

Socialist Worker

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No to Negotiations with illegitimate Government

For website readers - sorry but we are still learning this! We have not been able to scan in the picture

In this space is an ugly picture of Robert Mugabe with a big "X" crossing out the picture.

Use your imagination!!!

I.S.O. expelled from MDC for opposing talks with Zanu-PF
pages 8 & 9

SOCIALIST MOVEMENT GROWS IN AFRICA

The Left and I.S.O. In Zambia

Below cde Bornwell Mwewa, Secretary General, Zambia National Students Union Chair, Socialist Caucus looks at the left and the formation of International Socialist Organisation in Zambia.

After nationalist independence in 1964 the UNIP government proclaimed itself to be socialist embraced under what it termed humanism.

But the reality was different. Zambia's ruling class in fact embraced capitalism with the state as the bosses. Workers continued to be oppressed and exploited as they had always been done. In 1979, a strike wave took place that was so powerful that then president, Kenneth Kaunda, cancelled several foreign trips. He was so scared of being toppled from power.

This form of capitalism was abandoned in the 1980s as the price of copper, the main export of Zambia, fell on the world markets. The ruling class turned to the IMF and World Bank for capital. Kaunda and UNIP adopted Structural Adjustment Programmes (ESAPs) similar to what happened in Zimbabwe.

Ordinary people were left in deeper poverty. This sparked off food riots in 1986 that gave birth to a new movement – a movement that demanded improved living conditions, fairer distribution of wealth and greater democracy.

Riding on the back of this movement of protest, the MMD came to power in 1992. **It enacted savage economic reforms that left ordinary Zambians worse off**, by promising that the introduction of fees on everything and privatisation would benefit everyone. Following the worsening of the crisis, Zambian workers grew a deep distrust of the MMD.

It was in this scenario that the Socialist Caucus emerged in Zambia. Both the "opposition" Labour Party and UNIP failed totally to provide any solutions for the crisis and deepening poverty facing Zambian workers. The situation in Zambia provides an opportunity for the development of socialist cadre movement rooted in the ordinary people.

What needs to be formed is a non-ambiguous, ideologically grounded leftist mass movement. Such a movement would aim to make mass action the main vehicle for implementing change towards socialism, the fair distribution of wealth and real respect for human rights.

I.S.O. in Botswana

Below we run an extract of the founding principles of ISO Botswana, the newest addition to the socialist movement in Africa, formed in March. Congratulations comrades. Now to the mill of hard work.

"We realise that the massive wealth under capitalist Botswana, enjoyed by a tiny minority is a direct creation of the poor peasant and workers who toil for pittance because they are exploited by the bourgeoisie. That this sordid state of affairs faced by the masses is a deliberate result of capitalism. A system, which by nature, breeds economic, social and political inequality in society as it is meant to benefit a few who own the means of production, which they also acquired through exploitative means from the workers.

For this reason, we call for a completely new society in which the workers, who produce wealth for the capitalists, collectively seize control of their resources and democratically plan its production and distribution for the benefit of all not a few elites as is the case under the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) regime. To achieve this the present regime must be overthrown altogether and replaced by a workers government whose primary concern is production for need not profit.

A revolutionary workers party does not exist in Botswana as yet. Botswana has many parties but they are all parties of elections rather than of struggle. The role of workers in these parties is just to passively vote into power a handful MPs whose agenda is to promote the process of capital accumulation ... exploitation of workers.

Workers need a revolutionary socialist party for their daily battles against capitalism. Activity to build such a party has to be based in the mass organisations of the working class. Such a revolutionary party is a weapon in the hands of workers. It brings together the most revolutionary and class conscious members of this class who will ultimately influence the rest by the spread of socialist ideas. We have to organise in the mass movement to build the revolutionary party. Through patient argument we can win workers from the side of capitalism, economism and reformism to revolutionary socialist politics. Join us! Write to isobo@hotmail.com

Because of its history and current position, the Socialist Caucus may not be strategic in playing this role. The ideologically clear membership of this group will be critical in establishing another force.

The International Socialist Organisation offers the best in terms of relevant experiences in other countries and the needed international support and solidarity. The ISO also provides clear leftist ideological principles.

Zambia is ripe for the establishment of an ISO Zambia to harness and re-focus people's energies into mass action for change. The organization will obviously start off small and may take painfully long to build. One of its tasks will be to resist attempts from agents of the neo-liberal imperialists. But the long-term benefits will outweigh all the short-term hurdles.

To enquire and know more about ISO - Zambia write to us at isozambia@hotmail.com

100 Anti-Privatisation Forum activists arrested in South Africa

RECENTLY 90 people were arrested in Johannesburg after a demonstration at the mayor's house. 49 are still held in prison, awaiting trial. The demo was built by the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee. When the mayor, Masondo, wanted votes he came to the streets promising free services, but electricity cut-offs are everywhere. For two years running SECC have marched against electricity cut offs and for two years the mayor refused to come receive our memorandum.

So on Saturday 6 April a crowd including grannies and youth went to Masondo's house to fire him from office. But Masondo's security guard fired live rounds into the crowd. People narrowly escaped death. After this their fear turned to anger and they trashed the mayor's pavement garden and swimming pool. While 49 have now been in jail for over a week without bail the security guard walks the streets.

We have since September 2000 been able to be part of a new movement to resist economic apartheid. This is the Anti Privatisation Forum (APF). The organisation has built its strength by working hard on the ground against water and electricity cut-offs and evictions coming out of the government's privatisation campaign and their general love affair with neo liberalism. It has gained confidence from the current upsurge of a world anti capitalist movement.

The ANC's membership base has shrunk dramatically over the past three years from over 300 000 to under 100 000 now. A lot of these people may have moved to passivity but a significant minority have joined us in struggles over bread and butter issues of water and electricity provision, against evictions for decent houses, free education. Out of this the APF has been able to pull together demonstrations and campaigns of civil disobedience such as reconnecting water and electricity after it has been cut off. In its formative stages the APF saw very little harassment from the state. But as its influence has grown so the government has brought out the cudgel of the legal system against it. Recently we have experienced many arrests of APF activists for illegal demonstrations and law suits by powerful slumlords for defamation against the fledgling movement. Those arrested are held for longer than normal. This is carried out to try and break the spirit of the organisation and ensure its still born.

Comrades we appeal that you send messages of solidarity from your organisation to the APF to strengthen our spirits.

Alluta Continue: Alan Goatley for Keep Left - Messages of support c/o keepleft@ananzi.co.za or george@sn.apc.org and <http://sa.indymedia.org>

ISO Ghana grows

When NCA, ISO and PTUZ activists were arrested after the 15 February Demonstrations in the run up to the presidential elections, ISO Ghana organised initiated a solidarity campaign. A picket was held outside the Zimbabwe embassy. Two meetings at the university in Accra attracted 400 and 700 students respectively. They also intervened in Heinz strike where they have started building rank and file movement in the union. As the economic crisis continue to worsen the group is set for a bright future. To enquire and know more about ISO - Ghana write to isogh@hotmail.com

Madzimai eN.C.A. akatovhura ndima kare

PRESIDENTIAL elections have come and gone. Even though most people were angry with the results there were no massive spontaneous demonstrations as anticipated. There was though little action in Highfield, Mbare and Chitungwiza which were easily crushed by the police. The ZCTU stayaway which was called two weeks after the elections was a failure. The N.C.A demonstrations though crushed by the police were not massive. Is it because the people do not want to fight back and are prepared for another six years with Mugabe.

There is no doubt that the masses are willing to fight, but not in a disorganized army. The ZCTU stayaway failed because the action was only called by the top leadership without consultations from the masses and also there was no proper communication to the workers about why a stayaway. Mass action is not organised from papers and also ZCTU cannot continue to rely on its weak structures to get the information to rank and file workers. What happened to the labour forums and mass meetings that formed MDC? If this is continued we are at the mercy of discrediting our traditional methods of fighting.

We are facing a historic opportunity and we should make sure that we utilise it. The economic situation continues to worsen and this is made worse by the drought. The prices of basic commodities continue to rise. For how long will workers, students, peasant and

the urban poor continue to suffer in silence or we will witness another January 1998? Will Mugabe be able to contain the situation?

Way Forward

The time now is ripe for an indefinite action. In Madagascar today and Serbia in 2000, mass action booted out dictators who had stolen elections. If the 1997 anger could call those big numbers why not now when the crisis in the country has gone deeper? The NCA has obviously a big task to bring itself on to the scene once more given the emergence of the MDC. Besides the small groupings of mainly regional executive most of whom are too weak to participate in street action it has no visible numbers for now.

Its popularity before the MDC arose from, above constitutional matters, its ability to link bread and butter issues to the constitutional debate. It made sense to a worker arrested for taking up industrial action to fight police brutality which the state machinery perpetrated under repressive laws. An abstract academic debate will not bring the masses to the streets. It will be a sheer waste of time and resources. The answer then becomes mass meetings that bring up these links to bread and butter issues.

Arrested NCA women with their children

MDC - Zanu (PF) Talks: What is Really Going On?

8 April 2002 - ISO writes to M. Tsvangirai: "The ISO ... writes to express our objections to the ongoing negotiations between the MDC and Zanu (PF) ... How can the party engage in talks with the regime when it is incarcerating mothers and their children for demanding a new constitution and its supporters butchered as daily revealed in the Daily News?...**Mugabe (is engaged in the talks because) he desperately needs breathing space ... But why should the MDC leadership throw him a life line --- when their job is supposed to be to finish him off and shorten the pain of the long suffering masses of this country.**"

16 April 2002 - "Return to talks must hinge on end to violence" Editorial in the *Daily News*: "Having failed to make it a condition for entering into the talks in the first place, the party now has an obligation to tell the facilitators that it will not return to the negotiating table on 13 May unless all violence will have completely ceased by then."

23 April 2002 - "Young girls see their mother's head cut off" -*The Daily News*: "Two young girls aged 10 and 17 watched in horror as their mother was brutally murdered by having her head cut off at the neck. Brandina Tadyanemhandu, 53, was butchered inside her hut by suspected Zanu (PF) supporters ... The reason for for Tadyanemhandu's grisly murder was the accusation by the youths that the deceased was a supporter of ... the MDC... She was the mother of MDC youth activist Tichaona Tadyanemhandu, 20, who went missing in June 2000. His body was found missing ... later in the mortuary at Harare Central Hospital." "Tadyanemhandu's husband, Enos, 63, yesterday said: 'They killed my only son in a family of eight children and now they have killed my wife. Why are they fighting us after they won the election? I will not be silenced. I will speak out against this evil.'"

25 April 2002 - Tsvangirai threatens to pull out of talks - *Financial Gazette*: "In the light of the state-sponsored violence and campaign

of retribution being waged by ZANU PF, we now find it difficult to resume talks under a climate of banditry, lawlessness and terror which is being left to flourish," Tsvangirai told the *Financial Gazette*," Tsvangirai declared. "How can you talk when people are being tortured, harassed, displaced daily through elements being sponsored by the state," the MDC President asked. "The talks are aimed consolidating national interests, (but) ... **We, as MDC, will not betray our supporters, more importantly their lives, for the sake of sustaining Mugabe's political fortunes.**"

27 April 2002 - MDC advert in *Daily News*: "Why the MDC Is In Talks With ZANU(PF)...Zimbabwe faces an unprecedented crisis and the talks seek ways of pulling the country out of this crisis...The present food crisis needs an immediate solution to avert catastrophic starvation...The economic crisis is symptomatic of a deep political crisis"

Socialist Worker then asks:

These are the events and comments in the order that they happened. Why was the National Executive of the MDC, up to 25 April, giving out the message that they were now *not* going to be resuming the talks on 13 May, **but then on 27 April, 2 days after the *Financial Gazette* statement, releases an advert in the *Standard* giving full justification to the talks and to extending a lifeline to the rotten ZANU(PF) Mugabe regime?** The crisis of food and the economy were caused by ZANU(PF) so why do Tsvangirai, Ncube, Sibabnda and others want to help end the crisis?

If Tsvangirai is serious why then is he still proceeding with the talks on 13 May? Who really calls the shots in the MDC?

The real truth is that the MDC leadership desperately wants to prevent a full scale revolt from developing in Zimbabwe - a revolt that would have been caused by the crisis unleashed by ZANU(PF) - and a revolt that would have the potential to permanently finish off Mugabe and ZANU(PF) permanently.

Israel is the Terror State

Over the last few weeks, the Israeli army has invaded areas of Palestine and has at the time of going to press butchered over 1000 innocent Palestinians. More bodies are being pulled from the rubble of destroyed buildings, homes and refugee camps. While there has been a "withdrawal" of troops from Jenin, the army continues to mount roadblocks.

The Israeli state has used terror against the Palestinians since Israel was founded in 1948 when Israeli terror gangs drove 750,000 Palestinians from their homes. Israel invaded and annexed the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967. Six years later, in 1973, the Israelis invaded the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt and the Golan Heights in Syria.

The Palestinians have been prisoner in their own homeland for 54 years. Over 4 million Palestinians are refugees. Israel ran Palestine just like the apartheid regime in South Africa ran the "homelands". Palestinians were denied any rights and were forced to carry passes to work in Israel. **As Michael Ben-Yair, Israel's attorney general from 1993-96, put it "We enthusiastically choose to become a colonialist society, ignoring international treaties expropriating lands, transferring settlers from Israel to the Occupied Territories. We established an apartheid regime."**

The 1993 Oslo Agreement to hand over power to the Palestinian Authority (PA) did nothing to improve the life of ordinary Palestinians. The PA police of Yasser Arafat in the late 1990's became notorious for arresting and jailing militants at the whim of Israel.

Madagascar – Workers Must Learn How To Fight

The southeast African country of Madagascar provides workers with valuable lessons of why parliamentary opposition parties must not be listened to.

The then ruling president, Didier Ratsiraka, was "re-elected" amid massive rigging in December last year. His economic policies had seen workers worse off.

In the presidential elections his rival was the mayor of the capital Antananarivo, Marc Ravalomanana – a millionaire.

But the rigged results were not accepted by the workers. In January hundreds of thousands took to the streets and seized control of the capital forcing Ratsiraka to flee to the countryside.

Ordinary workers then launched a general nationwide strike to force the resignation of Ratsiraka. But Ravalomanana persuaded the bankrupt trade union leaders to call off the strike. He ridiculously claimed "*In Madagascar we do things peacefully – we don't use force.*"

Ravalomanana then moved to create another cabinet and installed himself as President. His cronies and middle class supporters continued to live their life-styles showing off the latest shiny four-wheel drives.

But this was in the middle of a crisis. Ratsiraka's thugs organized a blockade of the capital leading to shortages and company closures. Since then 1000 workers have lost their jobs every day. The number of homeless people rocketed. Whilst Ravalomanana preached peace, law and order, Ratsiraka's thugs butchered 36 opposition members.

Poverty, hatred of Ratsiraka and the selling-out by Ravalomanana have laid the basis for a civil war in Madagascar. To try to stop this from happening, the two Presidents have met in Senegal to resolve their "differences".

This can only mean that the two will set up a government of national unity – a government comprising of those who only yesterday oppressed the ordinary Madagascans and those who claim to stand for democracy and economic prosperity.

The opposition in Madagascar has shown its true colours. It will allow the ordinary people to get slaughtered and fall into poverty whilst the elite will continue to benefit and hold talks with Ratsiraka.

The only way for Madagascan workers out of this mess is to ignore the calls for peace from the "opposition" and organise to boot out both Ratsiraka and the so-called opposition and to resolve matters for themselves on the ground.

But the continued poverty saw the Palestinian intifada (resistance) continuing. It broke out 18 months ago with renewed determination. The "new" Israeli regime of Ariel Sharon threatened action against Arafat.

Arafat got his reward for co-operating with the brutal regime in Israel. In December last year, Israeli forces bombed and surrounded Arafat's compound and held him prisoner.

Israel was created, and is funded and armed to the teeth up to today, by western imperialist powers to safeguard the regions oil. This is why the west fought a war over Kuwait. Israel is the watchdog state of the Middle East. Smaller lap-dogs include the regimes of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

The re-occupation of the West Bank has been the most violent and savage in many years. This offensive is an attempt by Sharon to destroy the Middle East peace process forever. "*The Palestinians have to be hit hard, they have to be beaten*" Sharon announced. **He even expressed regret at promising to keep Arafat alive during the offensive. Sharon has rejected the Oslo Accord guaranteeing normal relations with Israel and its neighbours in return for a free Palestine.**

Sharon has been backed every step of the way by his paymasters and those who arm him – George W Bush and Tony Blair. Officials of the US and UN have refused to lay the blame squarely at the feet of the Israeli regime.

This is why the calls for peace in the Middle East are sickening. **Palestinians have been driven to desperation by 54 years of poverty and oppression.** There can be no peace in the Middle East until there is full justice for the Palestinians.

That justice can only be achieved by smashing the state of Israel and the states of those who co-operate with it in the region.

VENEZUELA

The poor of Venezuela defeated a right-wing military coup over the weekend of 13-14 April. The army attempted to overthrow the popular president Hugo Chavez.

Chavez was elected to power in 1998 on a platform of big reform. During his time in office, Chavez developed a friendly relationship with Cuba's Fidel Castro and refused to support the US-backed war against the leftist guerillas (FARC) in neighbouring Colombia. Chavez used the military to carry out some of his reforms

This has greatly upset the world's top bully - the US verment of George W Bush.

Faced with this, the boss class in Venezuela attempted to remove Chavez. It was the work of the employers organisations, the army generals, the head of the Catholic Church and a corrupt trade union leader.

But ordinary people refused to take this lying down. From the shanty towns surrounding the capital, hundreds of thousands of ordinary people took to the streets daily to protest the coup. The presidential palace and main military camp were besieged, control of the main TV station was seized, while rioting and looting broke out.

This heroism split the army, broke the coup attempt and saw Chavez restored to power after army commanders were terrified of the sight of millions on the streets.

But the military is now putting pressure on Chavez to reverse the reforms. He is complying with them calling for a round table of national unity.

Those who took to the streets totally disagree with this. They have seen how the bosses have no concern for democracy and human rights. They are bitter at the owners of the newspapers and TV for their support of the coup. They want the military leaders to be booted out.

It is now up to ordinary people only to take action to challenge those at the top of society while their structures are in disarray.

This cannot be done by relying on Chavez to do things using parliament or the courts.

It mens direct struggle from below, run by workers and peasants themselves to overthrow the bosses system and the state that supports it.

NCA

TEN Ways in Which the Constitution was Manipulated to Ensure ZANU P.F. Victory

The National Constitutional Assembly is convinced that the will of the people was subverted in the just concluded presidential elections because of the defective nature of the current Zimbabwean constitution. Therefore, the NCA would like to present to you the following 10 ways in which the constitution was manipulated to facilitate rigging of the poll by ZANU P.F.

1. Voter registration was not transparent. Thousand of voters in opposition strongholds could not register due to the restrictions posed by the General Laws Amendment Act. In a new constitution an Independent Electoral Commission will do voter registration.
2. President used his powers under the defective constitution to legalise the "Supplementary Voter Roll", which was a mere list of ZANU P.F. supporters.
3. The draconian Public Order and Security Act was enacted to suppress and ban campaign meetings of the opposition. In a new constitution with a democratic Bill of Rights, such an Act cannot be passed.
4. ZANU P.F. supporters "declared" other provinces to be "no go areas" for the opposition. In a new constitution all political parties will be free to campaign in any area of Zimbabwe
5. The public media was abused to only churn out ZANU P.F. propaganda and nothing positive about the opposition. In a new constitution access to the public media will be guaranteed to all parties.
6. Registrar General, a ZANU P.F. official and appointee of the president deliberately designated polling stations in a way that favoured ZANU P.F. Ridiculously few polling stations were designated for opposition strongholds like Harare and Chitungwiza while more polling stations were designated for rural areas.
7. President used his powers to override court orders and to declare tripartite elections in Harare and dual elections in Chitungwiza so as to make the voting process take long in these areas in order to frustrate the voters. Thousands of voters were disenfranchised in the process as polling station were closed before they could vote.
8. President Mugabe used his powers to reinstate draconian and undemocratic provision of the nullified General laws Amendment Act that favoured ZANU P.F.
9. Deliberate poor accreditation of local observers was done by the Electoral Supervisory Commission, whose chairpersons is a president's appointee, to facilitate rigging. The elections were conducted, monitored and supervised by civil servants whose master is the president.
10. President used his powers to open postal voting to soldiers, policemen and government officials on diplomatic missions. Thousands of Zimbabwean in the Diaspora who do not fall in the above categories were disenfranchised. In a new constitution all eligible voters will be given the chance to exercise their right to vote.

Therefore, the NCA is calling upon all Zimbabweans to rally behind its drive to push for a new constitution for Zimbabwe. Mass action and mass pressure will be organised in due course to coerce President Mugabe accept a new democratic constitution for Zimbabwe.

Never Again Should Zimbabweans Be Fooled To Go to an Election Without A New Constitution.

A New Constitution is a MUST for Zimbabwe.

**For more Information Please Contact NCA on Tel: 04 736338/730432, Fax 04 721146
E-mail: info@nca.org.co.zw**

Produced by NCA Information Department

No to Talks - No to Government of National Unity

AS political uncertainty manifests itself in Zimbabwe, disturbing signs are beginning to emerge from the opposition leadership. The major problem facing the MDC today is that of political prostitution and opportunism amongst its ranks. Evidence of this is the vigorous call for negotiations with ZANU (PF) for Government of National Unity (GNU) by the majority of its national council members. And that majority has won its position as talks are set to resume beginning of April.

We as an organization cannot afford to be part of this rot. For the people of this country this is a time to fight not a time to negotiate. A GNU will not solve the burning problems faced by the people of Zimbabwe but will in fact give the Mugabe regime more breathing space and bring more repression to the people. This confirms earlier sentiments that the MDC has fighting not to solve the people's problems but to be the next rulers of this country, to be the next agents of the Capitalist/Imperialist forces of repression (Mugabe has been one such agent and a good one too). Proof of this is the failure of the party to address bread and butter issues both in parliament and during its presidential campaign. This would impact negatively on the capitalists who have been heavily backing the party financially and otherwise. This is why Munyaradzi Gwisai has been a lone figure in fighting for people's rights in parliament. It is exactly the reason why he has been a lone figure in industry, articulating the workers' agenda. One would be excused to think that has been the only MDC (a labour-backed party) MP in Zimbabwe so far. We are yet to get more.

Why a GNU? This is a clear attempt by the leading capitalist countries, notably Britain and the USA, to safeguard their interests. Mugabe's slight shift to populism, due to pressure by the masses, has greatly threatened the crumbling capitalist system in the region. A key example is the land question, which has spread like veldt fire across the region, especially to South Africa, Namibia and Kenya. The whole of Africa has actually rallied behind ZANU (PF) on the issue. The western world cannot afford to ignore such an assault on land ownership, a key capitalist preserve.

The numerous mass uprisings (which lead to the formation of the MDC) by Zimbabweans have been another threat to the capitalist system. This shown the people's preparedness to demand and indeed fight for their rights. The fears are that this would spiral out of control and become not just a fight for a mere change in political leadership but for Socio-Economic policies that are more favourable to the people, and which should be the case, thereby exposing the system to destruction. A good example is the Harmonized Labour Bill proposed by the labour body in conjunction with other progressive forces like the ISO, which would empower the workers to fight (the unconditional right to strike). By getting the two parties to negotiate Tony Blair and George Bush would have managed to divert attention from real issues (employment, new labour act, better remuneration, new constitution, free education, affordable prices, free health services, etc) to mere political concerns like the rule of law, re-run of the elections etc, which do not benefit the people at all.

In so doing they would have managed to use the MDC to stem the tide and prevent the people from carrying the revolution all the way to the bitter-sweet end.

What is the public opinion and our position? The message coming from the generality of the population is a big NO to a GNU. The people do not want anything to do with the ZANU (PF) government and/or anybody who joins forces with it. It has been clearly stated that such a person would be deemed a traitor in the eyes of the people. A GNU would be tantamount to a betrayal of the trust bestowed upon the MDC by the people. The result is a disengagement of the leadership from its base (the masses) and hence a compromise of the masses' position. The MDC must learn from history: The first step towards the destruction of Joshua Nkomo and PF-ZAPU was a GNU orchestrated by the same people who are pushing for it today. Considering this is extensive public opinion whose mandate would this government be serving, and what role do we as a revolutionary organization play given the circumstances?

The answer is neither here nor there. Our standpoint is very clear that if the MDC takes the dialogue route it will do so without us. We will not be party to attempts by the imperialist powers to disenfranchise the people of this country of their sovereign rights. We cannot afford to be the traitors of our own people nor can we stand by the sidelines and watch. We say NO to a GNU. What we demand is an immediate address of the main issues that gave birth to the MDC. Paramount is the removal of the Fascist dictatorship of Mugabe, the constitutional issue, the labour issue: a new labour act now; and the reversal of privatization in tertiary institutions. A GNU will not address these but will instead compromise them, therefore the struggle continues.

The way forward for us is to combine forces with other progressive elements, those who can see through the lie, to step up and direct the fight. As the MDC moves towards a GNU and destruction, the alternative for us is to jump off the gravy train and consolidate our alignment with the minority militants within its ranks and other forces in the struggle for the working class and the poor against the oppressors. We are prepared to fight, by any means necessary, for the total emancipation of the people Zimbabwe not the manifestation of Neo-liberalism. Forward with the REVOLUTION.

AMANDLA NGAWETHU!!! - Fela Bantu

Hell has no fire

Solidarity of workers, students, peasants and the urban poor whose future for the coming six years has been doomed by the rigging of the presidential elections will be able to reverse this rigging.

We were beggars before we uttered the word chinga! We should remain united until we have achieved real change. We thought milk and honey was for the entire mass of Zimbabwe but only to realise that the wealth of Zimbabwe has been lost in the hands of Zanu PF and bosses. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen.

Now after the presidential elections Zanu PF has already started its attack on workers - the increase of bread and cooking oil. Zanu PF is now shaken and lost in the helm of politics. However as workers we should not be Mutsago to Zanu PF by allowing them to go on with their attacks on us. My words to you fellow workers is that Hell has no fire (Gehena harina moto). No to another six years of worker impoverishment.

We need a new democratic constitution that address bread and butter issues. We cannot continue with the colonial Lancaster House constitution that re-open healing wounds.

We also need a new Labour Act - we are sick and tired of just talking. We want a new Labour Act that is not designed for capitalists who do not go through the toils of a poor and impoverished worker. We want right to strike in the Labour Act - Minimum wage linked to inflation now, Protection of contract workers.

We will not be silenced, united we will never be defeated.

By Nyamavhuvhu Vhuvhuta - National Engineering Workers Union.

International Socialist Organisation Meetings

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

Harare

Town/Mbare	Saturdays - 2.00pm
G.View/Budiriro	Sunday - 2.00pm
Poly/Belvedere	Thursdays 7.00pm
U.Z	Wednesdays 6.00

Bulawayo

NNUST	Tuesday 5.30pm
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Kadoma	Saturdays 2.00pm
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Gweru/MSU	Thursdays 5.30pm
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Chinhoyi	Thursday 5.30pm
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For details on venues and topics, write to P.O. Box 6758 Harare or isozim@hotmail.com or phone 704209 or 091 370 554

ISO Objections to the MDC

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Below is the letter that was sent to MDC president by I.S.O. on its objections to the inter party talks between MDC and Zanu PF.

8 April 2002

Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai
President, Movement for Democratic Change
Harvest House, N. Mandela Avenue, Harare

Fraternal Greetings

RE: ISO Objections to the MDC – ZANU (PF) Inter – Party Dialogue

The International Socialist Organisation sends you its fraternal greetings. We write to express our objections to the on going negotiations between the MDC and Zanu (PF).

For reasons detailed below, the ISO believes that these talks are both unnecessary and destructive to the struggle for democracy and emancipation of working people. They are a betrayal of the many people who built the MDC. Our first point of objection is on principle – why should the MDC negotiate with a regime that butchered and rigged its way to “victory?” In any case we understand the position that had been agreed by the MDC National Council Meeting was that the party leadership first holds consultative meetings and rallies with its general membership before engaging in any talks with Zanu (PF), and that the facilitators should be informed accordingly so that the Zanu (PF) government does not prohibit or disturb such meetings. But this has not happened and we understand talks are starting this afternoon ... why is that so? It’s too soon after the elections when our people feel the pain of the election robbery to start negotiations with Mugabe when he daily insults the opposition.

By accepting these talks the MDC leadership is falling straight into Mugabe’s trap. We have to ask ourselves why Mugabe should want talks so soon after elections, which he claims to have won resoundingly. The reasons are obvious – the regime is in an irredeemable position – the level of the economic crisis (a result of its neo-liberal ESAP reforms) in the context of a drought, growing food shortages and imperialist isolation conspire to ensure that its life span is severely circumscribed. This country faces economic melt down of unprecedented proportions in the next twelve or so months. As the mealie meal, sugar, cooking oil etc queues grow longer and more desperate, the situation is bound to explode, making this country ungovernable, at least by Zanu (PF).

Mugabe desperately needs breathing space to avoid such situation, which is why he is prepared to go into talks, with a party he derides so much. But why should the MDC leadership throw him the life line — when their job is supposed to be to finish him off and shorten the pain of the long suffering masses of this country. His second objective is to neutralize the MDC and in the long run swallow it up just like he did with ZAPU in 1987. Of course it is clear that this time around he is not going for a merger of the two parties but rather their merger in government as happened with ZAPU in 1980 – 82 or with Inkhata with the ANC in South Africa – but the result will be the same, namely the strengthening and consolidation of Zanu (PF). For what can stop Mugabe now accepting some compromise which results in a unity government, including one of a short-term or transitional nature with elections in the end, but boot out such arrangement at the end – What guarantee would the MDC have to force him to keep his word, for after all by then he would have survived the current crisis yet the MDC by the end of any such transitional period would have been significantly compromised in the eyes of its own supporters. We fail to understand the need for continuing with the talks when Mugabe has made it abundantly clear in the address to his Central Committee that he will not entertain the MDC’s main proposal of a re – run of the elections. What he wants is to swallow us.

Many MDC leaders say they can see this but are going through the talks as a formality to show respect to Obasanjo, Mbeki and the “international community.” But Obasanjo and the so-called international community are not pushing for these talks for the interests of the ordinary worker, youth, housewife supporter of the MDC. No! They are doing so firstly to save the skin of their own brother dictator and secondly and most importantly, for them to remain in the good books of the western imperialist countries, who have threatened to shoot down their NEPAD programme unless they bring Mugabe to book. This NEPAD programme is nothing other than the acceleration at a continental level of the neoliberal IMF backed reforms or ESAP that have already brought so much poverty, pain and suffering to the ordinary people of this continent. What they are really scared of are that unless pre-empted now, the Zimbabwean crisis could spiral into massive popular based revolts based on a radicalized MDC as hunger and starvation increase, which would target not only Mugabe but the dirty rich and bosses of this country – i.e. a social revolution that threatens private property, not only in Zimbabwe but the entire region. It is this they want to pre-empt by a national government of unity of the elites and the rich in Zanu (PF) and MDC, which would proceed to implement a vicious neo-liberal ESAP programme against the povo – in other words to combine the MDC’s IMF backed neoliberal Bridge programme with Zanu (PF)’s IMF backed New Millenium Economic Recovery Programme to produce a massive hybrid a hundred times worse than ESAP! What they and the elites in Zimbabwe want is for the MDC to use its undoubted popularity with workers, youths and the urban poor to pacify them and make them accept such a new ESAP just like Joshua Nkomo was used to pacify the people of Matebeleland and the Midlands. This is exactly what Obasanjo and other African leaders did in 1979, to force the Patriotic Front into an unprincipled sell out compromise deal at Lancaster which ensured that white colonial privilege and property, including land, would remain protected even if nominal political power moved to the blacks. This is what they want to do again in 2002. But whilst that would not only bring untold suffering to the ordinary people it would also be the greatest betrayal to the ordinary people who have built the MDC - it would be its kiss of death just as happened to Joshua Nkomo’s ZAPU.

Way Forward

FOR these reasons the ISO strongly recommends that the MDC leadership immediately pulls out of the talks with Zanu (PF) and instead like in Madagascar and earlier on in Serbia and Ivory Coast, as an opposition reject the stolen elections and mobilize the masses to remove such regime through mass action. The current talks will only demoralise and divide the forces of the opposition to the benefit of Mugabe – in any case why negotiate with Mugabe now before he has really felt the pinch of the crisis. Six months from now with the economic crisis so deep he won’t be boasting the way he is now at the talks. On the other hand the people would be much more angry and ready to fight because of the increasing hunger and shortages, retrenchments and dictatorship.

But to effectively mobilize the masses to remove this regime requires that the party completely revamps itself and throw out the burden of neoliberal policies like Bridge and its middle class, bourgeois and imperialist allies it now has and who dominate the party as we had warned, in vain, in our document last February in Nyanga, entitled “MDC revamp the party ... go back to the working people.” Instead of party leaders confusing the masses “celebrating” useless “victories” in the Harare municipal elections, or calling the masses to celebrate Independence Day in Bulawayo or cohabitating with the enemy in the useless talkshop of parliament, the party must now boycott all these institutions and prepare its army for the real struggle ahead by actively participating all democratic struggles, strikes and demonstrations by workers, students and civic society, especially the call for a new constitution by the NCA. How can the

party engage in talks with the regime when it is incarcerating mothers and their children for demanding a new constitution and its supporters butchered as daily revealed in the **Daily News**?

INSTEAD the party must completely reject the IMF, neoliberalism and support bread and butter demands like a new Labour Act that protects contract workers, guarantees the right to strike and a living minimum wage linked to inflation for workers and pensioners; reversal of privatisation in all sectors of the economy including free education and living allowances for all students, reinstatement of all expelled/ suspend students; free health; no to devaluation and price increases; jobs for the unemployed through public works programmes such as houses, dams etc all financed by an increase of taxes / levies on the capitalists and the rich and unilateral cancellation of the foreign debt; seizure without any compensation of commercial farms with full compensation and resettlement of farm workers and finally a new democratic constitution to guarantee such rights.

Mass action works. In 1997 – 98 it forced Mugabe to reverse tax increases and to grant workers a 20 per cent cost of living adjustment. In Argentina it removed five presidents in two months, just like it's working in Madagascar and worked in Serbia and Ivory Coast. On the other hand negotiations, courts, the west, etc have failed here in twenty-two years to remove a much weaker dictator.

In conclusion we advise that the ISO feels the situation in our country has reached such a critical juncture that bold decisions are required by all those who genuinely want to fight for democracy, change and against capitalist exploitation. We cannot have another six years of this regime but the way to remove it is not through useless talks but mass action. For that reason we advise that should the party continue with the talks with Zanu (PF) and refuse to boycott the useless municipal and parliamentary institutions, which are legitimising the regime and corrupting the party as shown in the 400% increments that our Harare councilors have awarded themselves before they have even started addressing the issues of sewerages, roads, houses etc, then the ISO and all its members including those who hold public positions by virtue of their membership of the party shall immediately and without further notice resign from the MDC. Some might say this will weaken or divide our party but rather we should fight for our position from within. But we have already done this before, when as you well know we raised our serious concerns in the February 2001 Nyanga document and the June 2001 Letter from ISO to the MDC in which we raised our serious concerns about the hijacking of the party by the neoliberal middle classes and western interests including over the land question and desperately called for more radical anti-neoliberal, pro-working people positions and re-orientation of the party back to the working people. But all this was in vain and nearly led to the expulsion of our member M. Gwisai from the party. But we remained fighting within without making it a public open fight because of the impending presidential elections. Again this time we have tried our best to fight for our positions from within the party including Gwisai's very strong objections at the last National Council meeting, yet we are going nowhere. But this time the situation is different and we cannot just sit back and allow the struggle to be sold out and are therefore prepared to take this desperate step of resignation. We do not believe that this is dividing the party, for unity based on unprincipled and opportunistic reasons is no desirable unity at all – but we hope that should the worst come to the worst and we are forced to resign, then that should be a wake up call to the ordinary working people, general membership and progressive leaders of the party to mobilize and fight so that the struggle against the Zanu (PF) dictatorship and capitalist exploitation (ESAP) is not sold down the drain. Should this happen then we believe that our action far from weakening the opposition, will in fact strengthen it, and we on our part will remain prepared to unite and work with all forces who are serious and brave enough to confront and remove this regime and its neoliberal capitalist agenda, including the vicious

Labour Relations Amendment Bill coming when parliament reconvenes. We thank you.

National Co-ordinating Committee, ISO.

MDC Responds by Expelling ISO!

The MDC's response to the above letter of ISO was to expell ISO , albeit in an underhand. On 19 April, MDC vice president G. Sibanda summoned the ISO leadership to his office where he stated that at its National Executive meeting of 17 April the MDC had resolved ISO was not a member of MDC as it had no institutional members and therefore the threat to resign was of no effect. As for Gwisai, Sibanda stated that the meeting resolved that since Gwisai was a member of ISO and MDC has decided to go ahead with the talks, court action and participate in national events like the Independence celebrations, Gwisai should immediately resign within seven days or be expelled. This was repeated by MDC president M. Tsvangirai in a press statement on 17 April. But only last July MDC was officially acknowledging ISO as a member: When for instance its sec. general W. Ncube officially wrote to us saying our concerns about problems int he party were being into, after harrassment of Gwisai and ISO over the "The Rule of Law haipi sadza" controversy. Now they say we not members. No! They have expelled us because they want to cut deals with Mugabe! Write or e-mail to tell us your views at Box 6758 Harare or isozim@hotmail.com

Tsvangirai expels ISO ...

"ISO is not even a member of MDC since individuals are members of the opposition in MDC and not organisations...if Gwisai is president of ISO then absolutely he will be charged with misconduct and his Parliamentary seay will be questioned." - Tsvangirai quoted by *Daily News* 18 April 2002

... and coddling up to Zanu (PF)

"The MDC must shut up and allow him to settle there in peace. We as Zanu(PF) are happy that Mudzuri won." *The Standard* 28 April 2002 quoting Joseph Chinotimba, war vets leader and Zanu (PF) Harare province commissar defending MDC's new Harare mayor, Elias Mudzuri's move into the hated \$70million mansion and buying a \$22m Benz and a salary of over \$400 000 a month.

Socialist Worker asks: so who is the real sell out - datya ndiani?

Solidarity message from PTUZ

"The Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe wishes to inform you in the ISO that we are totally behind you. As I write our offices in Manicaland are inundated by scores of teachers from various areas like Chisumbanje, Cheche who have been forcibly evicted, beaten or placed on hit lists as MDC supporters. How can MDC continue talking in such an atmosphere. We have read the latest statements from MDC general secretary W. Ncube and M. Tsvangirai and fail to see why they are harassing you when they are now saying the same things you have been saying. Keep up the struggle."
Taka Zhou, President, P.T.U.Z. - 27 April 2002

Fighting Fund Appeal

Targets nearly reached - Thank you!

We wish to thank all organisations and individuals who responded massively to our special appeal in a very trying time to raise \$100 000 locally and £2 500 Pounds by April 2002. We are still receiving donations and we are going to publish the full list of donations made in our next paper.

So far \$84 000 has been raised locally and £2000 internationally. The money has been used for court cases for arrested comrades and to produce materials in ISO's "No to Talks" campaign to force MDC to cancel the useless talks and mobilise for mass action to remove the illegitimate regime. Let's do the final push to reach our target. Donations to be deposited in: First Direct Bank, 40 Wakefield Road, Leeds LS98 1FO. Account name: John Page; sort code: 40-47-78; account number: 1118 5489 E-mail details of deposits to isozim@hotmail.com

Debates: ISO and MDC – Is Entrism Still Relevant?

Entrism needs patience

Dear Comrades,

The text of the letter is generally very good, with the exception of the call to boycott parliamentary and municipal institutions (which seems mistaken).

As to your decision, let's go back to first principles. The reason why a small revolutionary group should join a larger reformist organization is because it will find there a milieu in which it can work, grow in size, and increase its influence. Tony Cliff always used to emphasize that the milieu need not actually exist mainly within the reformist organization itself: This seems to have been your experience: you couldn't have gained the support you have in working-class areas without being in MDC. Therefore the key question you need to ask yourselves concerns the development of the milieu and of the group: have they evolved to the point where they don't need the environment provided by MDC?

I have the impression that too often your discussions over the past year or so have started from the question of when you are going to leave MDC... Still it is putting things the wrong way round to start with the question of leaving... Cliff emphasized the importance of patience. Often there is no specific moment of departure: in the case of the SWP's entry into the Labour Party and Linksruck's time in the Jusos, the group just evolved to the point where it was operating more and more as an independent organization. The break was an organic process than an abrupt departure.

So how much has changed since you joined MDC? Crucially, are the most advanced workers and activists in the process of breaking with it? From what you say advanced workers have developed some disillusionment but not yet broken with MDC. These attitudes are a source of some, but not overwhelming problems.

Then there is the problem of explaining your decision to the people around you. In part because of the parliamentary seat, but also because of the more general activities of the group, you have a very high national profile, out of proportion to your real size and roots. Will those who look towards you understand why you are pulling out now? The timing is odd. The MDC party leadership decision to talk to the regime is a bad one, but not as bad (or indeed mad) as one to join the government. Why issue an ultimatum now... Why not wait till they actually make a deal with the regime? The abandonment of the seat will be particularly hard to explain.

Underlying the concrete tactical problems you face is the big strategic question of how we relate to reformism. Very few on the far left internationally begin to understand this. They either tail the reformists uncritically (as a large part of the Fourth International tend to) or they dismiss the reformists as reactionaries as bad as the open capitalist parties (e.g. the Democratic Socialist Party in Australia). The latter approach ignores the influence the reformists have on the best sections of the organized working class, while the former capitulates before this influence. We in the IS Tendency understand that reformism is a contradictory formation that both expresses and contains working class struggle. Relating to it means knowing how to work both with and against people to our right – with them when they want to fight against the bosses and the regime, against them when they hold the struggle back.

Revolutionaries can't remain in a hegemonic right wing popular front

Comrades argue that despite its massive turn to the right, revolutionaries must stay in MDC because it remains the main force against the Mugabe dictatorship. It is seen as a united front almost comparable to the emerging anti-capitalist movements like the World Social Forum, the Genoa Social Forum or the Stop the War Coalition.

The "big strategic question" is how to relate to such reformist bodies – entering them (entrism) being one tactic which a small group can use as ISO has been doing with the MDC.

ISO's threat to leave the MDC raises two central issues which are interrelated but not necessarily synonymous: namely whether in principle entrism is still justifiable and secondly even if no longer justifiable whether the timing of the break is appropriate?

Critical factors to consider include firstly, whether the reformist organisation represents rising working class consciousness, secondly the nature of the reformist organisation, in particular whether the revolutionaries can apply united front tactics - ie ideological and

A serious revolutionary intervention involves working on the contradictions within reformism. An entry tactic is one form of this general approach. You have used it very successfully up to now: why stop now?

Only you can make the delicate judgements involved in this decision... Basically our feeling is that you should be more patient, and should continue with the project on which you embarked nearly three years ago. You should carry on fighting alongside the best activists as they carry on the learning process through which they progressively discover that the solutions to their problems lie in their own hands and not in those of the MDC leadership.

Whatever you decide we will of course continue to support you as best we can. We are developing the solidarity campaign with the ISO that we started at the time of the election, and we are ready to respond to any more arrests like those of the Bulawayo students. Good luck!

by Alex Callinicos.

Left Wing Comments

Dear comrades

We would like to congratulate you for the brave stance you took in condemning the MDC leadership in engaging in the useless talks which are going to take the working class nowhere. As leftists we believe in action as you rightly put it, when dealing with the capitalist system. We have made the following observations though:

1) threatening to resign from parliament was uncalled for because when you went into parliament you did not go there to bring change to working class but it was to use it as the platform to make enough noise about workers concerns, that you did well in 2001 about the new labour bill.

2) you joined MDC not to change it but the main aim is to get revolutionary ideas across to much larger sections of the workers with eventual aim of persuading them to break with the reformist ideas and organisations. So what has changed today, the workers are in the MDC and most of them still have the reformist ideas.

3) This we feel will leave ISO with no room to participate in any Demonstration or Uprising because the Workers will not accept you.

With the Crisis in Zimbabwe and the potential of an uprising, we as Leftists should not be found lacking, but produce a leadership to avoid the struggle being hijacked by the Middle Classes like what happened in 1997/98.

We should learn from the past. If you resign from MDC, when it provides the leadership of any uprising against Mugabe, for example the recent NCA Demo, you become irrelevant. Tsvangirai promised action and called for a United Front at the Sunday Rally. Real Revolutionaries have to make themselves part of the Mass Movement sharing in its experiences in order to draw people towards the only consistent solution - Socialist Revolution. If you denounce, abstain or resign from the movement because it is not "pure" you condemn yourselves to sterility and irrelevance.

We comrades extend these few contributions and hopefully you will take them in the same faith we have written them in.

Fraternally
Left Wing - Co-ordinating
Committee

But by the end of 2000 when MDC cancelled the much – anticipated anti – Mugabe mass action, things had changed radically. Power had shifted decisively to the neo liberal middle classes who constituted over 90 per cent of its MPs. Fear of mass action made them opt for the route of negotiations, elections and western sanctions. The activists who had built it were bribed off as now spineless party employees or hounded out of the districts and provinces, despite the heroic resistance in Harare. Activists were replaced by money driven mercenaries. The party became a total and willing tool of the farmers, local capitalists like Eddie Cross, a key architect of ESAP and imperialists like Tony Leon, Tony Blair, Collin Powell and George Bush. MDC has become a classical popular front rather than a united front. MDC is no World Social Forum or a Socialist Alliance but a sinister stalking horse for imperialist designs on the continent. Why should Blair and Bush support it but be on opposing sides of the barricades at Porto Allegre or Rome? A partial reason for the defeat of the MDC was the disillusionment that set in with 50 per cent of the urban voters staying at home. The stolen elections for now mask this growing disillusionment but the engagement in the unpopular talks and the corrupt co-habitation of MDC officials with Zanu (PF) in the councils in the context of a growing economic crisis will soon explode such mask.

Is it possible to work within MDC?

Unlike before, MDC has now become a hegemonic popular front in which there is very little space for revolutionaries to enjoy ideological or organisational autonomy. Dissent is no longer tolerated which marks the end of any real possibility of genuine entrism work in the party. Either a group stays in but at the price of foregoing criticism of the reformist leadership - ie it is liquidated as has sadly been the case with Left Wing, which has been reduced to nothing more than cheer leaders of the MDC neo - liberals. Thus their national co-ordinator, L. Maengahama keeps the silence of the dead in his various MDC positions as general secretary of Harare province and councillor, whilst the group despite existing for nearly a year has not even produced a single newspaper preferring to use the considerable funding it has received locally and internationally to produce uncritical "vote MDC" posters or bribe members by buying them groceries. But it is always important to remember that Popular Fronts like the MDC are historically the grave yards of revolutionaries from China in 1925, Spain 1936 to Indonesia in 1965.

On the other hand a revolutionary group that maintains its revolutionary agenda faces a number of possibilities including expulsion, elimination, irrelevance or in practice the two groups in practise go their separate ways without any specific moment of departure as Alex says of the SWP and Linkstruck.

In reality the later is what has in fact happened with ISO and MDC since at least May 2001 when ISO decided to in practice start operating independently whilst seeking to provoke the formal break by going on an ideological offensive against the MDC reformists as was shown in clashes over Nyanga "Revamp the party" and "Rule of Law haipi sadza" documents. The latest fight over the ultimatum has in fact allowed that break to be formalised, with the party effectively expelling ISO on 19 April when its vice president G. Sibanda informed our national co-ordinator and other members of NCC that the national executive of MDC had resolved that ISO was not its member and Tsvangirai addressing a press conference on 17 April saying the same. I

Thus the issue of ISO leaving MDC is not an issue any more. What remains is for the organisation to formally acknowledge the expulsion at an appropriate opportunity, for instance on 13th May when the talks resume. ISO was right to push to the MDC leadership to the brink to formalise the break. Revolutionaries must not fear to be a minority at times just in order to be with the majority regardless of the level of consciousness of such majority. To do so would be to commit the fatal mistake committed by revolutionaries like Rosa Luxembourg who overstayed in a party, the SPD, which was a thousand times more radical than the MDC.

Timing of break a key tactical question

However, whilst the break has now occurred, there are still certain issues that are unfinished namely that of the parliamentary seat. This is what distinguishes the ISO position from that of Linkstruck and SWP on was the degree of entrism in particular the high national profile of a leading member of ISO, M. Gwisai as one of the most powerful MPs of MDC, with his constituency being the best performing one in the recent elections. The key issue that confronts any group which decides to assume high positions in the host organisation is how such high profile members will formally break out even if the organisation has already left - the timing of the departure of the two is not necessarily the same for as Alex points out, if improperly done it may still hurt the organisation. The timing has to be on sufficient ground to convince the leading advanced workers and activists - (not necessarily the majority of the working class)

This is where Alex has a critically valid point that disengagement over MDC's mere engagement in talks might not be tactically proper. Because

SOCIALISM

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

Socialism can only be built if the working class takes control of social wealth and democratically plan its production and distribution to meet human needs, not private profits.

SOCIALISM FORM BELOW

The working class, is the most powerful class in the struggle for socialism. We stand for their alliance with all other oppressed social classes in particular with peasants and the urban poor.

Socialism can only be attained by the mass self-activity of workers such as strikes and demonstrations.

We support trade unions as essential to the fight for workers' economic and political rights.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

Reforms within the capitalist system cannot end oppression and exploitation. Capitalism must be overthrown.

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 the workers. 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.

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INTERNATIONALISM

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

We campaign for solidarity with workers in all countries. We are internationalist 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.

REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a mass revolutionary 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.

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

of the stolen elections, the working class has not yet had sufficient experience to realise the treacherous nature of its leaders in MDC, hence most advanced workers seem unprepared to accept Gwisai's resignation on that issue, as they feel it might split the party, even as they hate the talks. So was the ultimatum wrong, especially in including Gwisai? Not at all - its an extreme example of the relentless ideological offensive that Lenin said revolutionaries must always execute against the reformists. It has given a living face to the massive popular resentment against the talks giving militants the courage to come openly against the talks, as shown by the demand by the party's national youth wing against resumption of the talks on 13 May. Such is the growing pressure from below that Tsvangirai has now been forced to threaten to quit the talks and call an emergency executive meeting on 6 May whilst on 27 April the party was forced to splash hundreds of thousands of dollars in full page newspaper adverts desperately trying to justify why its in the talks, as the pressure brought by the ISO crisis accelerated and tensions increased in the party. If it were not so why did the MDC leadership not fight such adverts when it started the talks. If ISO continues with its current offensive against the talks and the talks collapse, even if Gwisai remains as an MP still using that platform to expose the bankruptcy of the reformist leadership, and such talks collapse, then ISO gains immense authority in the class, positioning it for a leadership role of militants within and without the MDC ahead of the impending crisis. It will be up to the reformist leaders to expell Gwisai, and thereby assume the responsibility for the formal break.

But if there is an agreement then a powerful ground for Gwisai's resignation emerges, because of the massive popular hatred of the regime. Contrary to Left Wing's assertion given the growing economic crisis and the refusal of MDC to engage the regime and the bosses, there is growing space to work outside MDC, critically over the two issues of constitutional reform led by the NCA and emerging rank and file movements in the trade unions. We successfully used the MPship to develop roots in both movements to the extent that it is no longer essential for our work there, but in fact now an impediment given the growing disillusionment with MDC.

To move forward requires that revolutionaries be courageous enough to take bold decisions such as the break and avoid the mistake of Left Wing of becoming cheer leaders of neo – liberal popular fronts just because of a misplaced overreaching desire to remain with the majority of workers. But then a revolutionary organisation that does so dismally fails in its role of being the vanguard - to be both the memory bank and university of the class.

by Oscar Simbi

Crisis in Zimbabwe Committee

Press Statement

24 April 2002

The arrest NCA members.

The Crisis in Zimbabwe Committee unreservedly condemns the arrest of National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) members on the 22nd of April, ahead of the planned demonstration to demand a new constitution for Zimbabwe. We view this authoritarian action by the State as part of a wider conspiracy to silence dissent through intimidation.

This is the second time that members of the NCA have been unlawfully detained by the Zimbabwe Republic Police. The heavy-handed action by the police against citizens exercising their constitutional freedoms confirms the extent of the crisis of governance facing Zimbabwe as well as the need for a new constitution. It also flies in the face of 'freedom' as a basic tenet and cause of the liberation war. Such conduct is anti-democratic.

These retrogressive state actions contradict President Mugabe's calls for national unity and reconciliation. They expose the lack of genuineness in such rhetoric.

We once again call upon the State to obey international law, SADC conventions and the national Constitution. In particular, the state must protect and promote freedoms of Association, Assembly and Expression rather than thwart them.

The Crisis committee re-iterates its support for the constitutional reform initiative as part of a holistic approach to solving the multi-layered national crisis. The committee further reiterates its previous assertion that the present regime is illegitimate hence to the use of crude force to silence alternative views.

Issued by

The Crisis in Zimbabwe Committee

The fire must keep burning

An account by one of the student activists who were detained for leading a class boycott in solidarity with the stayaway called by the ZCTU immediately after the elections.

“WE greet you in the name of the struggle to bury the anarchy of capitalism and invent a new world without poverty and oppression..

We emerge out of prison inspired by the solidarity. Your support was great and we will find solace in it throughout the trial we now face. Thank you. Through your active measures to get us released you do demonstrate that revolutionary solidarity is an action not word.

The state was extra brutal in dealing with us. They wanted to destroy an example, one of students giving active solidarity to workers struggles. But for us there is no going back, never again are we going to let workers fight on their own. As our banner says ‘workers and students united will never be defeated’.

Our experience demonstrates that the state is highly mobilized to crush uprisings. It will be a tragedy if we do not quickly learn too that our struggles have to be super organized and coordinated if we are to match them. The time for shoddy organization is gone otherwise we will just expose ourselves and boost the confidence of the state.

There is a real danger that disorganized struggles when successfully crushed by the state, as they surely will be, can only disarm and disillusion the sections of workers and students ready to fight.

The police reaction unit that descended upon our college was ready to take on a rebel army. They invaded our offices and went around campus pulling down our posters. We were rounded up and bundled into police trucks and taken to the central police station where we underwent long hours of beatings and harassment. By the time we were thrown into cells we could hardly sit.

The following days were to bring rigorous questioning and assaults. They would flash guns and threaten to shoot us and boast that they could make us disappear and nothing would happen. They particularly wanted to know more about my involvement with the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and accused us of working to unseat the government. We were questioned over our red banner that declared; ‘Workers and students united will never be defeated.’

The role of the Labour movement under threat by POSA?

By Grail Kupakuwana

Zimbabwe’s labour movement a neutral body in terms of the Industrial Relations is now under threat by the newly enacted Public Order and Security Act. Employees gatherings under POSA are now really difficult. POSA requirements censure privacy of public and private gatherings. A fine example is the Ziscosteel shoot out when employees decided to demonstrate against the company’s management over low wages and salaries. A saddening scenario is though the Act exists it has not been applied to the liberation war veterans who have gone on rampage invading farms.

Trade unionists and activists continue to receive direct threats. The labour relations background has been complex for so many years now. On 2 December 1960 the Law and Order Maintenance Act became law as a Consolidation of three principal Institutes (i) subversive principal acts (ii) public order act and lastly the seditious Act. It provoked debate in the legislation of Southern Africa to the then Minister who was challenged to put the act neatly. What is now a surprise is that it was described as a colonial law to frustrate the blacks and the liberation struggle after being viewed oppressive.

The major questions now are how different is LOMA to POSA? What is the purpose of POSA? Once the seed of disobedience is sown by citizens it is challenged and governance is made difficult. The act is attracting wide criticism and opposition. POSA is a departure of fundamental rights in the bill of rights since the law was harshly passed amid protest.

Democracy and fundamental freedoms are universal but however POSA is against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 20 which recognizes freedom of expression, association and assembly. It further goes against the

In the cells it was just horrible. We were mixed with criminals some who were already convicted. The cells were overcrowded, filthy, stinking, and badly infested with lice. You would have to beg to get the toilet. By the third day two comrades had terrible stomach upsets and diarrhea. The police would not allow us to get medical attention.

We refused to sign their prepared statements. Our lawyer was turned away three times. We were released on the fifth day on bail under charges of contravening the repressive Public Order And Security Act. We can not rule out the fact that the magistrate was intimidated by the unprecedented huge crowd gathered for our case.

The dehumanizing experience we were subjected to was meant to break our will. But they failed. Once again it has been proved that jails can not confine the revolutionary spirit and international solidarity works.

The struggle is far from over. Our fight against privatisation can only intensify. This we will do within the broader context of fighting to remove the dictatorship of Mugabe and his neo-liberal policies. The need to have maximum unity among progressive forces, workers and the students can not be over-emphasized.

The movement can only realize the vast potential it has to become a mass movement if it connects with the concerns of the ordinary worker, student, peasant and the oppressed poor Zimbabwean. This link with these forces must come through articulating bread and butter issues; price increases, privatization, shortages of basic commodities, unemployment and state violence and demands for a democratic constitution.

What is needed now is mass struggles directed at the heart of the crisis- dictatorship and the IMF driven capitalist economic policies. Massive labour and students forums will do the trick. It is time for mass meetings to build mass action. Struggle is our only recourse.

Solidarity forever!

Briggs. J. Bomba CO- ORDINATOR ISO [STUDENTS UNION]
PRESIDENT-NATIONAL UNION OF UNIVERSITY
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International Convention of political rights article 22 which does state that “everyone shall have the right to assembly including the right to join and form trade unions” Democracy is under threat as the government is legitimizing the illegitimate through regulation.

Infringement of rights of fundamental freedoms of expression, association or assembly is known worldwide that whenever it happens it’s a sign of displeasure. POSA is going to cause labour unrest. POSA has given a green light to unscrupulous employers an excuse to underpay and employees will fail to improve their working conditions. Any uprise to restore the status quo will be thwarted under POSA. Again under POSA police have been given too much powers to sanction gatherings and they don’t have the knowledge of labour relations. POSA criminalizes boycotts, stayaways and groups.

Repressive laws if not repealed will haunt the labour movement forever and will affect everyone.

The international Labour organization does recognize the declaration of fundamental principles and rights at work which also address freedom of expression and association. Although these rights exist POSA is hindering good labour relations as it even threatens collective job action.

It now goes back that the first primary source of labour relations is the constitution as labour relations are very much affected by the political framework. NCA a civic organization is now spearheading constitutional reform. Government is developing cold feet about it.

The right to strike is universal but here in Zimbabwe under POSA it is restricted. The state and employers are now against the workers – forces of production as governments feels threatened by the labour movement.

POSA is now part of our everyday life. Only Zanu PF is an exemption to Act. The idea of trade unions to mobilize people to bargain have been thwarted. All stakeholders have to come up with yet another Labor act which will protect the workers, employers and trade unions. ZCTU should defy the government like what it did when it went ahead to organise the 6 June 2001 stayaway after fuel increments.

Real International Solidarity Is The Key

The letters that were sent and demonstrations done internationally to put pressure on Zimbabwean state to release the arrested students and workers show the power of real solidarity – the solidarity amongst workers of the world!

When the five students at Bulawayo NUST University were arrested, ISO contacted comrades and sympathizers internationally.

Ordinary people in the USA, Canada, Britain, Ghana, South Africa and elsewhere demonstrated outside the Zimbabwean embassies. They also bombarded Bulawayo Central Police station with telephone calls demanding the release of the students.

On several occasions, the police came to the cells where the students were detained and complained. It was this action that kept up the spirit of the jailed students. When they were being taken to the courts for bail remand, we heard of the magnificent demonstrations that had been organized at the Zimbabwean embassies.

During all this, several e-mails were sent to the mainstream daily newspapers. *Only one was published.* Several requests were made that middle class organizations put out statements calling for the release of the students. *Not one responded.*

It was the international pressure of ordinary working class solidarity that helped to secure the early release of the detained students. It is this sort of international solidarity that ordinary Zimbabweans need – not the sanctions or allying with right-wing bastards like Bush and Blair - that can help remove Mugabe.

Zanu PF's agenda in all SRC set ups

Whave learned of Zanu PF's plan to hijack ZINASU by infiltrating all SRC's in the greater Zimbabwe.

At MSU, Harare Polytechnic and Belvedere Technical Teacher's college, the ruling party has made great strides in ensuring that once again it will steal (or attempt to) the elections so that the doctrine of dictatorship is entrenched ad infinitum. Very soon Hondo yeminda will be the institutions' anthem of the day as evidenced by nightly meetings at Harare Poly since long back.

Students at Harare Poly have confirmed that any student associated with SRC radicals gets a kick and is shown the way home. Some ND1 students vying to get into ND2 are being asked informal questions like "wakambodanana here na we SRC? Any link with the SRC would result in automatic disqualification, though a student would have passed the ND1 level.

At MSU, we have evidence linking the vice chancellor, students' Dean, Registrar and the deposed NCA Vice Chairman Chris Gwatidzo, to selection of nominees for SRC posts at the college, and are using residence halls' Sub-wardens, who are pro-Zanu PF. The administration has promised funding to meet the nominees' campaigns, and ensure they, like their "leaders" burst into office through mechanised means. The 2001/2 vice president of the SRC is an example of one plant who stole the elections.

Belvedere TTC has not been spared the ruling party's tentacles' as it has been learnt that the interim SRC is composed of class representatives who are again sympathetic to the ruling party. A visit to the college on 18 March revealed that silence to unfamiliar faces is the order of the day. Information as to the class reps being nominated by the college administration was sucked out through "friends" who just after disclosing the dubious goings-on suddenly left scared of being weeded out.

Zanu PF has gone too far. We call upon all students with future of all at heart to support efforts of fighting such an insensitive agenda that attack students. We will be in the streets shortly to demand no intention by government in student's government. We must demand:-

(1) No tuition, but grants and (2) No to privatisation of catering.

by *Mbuya Nehanda*

WE ARE writing to express our outrage and condemnation at the arrest and treatment of five students – John Bomba, Tendai Jeka, Richard Nyengera, Bernard Mupamba and Agrippa - from the National University of Science and Technology in Bulawayo.

These students were protesting at the privatization of colleges and universities. They were opposing the imposition of tuition fees and challenging the regressive Public Order and Security Act.

These are the same sort of demands raised by students and professors in Universities and Colleges across Canada. The expression of opposition to the neo-liberal policies of privatisation in the education sector is not a crime. In fact the right to dissent is a fundamental basic freedom associated with democratic society.

We are shocked and outraged at the failure of the Mugabe government to protect this right. While some courses explain the impact of imperialism on Third World development, the actions by Mugabe cannot explain what happens inside Zimbabwe itself.

Rest assured that demonstrations against the denial of basic civil rights in Zimbabwe are being organized.

Fraternally,

Abigail Bakan, Professor of Political Studies, Queens University, Ontario, Canada, Brian Champ, Toronto, Canada, Nicole Gombay, Ontario, Canada

Clean Out ZINASU – Boot Out The Mercenaries!

Student activism reached its zenith in the late 1980's through struggle from below the students had a leftist guiding ideology, were the voice of the voiceless, spoke up on behalf of the masses and had grassroots bodies augmenting the union. These bodies helped in propagandizing, agitating, mobilizing and organizing the students through the Society for Modern Scientific Thought and the Society for African Studies.

With the onset of the neo-liberal programmes in the 1990's, students lost their grip on leftist ideology and retrogression of activism began. Still they identified with the masses and were able to organize demonstrations against police brutality. The grassroots organizations had vanished and therefore the strengths of their actions deteriorated.

Activism was saved from extinction by merging it with civic societal issues, culminating in the swallowing of ZINASU by the MDC.

The group of activists that had emerged since then had failed to revive ideology and organization at grassroots level. The union has become a grouping of office-bearers out of touch with the grassroots and pre-occupied with money-mongering from middle class civic organizations.

What is to be done?

The immediate tasks before us demand resolution and ideological clarity. We must continue with our fight for democracy, the fight for the re-instatement of all expelled and suspended comrades and defend our right to hold political meetings at campus.

The other front to which the struggle calls us is the economic front. We must reject tuition fees and bank loans and instead call for nationalised catering services and accommodation plus grants. The current policies of privatization do not only affect us but workers and the poor.

We must demand the permanent implementation of price controls and the prices of commodities to go to April 2001 levels, reversal of privatised parastatals and a higher minimum wage on May Day. We must fight the neo-liberal policies and dictatorship of the two parliamentary parties.

Join S.A.P. to build the resistance and attend meetings on your campus. SHINGA MUDZIDZI SHINGA!

Steve Biko, National Co-Ordinator, S.A.P. P.O. Box 6758, Harare, e-mail sapzim@hotmail.com, phone (04) 704209

Reflections - victory near - Mobilise for accreditation proceedings!

As most are aware, Reflections a printing Rank & File movement formed on 11-08-01 at Glad Tidings Hall for the principal purpose of removing the incompetent Zimbabwe Graphic Workers Union executive and put in place leadership that is accountable and capable of advancing workers' demands. To that effect Reflections applied to Ministry of Labour to convene accreditation proceedings under the Labour Relations Act to dissolve the executive after both Z.C.T.U. and N.E.C. had failed to take heed of our petitions or at least just to respond. Victory is now near. After much delay the Ministry is now going to publish the Notice of Proceedings in the government gazette by 03/05/02, with accreditation proceedings thirty days later.

Admittedly, the fact that Reflections last held its meeting on 10/02/02 should raise a lot of questions from its membership as this creates a vacuum but be rest assured your executive was busy on logistical work pressing the ministry to institute accreditation proceedings and for now we are at least almost there and an executive meeting will be held on 27/04/02 to map out an action plan and everything will be communicated to you in due course. The general secretary also met the Reflections co-ordinator for Gweru and the progress there is forthcoming and Gweru was advised to set up structures there as we move in to function as a trade union. We believe in worker power and self activity. Already we have members in the NEC sub committees on the the redrafting of the printing and packaging CBA who are pushing our positions, as put across in the letter to N.E.C. of 18/02/02 and circulated to membership. In particular

Construction Workers Arise!

WITH the prevailing economic hardships how can a seven thousand two hundred dollars construction worker make ends meet? But for how long should we wait for the Messiah to come to the rescue? Comrades do you think there is someone who should come and put our house in order without you and me setting the initiative.

It is now three months into 2002 and it is time for collective bargaining. Let us not wait for an announcement by anyone. Instead we should start discussing it right now in our work places during lunch-hour meetings.

The neo-liberal contracts signed by workers are very disturbing. To try to keep workers divided and isolated, the stinking bosses have introduced a two-week working contract. Secondly they "allow" us to set up Workers Committees, which comprise three officials but not two other members. The committee has to be approved by management to ensure that they are bosses puppets. Some of them are relatives or friends of the bosses.

To begin to organize our workplaces, we must begin by demanding and fighting for a new Labour Act in favour of workers. Remember that the bosses, ZANU(PF) and MDC do not have mercy on workers. The only language these people understand is action comrades!

Trade Union

Arise comrades! The struggle we are facing does not need foreign aid like toothless trade unions. It is high time we build our Rank-and-File movement (RAFs) activists. Other industries have done it, why can't we? We don't need money people to come and tell us "we are here for your long unsolved problems" yet these people have hidden agendas.

The Way Forward

Whilst Mugabe and his crew have draconian laws like POSA, we have "POSA proof ways with us - mass action. Remember the 1996-97 demos sent the message to the millers so lets join hands in the April mass actions. Mushandi, mudzidzi and poor peasants say "No To Dictatorship and Neo-Liberalism".

SHINGA MUSHANDI! QINA MSEBENZI! SHINGA MUDZIDZI! - *By Kasikai Dhlwayo*

they are demanding that all workers in the industry including admin staff be covered; contract workers be paid on a rate of one and half times and casual a rate of x 2; anyone employed for 6 weeks in two months be made permanent. The next meeting of the NEC committees is 4th May and members will be updated. Ironically ZGWU leaders are not even involved at the last meeting its national organiser, Samuriwo was chucked out by Bensen - so how can they claim to be representing us. Reflections is also demanding fresh negotiations for July increments as the 25% is nothing considering the increases in prices of basic commodities which have started with bread and cooking oil. But to achieve victory at the accreditation proceedings and the CBA talks requires all of us to mobilise hard. We need petitions signed by at least 4 000 workers to ensure success at the proceedings. Already we have 1 100 just slightly less than ZGWU's 1 500 official membership. Reflection members who are still in the union must initiate and pass resolutions in their different chapels and branches calling for the dissolution of the recurrent leadership and supporting Reflections. Workers Committees must also pass similar resolutions. To push this mobilisation we must seriously consider calling general meetings in all major towns to uplift members morale. **The next meeting of the full Harare Reflections Committee is on 11 May 1.00 pm. Make sure your company sends its representatives. For details of venue or for petition forms get in touch with me. United workers can never be defeated.**

Shinga Mushandi - H. S. Masadza General Secretary Tel. 704209

Textile Workers - wake up and fight

THIS is an open challenge to all youthful and right thinking workers in the Textiles industry especially members of the Zimbabwe Textile Workers Union, which boasts to be one of the unions with a sound financial base but ironically it has the lowest paid workers. Cde Lenin said *SI vis Pacem Paa bellum*.

The year 2001 saw the worst wage agreement in the history of the union if not the whole of Z.C.T.U., signed by the old guards of the union. The agreement left the lowest paid worker getting \$1 976-56 per week. If it was not for the TNF agreement these workers would be getting these peanuts by now.

These unfortunate developments did not go well with Harare branch members, who showed their anger by kicking out the G.S. and the regional president out of the report back meeting on 03/06/01. The workers were ready to fight the heartless leadership and take control of their union. To push the docile leadership out of office, other demands were also added; these were as follows

- failing to negotiate for housing, transport allowances.
- inaccountability - they failed to account for 10% of union contributions allocated to educational programmes
- denying members access to union constitution and other information
- too employee friendly

Surprisingly all the momentum gathered melted and died a natural death, giving another lease of life to the uncaring, biased and bosses praying leadership. This was mainly for many reasons, but notable it was due to lack of organised workers at shopfloor levels to consolidate work of the branch leadership.

For the way forward I urge the workers to start rank and file movement (RAF's). The Kadoma workers have already done so, especially banking in the potential in most of the radicalised workers around Harare

By Amilca

Socialist Worker

WAGE AND SALARY NEGOTIATIONS:

Workers Beware!

Vashandi Ngwarirai!

Zisebenzi Qaphelani!

IT IS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING time again and this time workers have to be resolute. With the scarcity of basic commodities prices have sky-rocketed by over 100% thereby seriously eroding the workers' income. The bread basket for an average family now \$23 00 but workers are getting a paltry \$9 000 (some even less). Most of them are walking long distances to work every day. How do we make up for the difference?.

We must demand a minimum wage that is above the poverty datum line. The ZCTU must call for a national minimum wage linked to inflation now and all affiliate unions must adopt that position. No negotiations should be based on percentages. Those trade union bureaucrats who will sympathise with the bosses must be met with the bosses' best language - STRIKE. Preparations must start now with labour forums and setting up of strike committees.

ZANU(PF) has won the elections and so price controls are being lifted; as evidenced by the rise in the prices of soft drinks and beer. More are to follow with bread and cooking oil having started already. The impending drought spells more hardships for the worker. Workers have to stand up and fight for their survival. To show that they are not our friends the bosses have ganged up with the government to viciously oppress the workers. They sabotaged the 3-day stayaway (called for by the ZCTU) to save their interests, and July Moyo empowered them to fire any worker who heeds the call. Are we going to starve while ZANU(PF) and the bosses live luxurious lives off our sweat? Never. It is high time close ranks and demand share. Enough is enough' now is payback time \$28 000 now or it's war. This time victory is ours. Strike action is our best and only weapon

SHINGA MUSHANDI SHINGA! QINA MSEBENZI QINA!

NEW LABOUR ACT NOW!

BILL COMES TO PARLIAMENT IN MAY

- ◆ Mobilise now - Organise labour Forums.
- ◆ Workers demand nothing short of adoption of the bill as amended by the labour Body.
- ◆ ZCTU call for a nation wide General Strikes and demonstrations on the day to press for our demands.
- ◆ Right to STRIKE NOW!