rig or steal the elections or face the might of the working class as the one that defeated them in 1997.

But this is precisely the action that the MDC leaders are dead opposed to. Against all objective indicators they pin their hopes on a "peaceful" change through the elections.

But elections themselves will not solve the pressing issues for the poor of this country. The MDC leaders recognise this. They, aided by some in the trade unions, are deliberately undermining mobilisation for mass action, particularly the general strike that has been demanded by workers in ZCTU labour forums.

They fear that any such activity by the workers themselves will potentially go much further than what the MDC and their capitalist masters want, namely uprisings not only against Zanu (PF) but the bosses as well as is happening in Argentina. Yet the MDC itself is promising an even more vicious neoliberal programme in its BRIDGE and would therefore not want to make the working classes vigilant now. Zanu PF has already killed the proposed Labour Bill and the MDC is not talking about it. Only action now before the elections can force the politicians to recognise the workers demand for a new Labour Act!

We urge militant trade unionists and civic groups, students and the MDC rank and file to mobilise for mass action starting with the 15 February Marches called by the NCA, ZCTU, ZINASU, ISO, SAP, ZLP and trade unions. The power is our hands! Demand that your union and the ZCTU call for the general strike *by Rosa Zulu*

### Join 15 February Marches against Dictatorship & Poverty!

Join marches in Harare, Bulawayo, Mutare, Gweru

#### TO Say No to

- POSA and state sponsored violence
- Rigging and Military intervention in the elections
- ESAP and IMF programmes
- Privatisation of education & new tuition / loan policy

#### **Fight for New Constitution & Labour Act!**

**For details phone ISO or NCA at 704209 or 736338 or e-mail [isozim@hotmail.com](mailto:isozim@hotmail.com) or [info@nca.org.co.zw](mailto:info@nca.org.co.zw)**