

Vanguard

**Organ of the National Steering Committee of the
Zimbabwe Communist Party** Vol. 2 No. 1
1st May 2017

*We announce to the
workers, peasants
and
revolutionary
intelligentsia
of Zimbabwe
the formation of the
Zimbabwe
Communist
Party*



**ZimCom Publishers for the
Zimbabwe Communist Party**

From:
How the Steel
was Tempered
(1934)



Man's dearest possession is life. It is given to him but once, and he must live it so as to feel no torturing regrets for wasted years, never know the burning shame of a mean and petty past; so live that, dying, he might say: all my life, all my strength were given to the finest cause in all the world — the fight for the Liberation of Mankind

by Nikolai Ostrovsky (1904-1936)

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Vanguard began as the newsletter of the Zimbabwe Communist Group and four issues were produced between January and April 2016. With the unification of the Zimbabwe Communist Group and the Zimbabwe Communist League on 1st May 2017, it was agreed that *The Vanguard* — now simply *Vanguard* — would now be the responsibility of ZimCom Publishers formerly a subsidiary of the Zimbabwe Communist League and now a subsidiary of the Zimbabwe Communist Party. We aim to publish *Vanguard* quarterly with three issues this year, 2017.

There will be no Editorial in this issue as the place of the Editorial will be taken by the speech and press release given by Comrade Nicholas Ngqabutho Mabhena, General Secretary of the Zimbabwe Communist Party at the Bulawayo Press Club on 3rd May 2017.

Ian Patrick Beddowes

Editor, ZimCom Publishers and *Vanguard*

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**PRESS STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE
LAUNCH OF THE ZIMBABWE COMMUNIST PARTY
MADE BY GENERAL SECRETARY COMRADE
NICHOLAS NGQABUTHO MABHENA**



Members and Friends of the Press
Fellow Zimbabweans
Ladies and Gentlemen
Comrades

On 20 June 2015, Communists in Zimbabwe held a seminar in Bulawayo, under the theme, “Is Zimbabwe Ready for the Vanguard of the Working-Class?”

The seminar gave birth to the Zimbabwe Communist Group which, working with the Zimbabwe Communist League, set out to establish the vanguard of the working class in Zimbabwe.

Following wide consultations, also informed by the absence of the vanguard role player in the Zimbabwean body politic, the Zimbabwe Communist Group and the Zimbabwe Communist League have from 1st May 2017 resolved to dissolve their two separate groupings to adopt a united constitution to now establish the Zimbabwe Communist Party (ZCP), a Marxist-Leninist political organization whose ideology will be that of scientific socialism. Ours is a class movement, a three pronged struggle against imperialism, dictatorship and the parasitic bourgeoisie.

We seek to democratize the Zimbabwean State as we continue the transitional journey to a Socialist State whose economy and means of production are owned and controlled by the collective citizenry, affording each one of us an equal opportunity to realize our worth, potential and excel in our chosen fields of economic and social contributions to the country.

Our immediate task is to unite the workers by offering a platform for building a true workers trade union movement. We sadly note the manipulation of the ZCTU for political gain — workers need an independent, revolutionary trade union centre which will advance the struggle of workers as opposed to being diverted by politicians and used as a step ladder for selfish ends.

We seek to unite the workers, the majority of whom have been forced into the informal sector being victims of the great economic and managerial deception of 1980. As revolutionaries we seek to embark on an exercise of genuine nation building since our people have been divided into ethnic enclaves since attaining independence.

The regime has failed to resolve ethnic divisions in our society. Their rule became synonymous with modern day slavery where humans using the Zimbabwean state machine exploited fellow humans in the form of citizens — with opposition playing to the gallery of the capitalist world. The worker and the poor peasant became the ultimate loser in a game of thrones that ensues up to this day.

As the June 2015 International Labour Organization Resolution 204 dictates, the Zimbabwe Communist Party seeks to formalize the informal sector, working closely with the sector players to build capacity and raise class consciousness.

We will work with the Zimbabwean workers based in the diaspora, many of whom are exploited by their employers in their different host countries, having become economic migrants and refugees thanks to the anti-people exploitative and inhuman policies of the current capitalist government.

We therefore, in seeking to concientize our fellow citizens, and eventually establishing an equal society void of classes, introduce the Party for the working class, the peasants and the poor.

Ours is an invitation to the people of Zimbabwe, who for decades have borne the yoke of capitalism and exploitation in its many facets, to come together and revisit the class struggle as we also perpetuate the struggle for freedom from both imperialism and dictatorship.

Socialism In Our Life Time!

We thank you!



To the Zimbabwe Communist Party at its Founding Conference

28 April 2017

Dear Comrades

Message of Greetings and Solidarity to the Founding Congress of the Zimbabwe Communist Party

The Communist Party of Britain sends its greetings and solidarity to the Founding Congress of the Zimbabwe Communist Party.

The struggle against imperialism in Southern Africa, particularly British imperialism, continues. Imperialism's economic and political legacy and its continuing attempts at political destabilisation make the existence of a Communist Party ever more important.

A Communist Party armed with Marxism-Leninism will provide the workers and working farmers of Zimbabwe with the analysis and understanding needed to secure social and economic emancipation.

Dear Comrades, we wish you every success in the work of your Congress

Long live working class internationalism !

Long Live Socialism !

Yours in comradeship

ROBERT GRIFFITHS
General Secretary



Party of Communists USA
P. O. Box 140434
Staten Island, New York
United States of America
partyofcommunistsusa.org



April 27, 2017

Dear Comrades:

We are very glad to hear the news that the first organizational meeting of the Zimbabwe Communist Party will be held on April 29-30, 2017 on the initiative of the Zimbabwe Communist Group and the Zimbabwe Communist League in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. In this historic location, history continues to be made with the foundation of the Zimbabwe Communist Party.

Your experience is parallel to that of our Party, PCUSA. We launched a new Party in 2014 on May Day, and held our inaugural congress in April of last year. The old CPUSA continues down the path of liquidation and right opportunism. A new, principled, fighting Communist Party was needed, so we took the initiative just as you comrades are doing now.

We anticipate that at first, the process will be slow. But after working people learn of the existence of the new Party, your efforts will bear fruit. The neo-liberal model of economic and social development is a dismal failure. There is only one future for workers, and that future is socialism. We are prepared to stand with your party as one, united, proletarian force, small in numbers, but great in influence and ideological strength. Your struggle is an inspiration to us, as it always has been.

Continue this outstanding work comrades. The comradeship between our two peoples can never be broken. We are in this struggle together. If we can be of assistance to you internationally, let us know and we will do everything we can to help. We love you comrades! AMANDLA!

Warm comradely regards,

Joseph F. Hancock

Joseph F. Hancock
Chair, International Department
Party of Communists USA

ZIMBABWE COMMUNIST PARTY

POLITICAL ECONOMY

POLICY DOCUMENT

Section 1

A Brief History of the Political Economy of Zimbabwe

1. The history of Zimbabwe's current political economy starts in 1890 with the arrival of the Pioneer Column. Colonization soon swept away the previous relations of production and replaced it by capitalism. Historically, Zimbabwe had traded with the Arabs, Swahilis, Portuguese, Indians and Chinese in gold and ivory, but in the main there was peasant production of grain in the form of different varieties of sorghum and millet, vegetables, goats and cattle. The degree of importance of livestock rearing in relation to crop-growing varied according to the amount of rainfall and of soil conditions found in different parts of the country. In some areas, communal-patriarchal relations of production had given way to a form of feudalism and the beginning of class society. Here and there, there were still hunter-gatherers. But from at least as early as the 14th century, there was a small class of traders linked to hereditary leaders.

2. The colonizers simultaneously brought with them both modern infrastructural development and racial oppression. They determined the shape of the country which was at first called "British South Africa" and from 1895 "Rhodesia".

3. European settlers did not enter the country which we now call Zimbabwe simply to oppress black people; they came for economic reasons which were dictated by the development of capitalism in Europe through the 19th century until it had reached its monopoly stage. Small capitalists had been swallowed by big capitalists. Capitalism needed to grow through the export of capital to make more profit and through the ever-increasing need for raw materials both from mining and agriculture. In 1885, the leaders of the contesting European capitalist countries came together at the Berlin Conference and divided Africa between them. Prior to that, European capital had been content with trading ports around the African coast but few had ventured into the interior. The percentage of Africa belonging to European Powers was 11% in 1876, and 90% in 1900

4. In 1916, in his book *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism* V.I. Lenin made this summary of the main features of imperialism:

“(1) The concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life;

“(2) The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this “finance capital”, of a financial oligarchy;

“(3) The export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance;

“(4) The formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves;

“(5) The territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed. Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.”

5. Lenin also quoted Cecil Rhodes in *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*:

“I was in the East End of London [a working-class quarter] yesterday and attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches, which were just a cry for ‘bread! bread!’ and on my way home I pondered over the scene and I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism... My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e. in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced in the factories and mines. The Empire, as I have always said, is a bread and butter question. If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists.”

6. The Pioneer Column was not a project of the British Government; it was planned and financed by the British South Africa Company a joint-stock company under the leadership of Cecil Rhodes looking principally for profit.

7. It was J.V. Stalin in 1924 who in his book *The Foundations of Leninism* pointed out:

“The third contradiction is the contradiction between the handful of ruling, ‘civilized’ nations and the hundreds of millions of the colonial and dependent peoples of the world. Imperialism is the most barefaced exploitation and the most inhuman oppression of hundreds of millions of people inhabiting vast colonies and dependent countries. The purpose of this exploitation and of this oppression is to squeeze out super-profits. But in exploiting these countries imperialism is compelled to build there railways, factories and mills, industrial and commercial centres. The appearance of a class of proletarians, the emergence of a native intelligentsia, the awakening of national consciousness, the growth of the liberation movement — such are the inevitable results of this ‘policy’. The growth of the revolutionary movement in all colonies and dependent countries without exception clearly testifies to this fact. This circumstance is of importance for the proletariat inasmuch as it saps radically the position of capitalism by converting the colonies and dependent countries from reserves of imperialism into reserves of the proletarian revolution.”

8. The truth of Stalin’s statement is born out in Zimbabwe by the fact that despite the co-ordination of the different ethnic groups across Zimbabwe in the resistance war which began in Matabeleland 1893 and later spread across the country due to the influence of the Kalanga religious leader Makwati (Mukwati), they could not defeat the imperialist colonizers. Spears could not defeat Maxim machine-guns. The old system of chiefs and kings was either swept away or made subservient to the Rhodesian administration. The colonizers built infrastructure, railways, coal-mines, power stations. Hut tax was imposed so that young men would have to work in the mines or for other European businesses in order to earn money to pay that tax. Thus there was the beginning of a native proletariat. Resistance was not led, for the most part, by the old traditional leaders, but rather by the young men trained in the mission schools who were part of the new system.

9. The colonization of Zimbabwe and South Africa was, however, different from that further north. In most of Africa, imperialism sought at that time only to plunder minerals or to establish plantations. In Rhodesia and South Africa the Europeans who came to settle were trying to establish a permanent home. So, despite their arrogant racism, they built an infrastructure based on European standards and at the same time, especially for those of working class origins, established for themselves living standards of which they could only dream in Europe; black servants became the norm for people who had never had servants in their place of origin.

10. From 1890 to 1923, Southern Rhodesia (as well as Northern Rhodesia) was ruled by the British South Africa Company. The settlers of Southern Rhodesia, however, did not want permanent rule from a board of directors whom they had no say in choosing; they petitioned the British Government, and, following a whites-only referendum, were given "Responsible Government". Mindful, even then, that unlike Australia, New Zealand, Canada and even South Africa that whites were only a small minority, the British Government did not give Southern Rhodesia official Dominion status; but with its own Parliament, it was, in fact, run in a similar way to the Dominions. With power in their hands, the Rhodesian settlers established an infrastructure of roads and railways. Wankie Colliery supplied coal for the provision of electricity and in the 1960s the Kariba Dam supplied hydro-electricity. Iron ore was mined in the Midlands and the state-owned Rhosteel (later Ziscosteel) became the centre of the steel industry.

11. In agriculture, the 1930 Land Act divided the land into white-owned land and African-owned land. About half the land was allocated to the white minority and about half to the black majority. In general, the best land was given to the white minority. Although there were a number of subsequent Acts which modified the original Act in one way or another, sometimes giving concessions to Africans and at other times taking more land away from them, the pattern of land ownership remained more or less the same until Independence in 1980 and for some time after.

12. Of great commercial importance were tobacco, sugar and tea with cotton coming somewhat later. pine forests were established in Manicaland by the Forestry Commission and there were large agro-industrial estates responsible for tea and sugar.

13. Although it is true that 70% of maize was produced by black communal farmers, it is also true that 70% of the population lived in the rural areas. The cities, then, were supplied with most of their staple food through the efforts of the white commercial farmers.

14. The white farmers also set up collective marketing organizations. Dairyboard, Cotton Marketing Board, Grain Marketing Board etc. as well as Farmers Co-op as a consumer co-operative.

15. Private industry grew up in the towns and cities but workers were very poorly paid. The fact that most male workers relied in part for their maintenance on their women-folk producing food on the communal land only served to drive the wage levels down. In 1948, Southern Rhodesia experienced a General Strike organized by black workers. Subsequently government was forced to try to alleviate working conditions.

16. 1945 marked the end of the Second World War. Though today it is often portrayed in movies as a victory for the USA and Britain, the reality, which people at that time understood, was that the main burden of the fighting was taken up by the Soviet Union. Even outside the Soviet Union, the main resistance movements in Europe, especially those of France Italy, Greece, Albania and Yugoslavia were led by Communists. In the Far East also, it was the Communists in China, Vietnam and Korea who seriously fought Imperial Japan, the ally of Nazi Germany in Asia.

17. In 1945, soon after the end of the war the 6th Pan-African Congress (was held in Manchester, Britain. With the defeat of fascism in Europe came the demand for African independence.

18. In the early 1950s, Gamal Abdel Nasser seized power in the British semi-colony of Egypt throwing out the corrupt King Feisal; soon after, the first major anti-colonial war in Africa took place in the French colony of Algeria. In Kenya the Land and Freedom Army, better known as the Mau Mau killed a handful of white settlers initiating a brutal response from Britain in which thousands of Kenyans were massacred and thousands more tortured. It was clear that the tide of African nationalism could not be stopped. Jointly, Britain and France adopted a new policy — neo-colonialism. “You can have your black President, National Flag and National Anthem — we will control your economy.”

19. During the 1960s there was a rapid move by Britain and France to grant “Independence” to African countries. However, in doing so, a great deal of power was given to the greedy black élite which yearned for the living standards of the European colonizers without having their organizational skills, or even the understanding of capitalism of their former masters — and, in fact, their former masters were not, for the most part really “former”. They simply receded into the background, still reaping the profits but without direct control.

20. As early as 1961, the African writer Frantz Fanon had this to say in the chapter *The Pitfalls of National Consciousness* in his famous book *The Wretched of the Earth*:

“The objective of nationalist parties...is... strictly national. They mobilize the people with slogans of independence, and for the rest leave it to future events. When such parties are, questioned on the economic programme of the state that they are clamouring for... they are incapable of replying, because, precisely, they are completely ignorant of the economy of their own country.

“In underdeveloped countries, we have seen that no true bourgeoisie exists; there is only a sort of little greedy caste, avid and voracious, with the mind of a huckster, only too glad to accept the dividends that the former colonial power hands out to it. This get-rich-quick middle class shows itself incapable of great ideas or of inventiveness. It remembers what it has read in European textbooks and imperceptibly it becomes not even the replica of Europe, but its caricature.”

21. After the granting of “Independence” to countries further north, when dealing with southern Africa the imperialists were faced with a problem. There were white settler regimes in place put there during an earlier stage of imperialism. It was obvious that they could not survive. Worse (in terms of the interests of the imperialists) in the Portuguese colonies, the liberation movements of Angola and Mozambique in particular had strong links with the underground Portuguese Communist Party — and with the Soviet Union. In South Africa, the main liberation movement, the African National Congress (ANC) was strongly influenced by the underground Communist Party and was supported by the Soviet Union. In Zimbabwe, from 1962, the liberation movement, the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU), had established strong links with the Soviet Union. The task, then, for the imperialists, was to replace the out-dated white settler regimes by black regimes — but not by Communists! The new rulers must be willing tools of monopoly capitalist, in particular mining interests.

22. Further, local southern African whites had to some degree, set up semi-autonomous economies outside of the direct control of imperialism. This was not too popular in Europe and America.

23. By 1965, and under pressure from the Commonwealth, Britain put sanctions against the intransigent Rhodesian Government. The imperialists were manoeuvring towards the establishment of a black neo-colonial government. The growing ties between ZAPU and the socialist world were not part of that plan; British intelligence manufactured a split in the movement, using as an excuse that the leader, Nkomo was a “member of a minority tribe”. The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), ostensibly more militant, was born in 1963 and, with the assistance of the imperialist powers, was to come to power in 1980.

24. In 1965, the Rhodesian minority, unwilling to grant the vote to the black majority as demanded by the British government, made their “Unilateral Declaration of Independence” (UDI), and following the imposition of economic sanctions by Britain, began to build economic autonomy. True, a lot of sanctions-busting took place, but state planning and control was strengthened.

25. By the time the Independence of Zimbabwe came in 1980, the economy was very strong. The Rhodesian dollar (and subsequently the Zimbabwe dollar) was valued at higher than the British pound. But there was a problem in that a great deal of the African population expected to quickly achieve the living standards enjoyed by the small white minority.

26. It should be noted here, that 1980, the year of Zimbabwe’s Independence also marked the beginning of the neo-liberal agenda of privatization and removal of controls from the banking system; this took off world-wide when Margaret Thatcher became British Prime Minister in 1979 Ronald Reagan became US President in 1981.

27. This trend was further deepened by the computer revolution which facilitated the movement of money around the world and created the conditions whereby money was used to make more money rapidly and with only a loose relationship to actual production. This trend has led internationally to a few people becoming very rich in the midst of an increasing number of predatory wars started by the United States and its allies and an increase in world poverty and human trafficking.

28. Following Zimbabwean Independence, the Rhodesian system remained in place and during the 1980s there was a modest increase in real wages and the living standards of the African majority. There was some import substitution, but there was little innovation or infrastructural planning.

29. In the late 1980s we saw the first major outbreak of the “shiny disease”.

What is the “shiny disease”?

The shiny disease is the idea that we must have the latest shiny technology, whether or not it is appropriate for our specific needs. Thus, for example, the tendency is for emergent business people will buy the latest Mercedes Benz rather than a 4x4 bakkie even if their home is in a rural area without proper roads.

30. Nationally, it was decided that steam locomotives were too old-fashioned — despite the fact that Zimbabwe has known coal deposits that can last at least another 300 years — but does not have oil. Further, at the time of Independence in 1980, Zimbabwe was manufacturing its own steam locomotives.

31. National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) asked Canada for advice on how to modernize. The Canadians of course advised Zimbabwe to buy diesel locomotives from them — and also spare parts. Because of this, Zimbabwe also had to increase its import of diesel. Steam locomotives are more labour intensive than diesel, but because everything connected with diesel locomotives had to be imported, they became more expensive. Zimbabwe, therefore, paid out a great deal of valuable forex in order to make Zimbabweans unemployed.

32. Until 1991, the Zimbabwe Dollar was not convertible outside the country. Not making one's currency available on the international market DOES create some bottlenecks. Therefore during the 1980s Zimbabwe was sometimes unable to import the constituents of toothpaste or of match-heads. Youth wanted Nike takkies rather than North Star. The idea grew that foreign made is better. There are many stories of people boasting about products purchased in other countries, only to discover that those very products were made in Zimbabwe.

33. In this period, the Finance Minister Bernard Chidzero proved to be efficient at his job. He was a good accountant. Unfortunately the ZANU(PF) government — ZANU was by now adding "Patriotic Front" to its name to become ZANU(PF) — did not understand the difference between accountancy and political economy. It was Chidzero who championed the neo-liberal agenda in Zimbabwe from within government. There was also pressure from the imperialist powers which had installed ZANU(PF) and Mugabe as the government of Zimbabwe. This pressure was strengthened by the fact that East European socialism was in crisis (political rather than economic).

34. Through a combination of these factors, Zimbabwe was pushed into the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) put together by the World Bank and the IMF. This was the real beginning of the neo-liberal agenda in Zimbabwe. Immediately both luxury goods and cheap imports poured into the shops. The ZimDollar started to rapidly decline in value. Factories closed, wage levels dropped and unemployment rose. ZANU(PF) had by this time swallowed ZAPU and the élite became ever more remote from their constituents.

35. Trade unionists justifiably began to discuss the formation of a labour party; but they had no funding. Simultaneously, the white farmers who had grabbed land following the 1930 Land Act, in 1994 successfully challenged a law which would have taken land away from them without compensation. Then came the Congo War; following the demise of Mobutu Sese Seko, Laurent Kabila was installed as the new President of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He refused to follow the dictates of those who had put him there, demanding that those mining in Congo should put money back into Congo. The United States used its puppet states of Uganda and Rwanda to invade the DRC under CIA direction and with the latest US weaponry. Zimbabwe sent troops and immediately lost the support it had long enjoyed from Western imperialism. The IMF and World Bank removed funding from Zimbabwe (while continuing to fund Uganda and Rwanda). This was the first stage of sanctions, the second being the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) which became official US policy in 2001.

36. Towards the end of 1998, about three months after the start of the DRC War, the British diplomat and MI.6 agent Linsey called together divergent strands of the opposition and asked them to create a well-funded new party; in the following year this was to become the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a party of militant but politically confused trade unionists, on the one hand and white farmers and other remnants of the Rhodesian Front on the other. This odd grouping came together against a united but corrupt national liberation movement in which the parasitic black bourgeoisie was becoming increasingly dominant.

37. One of the main players in this conundrum was the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), the main body uniting the workers but advised by Godfrey Kanyenze an employee of arch-capitalist George Soros through his virulently anti-Communist "Open Society Initiative".

38. Instead of organizing against sanctions and boosting production like their Rhodesian forbears, the Zimbabwe élite increased its plunder. The land occupations started by former freedom fighters in 2000 became a means for the élite to grab land for themselves, in many cases expelling the peasants who had been resettled earlier, in others treating the farm labourers on the commercial farms even worse than their former white employers. Black empowerment became the empowerment of the élite who now wished to take over ALL white owned businesses, whether or not they had the ability to run them.

39. Since then, the most devastating thing that has happened economically is that the skilled workforce has been effectively expelled from Zimbabwe by the new capitalists who do not understand that in order to continue exploiting the labour power of the worker, then he must be paid regularly. A small minority have become exceedingly wealthy while the working-class goes on strike not for increased wages, but merely to be paid.

Section 2

Moving Forward

40. There IS a solution. We cannot hope that China or the West is going to bail out Zimbabwe while Zimbabweans stand with their arms folded. We have to rebuild our economy based on National Planning and Production. The National Plan must involve the whole population and the whole population must benefit. There must be a Development Plan in every District and in every town. There must be a Development Plan in every Province agreed by the people and linked to the National Plan This is what we mean by Devolution of Power. Devolution must also involve the huge Zimbabwean Diaspora. Tribalism and racialism are the enemies of nation building. Our new Zimbabwe must be based on national consciousness linked to hard work.

41. Socialism cannot be built overnight. The building of a National Democratic Economy is the first step towards a socialist Zimbabwe. The building of a National Democratic Economy is the necessary intermediate stage between that of social production but private ownership (capitalism) and the social ownership of the means of production and social stability (socialism).

42. In 2009, the South African government produced a Green Paper on the question of National Planning; unfortunately, since then, most of the concepts advanced in that Green Paper have been severely undermined by predatory class interests when it comes to implementation. Nevertheless, it gives a clear idea of what has been happening internationally and is worth quoting from and an indication of the way forward:

“The collapse of the Soviet bloc in the 80s, coupled with the mixed success of the newly independent post-colonial states saw a decline of interest in and the prestige of development planning processes. This coincided with the dominance of what became known as the Washington Consensus, a conservative approach to economic management with a limited role for the State.

“Paradoxically, during this period, growing attention was being paid to long term strategic planning in capitalist firms. They had also discovered that, in complex organizations, it was impossible to make meaningful use of large volumes of detailed information in conditions of substantial external uncertainty, which became evident at time scales longer than a few years.

“However, shareholders and managers still needed to guide the evolution of their organizations. As a consequence, while formerly centrally planned nations were abandoning structured, planned state intervention, large firms, which were not subject to the same ideological constraints, continued to plan but developed new methodologies that were more appropriate to the complex and uncertain environments in which they operated.

“The success, in particular, of the East Asian countries which experienced explosive and sustained growth highlights the importance of focusing not only on the form of institutions and the capacity of the state, but also on mobilization of the public service and all of society behind a long-term vision.

“Strategic long-term planning and the institutions underpinning it should be rooted in the traditions of each society and aimed at its socio-economic imperatives.

“Clear justification and motivation existed as to why the societies of East Asia embraced certain policies and it was the underlying political and social processes that determined the form and quality of the institutions to drive growth and development. Japan felt that the only way it could be an important global player was by becoming an industrial power house. In Malaysia, inter-racial tensions, which reached their highest point in the 1960s, propelled the country to consider national strategic planning to expand the economic base, and to ensure more equitable distribution of resources and national unity. In the late 1970s and 1980s Thailand’s external security concerns were amongst the incentives for structural transformation.

“The outcomes of strategic national development planning have also been vastly different. The Philippines had a higher Gross National Product (GNP) per capita than Malaysia in the 1950s and Thailand in the 1970s. By 1990 Malaysia’s GNP per capita was three times and Thailand’s almost twice that of the Philippines even though the Philippines also set up a planning and co-ordination machinery. Instructively, in the Philippines, the core decision-making structures comprised four oversight agencies responsible for economic policy-making with little co-ordination between them. In contrast Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea have much stronger interagency co-ordination to plan and execute the development plan concentrated in the office of the head of government.

“A common striking feature of the successful states, particularly Malaysia, has been effective co-ordination and linking of the central co-ordinating agencies into the machinery of the development planning process — the Ministries of Finance, Industry and Public Service and Administration for example are closely linked to the bodies responsible for planning and implementation co-ordination in the Prime Minister’s office.”

GREEN PAPER: Annexure 1, Lessons from International Experience

“Lack of a coherent long term plan has weakened our ability to provide clear and consistent policies. It has limited our capacity to mobilize all of society in pursuit of our developmental objectives. It has hampered our efforts to priorities resource allocations and to drive the implementation of government’s objectives and priorities. In addition, weaknesses in co-ordination of government have led to policy inconsistencies and, in several cases, poor service delivery outcomes.”

GREEN PAPER: Preface by Trevor Manuel (then South African Minister of Finance)

Section 3

A Plan for Zimbabwe

National Plan

43. There can be no long term solution for the problems of Zimbabwe **unless production is put first**. Zimbabwe has abundant natural resources and it is the harnessing of these resources with an understanding of priorities through a national plan that there can be any national recovery. Following the lead of other countries with fast developing economies, we need to establish a National Planning Commission. It should be broad based and transparent. Provincial and District Planning Commissions should draw-up local plans in consultation with the people. In order to accomplish this we need a Draft National Plan to be drawn up by planning professionals working in conjunction with representatives of industry and trade unions as well as regional representatives.

44. The Draft National Plan needs to be discussed in every Ward and village. Every Town and District should have a Development Plan implemented with the assistance and oversight of a permanent, broad-based Planning Committee. Every Province must have a Provincial Plan and a permanent, broad-based Planning Commission. There must be an over-arching National Plan and a permanent, broad-based National Planning Commission. The Zimbabwean Diaspora must be involved in developing and financing the National Plan.

45. Planning Committees at lower levels need to be dominated by people at local level. Planning at the higher levels will require a greater input by planning professionals. However, we will need mutual sympathy between the professionals and the people who are involved directly in production. Professional planners need not be arrogant to those involved directly in production — and those involved directly in production should not have an obstructive or dismissive attitude towards the professional planners. The development of our country, Zimbabwe, must always be the priority.

46. In implementing the National Plan, the commanding heights of the economy should be publicly owned through parastatals or in some cases by enterprises under Provincial, Municipal or District ownership. All enterprises privatized since ESAP must be restored to public ownership.

Parastatals

47. We will need strong, efficient parastatals staffed by competent professionals recruited for their expertise and experience. Though there should be political appointees to the boards of parastatals to monitor adherence to the National Plan and to national development policies, they must be always outnumbered by appropriately trained professionals. Appointments made on the basis of nepotism or cronyism must not be allowed.

48. Whenever possible, parastatals should be self-contained and working for the national interest, by which we mean principally the interests of the working-class and peasantry. Parastatals should engage with the private sector locally or with foreign investors to create joint ventures only **when and where this is necessary and appropriate in the interests of efficient production**, i.e. when we need expertise either in production or distribution or the acquisition of machinery which would otherwise be unavailable. This proviso must never be abused by unscrupulous ‘business people’ with no real skills

Banking

49. The first principle of banking in a restored Zimbabwe is that banking must serve productive industry and not be used to suck its life-blood and eventually destroy it. Banking and accountancy must be used to assess and regulate growing production.

50. It is self-evident that banking should be well regulated and under strict government supervision.

51. The global melt-down of 2008 was wholly caused by the corrupt US banking system.

52. The melt-down in Zimbabwe in 2004 was wholly caused by the corrupt Zimbabwean banking system.

53. All banking regulations in force in Zimbabwe prior to ESAP in 1991 must be restored with immediate effect.

54. In particular, the duplum rule must be re-introduced and enforced. (This forbids, even through compound interest, interest becoming more than the original sum. Thus under this rule it is unlawful to try to recover more than twice the amount of money originally loaned.)

55. Securitisation of loans must be banned with immediate effect.

56. Banks which flout the regulations must have their banking licenses revoked and their assets confiscated.

57. There must be harsh laws against the buying and selling of currency. Individuals engaged in illegal currency selling must be punished through the confiscation of all assets, including family houses. Churches or other institutions engaged in such activities must have all their assets confiscated and face closure.

58. Half of all gold produced in Zimbabwe must be kept in the country and go into the vaults of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe in order to give strength to the currency.

59. A strong, government-owned National Bank must be established.

60. Co-operative Banks should be established by the people with government assistance.

61. Close ties must be established with the BRICS Bank as the only credible alternative internationally recognized banking system.

62. In order to create a production oriented banking system geared to the needs of national economic recovery, Government must establish an expert Commission to study and report back on the banking system so that a new and effective system can be established. Foreign as well as local experts need to be recruited on to that Commission. The following need to be studied as part of the Commissions work:

1) The Zimbabwe banking system prior to ESAP.

2) The banking systems of former socialist countries (such as the USSR, Yugoslavia and Hungary) those countries following a socialist path today (Cuba, China, Vietnam) and those countries which have successfully followed a semi-independent growth strategy (Bolivia, Nicaragua, Malaysia).

- 3) The recovery of Iceland after its banking melt-down.
- 4) Islamic Banking.
- 5) Co-operative banking (especially in Brazil and Bangla Desh).
- 6) The BRICS Bank, Banco del Sud and other relatively progressive international banking organizations.

PLANNING PRIORITIES

63. The two most basic economic priorities needed for self-sufficiency and therefore form the base for national sovereignty are food and energy. Energy includes both electricity and fuel.

64. Water is a major problem in Zimbabwe as rainfall has declined since Independence in 1980 while the population has grown. The problems of agriculture involve reduced rainfall just as much as chaotic land reform. However, the problem of water supply is not only about the building and maintenance of dams, it is also about pumping the water to wherever it is needed, therefore electricity supply becomes the most important single factor in infrastructural development and economic recovery.

On electrical power:

65. The current coal-fired power stations are performing far below capacity and need refurbishing.

66. Hydro-electric power from Victoria Falls and Kariba Dam need to be upgrade. Kariba Dam is in danger of collapse: if this happens it will be a catastrophe not only for Zimbabwe but for Zambia and Mozambique too.

67. Solar Power needs to be greatly increased with factories producing both solar water-heating and solar electric panels. In the rural areas these can be used in conjunction with establishment of wood lots and the use of wood-burning stoves to reduce deforestation and the amount of time spent by women on the collection of firewood. Street lighting and traffic lights should be solar powered throughout Zimbabwe, thus reducing the need for mains electricity supply.

68. A gas-fired power station must be built at Lupane using the so far untapped natural gas. The use of natural gas directly can reduce the demand for electricity for domestic cooking and also for some industrial operations.

On liquid fuel:

69. Zimbabwe has enormous coal reserves but no oil. We have the capacity to at least partially overcome our fuel problems through the following:

70. Putting our whole railway system back to steam (part of it is still relying on steam) thus saving a large amount of forex spent on importing diesel and also on imported diesel engines and spare parts.

71. There is a large low-grade coalfield in the south of Zimbabwe spreading across Matabeleland South and Masvingo Provinces but which has never been exploited. This coal is suitable for conversion into liquid fuel. This could be achieved through a deal with Sasol in South Africa which specialises in this process.

72. As mentioned above, there is a large untapped gas-field around Lupane in Matabeleland North. Conversion of vehicles to methane gas is a possibility which needs to be investigated.

73. Production of bio-fuel. This can be achieved through the following methods.

- a) Production of ethanol from sugar. This is already being done but can be expanded.
- b) Increased production of jatropha on marginal land. This has so far been done half-heartedly but if carried out in a systematic manner could be of major importance.
- c) Production of high-protein algae at coal-fired power stations as in Brazil. This process has been extremely successful and has significantly reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- d) Increased use of bio-gas from human and animal waste. This can be done especially on large-scale farms.

74. Research needs to be carried out on hydrogen cell technology. This technology focuses on the splitting of water into hydrogen and oxygen and requires platinum as a catalyst. It is the hydrogen which is used as fuel. It is a very clean technology.

75. An integrated energy programme needs to be worked out and implemented. Without any doubt, Zimbabwe could severely reduce its energy imports and possibly could eliminate them.

Water

76. Water is the most essential need for daily life. But in Zimbabwe, a country which most of the time suffers water shortages, there is little real planning. Dams exist but are not properly maintained and frequently we find dams which contain water but without means of utilising that water.

77. There are three major water programmes in the dry provinces of Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South and Masvingo as well as the Metropolitan Province of Bulawayo which need completion. These are the Matabeleland-Zambezi Water Project, in particular the Gwayi-Shangani Dam which affects Matabeleland north and Bulawayo. The Nuanetsi Scheme in Masvingo Province which needs the Tokwa Dam to be completed in order to be functional. The Matabeleland South Water Project, which is almost unknown, would connect existing dams as well as build two new ones to create a pipeline for agriculture in Zimbabwe's driest Province

78. In the north of the country, the people of Harare and Chitungwiza face water-borne disease with sewerage running into their drinking water. The disgusting state of the water in the capital city of Zimbabwe is a national disgrace. In Chitungwiza people go for days without any water at all and then are faced with a brown, smelly liquid which the authorities refer to as 'water'.

79. The creation of a National Water Plan is clearly a priority for Zimbabwe, both for the development of industry and for the health and well-being of the people.

Agriculture

80. The recent history of Zimbabwe has highlighted the central importance of agriculture in the economy of our country. However, in condemning the anarchic incompetence and inability of the ZANU(PF) government to carry out a land reform programme which is both just and productive, and the greed of the parasitic black bourgeoisie in grabbing the best land for itself, we should not forget the historical conditions under which this happened:

81. Under the 1930 Land Apportionment Act and a number of subsequent acts, (none of which made any fundamental change to the 1930 original), the Rhodesian Government divided the land into two, the white minority not only receiving approximately the same amount of land as the black majority, but also receiving the bulk of the best agricultural land. Following forced removals of the historic owners, the white minority then proceeded to create laws and give themselves title deeds to that land.

82. Following Independence in 1980, the white farmers, many of them owning multiple farms, with 1000 hectares representing only an average sized farm, consistently opposed any compromise on the question of land reform, despite the fact that only 40% of their land was being fully utilized.

83. The culmination of this was, the British Government through their surrogate organization in Zimbabwe the MDC, opposed the Draft Constitution of 2000 because of its land reform clause, despite the fact that that same constitution limited the term of office of the President, liberalized citizenship laws and guaranteed the rights of women amongst other progressive reforms. The defeat of this democratic constitution precipitated the direct action by war veterans and others who had waited 20 years to see the fruits of their struggle.

84. Nevertheless, the white farmers were generally competent at their job and the programme of removing them totally from the land was both wrong and foolish, more especially given the fact that the defeat of US backed forces in DRC and Angola provoked a furious response in terms of political and economic destabilization characterized by the 'Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act' passed by the US Senate, but in fact going far beyond mere sanctions. Such situations require the maximum national integrated effort, especially with regard to food production. After the initial land occupations, many white farmers demonstrated their willingness to co-operate with government. Fair treatment of those who co-operated would have encouraged many others to follow suit and the underlying current for national unity against foreign interference could have been a springboard for independent economic growth and development rather than its opposite.

85. Distribution of land has been even more skewed. Generally, A2 farmers representing those from the over-crowded communal lands and the more serious of the war veterans have, with their limited resources been more successful than the A1 farmers who are typically 'businessmen' living in town for whom farming is a hobby conducted by the occasional phone call to the 'farm manager', in most cases an under-paid and under-qualified poor relative.

86. For the most part, the real producers on the farms, the experienced farm labourers, many of them of Malawian or Mozambican origin, have been left out of the equation. When applying for land, they have been told that they are foreigners, and in most cases, when they have remained on the farms, their truly awful former white employers have been replaced by others who are far worse. The result is that many have returned to their countries of origin, others have simply become destitute.

87. There has for years been a lack of agricultural planning. Although the drier provinces of Matabeleland North and South and Masvingo have been advised to grow small grains rather than maize, government has continued to wastefully give out maize-seed packs and fertilizer. The growing of small grains has been encouraged only locally and spasmodically without any overall plan. Production of crops specifically adapted to dry land, pigeon peas and cassava for example is almost non-existent. Despite the exorbitant cost of insecticides and chemical fertilizers, organic farming methods are virtually unknown.

88. Meat production has concentrated on beef. The excellent work by the Matopos Research Station in commercial goat production has hardly moved outside the Station. Commercial production of eland and impala has hardly been touched; ostrich production has been systematically destroyed.

89. Agricultural estates, responsible for efficient production of sugar, tea, citrus fruit, coffee and other products have wholly or partly given to small individual producers, as has some Forestry Commission land with disastrous consequences for production.

90. Since Independence, successive drought, even before 2000 had a negative impact on agriculture, yet Zimbabwe has not been able to boast of a comprehensive irrigation policy. Sanctions have largely interfered with funding of the two major irrigation schemes, the Matabeleland- Zambezi Water Project and the Nuanetsi Scheme.

The Way Forward in Agriculture

91. There are seven basic problems to be tackled if we are to have efficient agricultural production coupled with the improvement of the lives of those living in the rural areas:

92. Correction of the mismanaged land redistribution.

93. Expansion and streamlining of irrigation schemes.

94. Serious technical planning of production taking into account the food needs of the population, export production and local conditions of soil and climate.

95. A charter to safeguard the rights of agricultural workers.

96. Skills training in agriculture at different levels including in situ training for peasant farmers.

97. Special planning for communal lands in conjunction with their communities.

98. Land Distribution

Unless those that are managing the land are competent, or at least enthusiastic and willing to learn the necessary skills, agricultural production cannot be achieved. Those who have been responsible for disrupting production and terrorizing agricultural communities must be dealt with urgently. This includes undisciplined elements in the police and the army.

99. An impartial land audit needs to take place. Those not using land or seriously under-utilizing land need to be removed. Those white farmers deprived of all their land should be rehabilitated on the “one man – one farm“ basis. Land must be made available to all Zimbabweans serious about farming regardless of ethnic background. As far as possible, although productive ability must be the first criterion, strong consideration should be given to prioritise people who belong to the area where land redistribution is taking place.

100. Those agro-industrial estates which have been sub-divided must be re-united. Where possible the old management must be restored. However, in terms of ownership, the old owners should have 49% of shares, the employees, divided into the three categories of management, supervisors and technicians, and workers should collectively own 20% of the shares (an employee receiving his share after 1 years employment and surrendering it when leaving – but retaining it on retirement). 8% should be owned by the district, 8% by the province and 15% by the national government. In this way, the needs of effective management, genuine indigenization, motivation of the work force and devolution of power are all met. Forestry Commission land should be restored and even extended.

101. Irrigation: See ‘Water’ above.

Irrigation is absolutely necessary for intensive large scale crop production. However, where irrigation is not available, the use of dry-land crops must be encouraged. The provision of maize seed to dry areas without irrigation is a ridiculous waste.

102. Technical Planning

Innovative and serious technical planning needs to be carried out, which will encourage maximum land use according to availability of water in the form of rainfall or irrigation, soil-type and terrain. The “mombes and mealies” mentality must be overcome, as must reliance on expensive agricultural chemicals. Large scale production of wheat must be encouraged so that Zimbabwe becomes self-sufficient in wheat-flour and bread. Nutritious traditional small-grains should be encouraged particularly in the drier areas and milling, packaging and advertising must be established to encourage their consumption. Potato farming can play an important role in irrigated areas and produce an alternative starch crop. Commercial goat farming is highly profitable and there is a huge untapped export market in Muslim countries. Commercial production of game meat also has a very good export potential as does the rehabilitation of the ostrich industry. Establishment of jatropha and other forms of forestry on marginal land also needs to be part of the plan. Those innovations which have been tested and found to be effective need to be implemented immediately. At the same time, experimental farms should be established and the mechanism put in place which will implement all those innovations which will assist sustainable agriculture.

103. Agricultural Workers

Agricultural workers are some of the poorest and most exploited people in Zimbabwe. They have benefited nothing from the liberation struggle, yet they have toiled to produce food for the nation. It is essential that this situation comes to an end. Zimbabwe cannot allow any of its people to be clothed in rags and live in poverty. Further to that, if we are to encourage skilled and hard working people to remain in our rural areas and build agricultural production, they must be well paid and enjoy a comfortable living standard. It is a well-known fact that people who are properly looked-after are far more productive than those who are not.

104. The Communist Party must fight to establish an Agricultural Workers’ Charter in collaboration with the appropriate Trade Unions and other bona fide representatives of the workers. This Charter should include rights to a minimum wage, decent housing, clean water, electricity (mains or solar), education, pensions, security, Zimbabwean citizenship and any other demands coming from the workers themselves.

105. Communal Lands

Development projects need to be developed on our communal lands, normally in conjunction with the traditional leadership of the area. Those projects, as with those for agricultural labourers, will bring clean water, electricity and decent housing to those areas – but they must also become productive and self-sustaining, not depending on hand-outs

106. When we deal with such communities, we must make sure that no group is subservient to another, and that each ethnic group or sub-group has its own leadership. For instance, the small San groups on the western border do not have any leadership recognized by government and are subservient to local Kalanga chiefs. Similar conditions exist elsewhere in the country for other oppressed minorities.

107. Communal projects will differ considerably according to local conditions and traditions.

Co-operative and Collective and State Farming

108. Co-operative buying and selling must be encouraged for individual peasant farmers and for commercial farmers.

109. Peasant farmers must not be at the mercy of greedy transport operators who buy their produce cheaply and sell at an inflated price. Communities need to own transport on a co-operative basis.

110. Dairibord, Cotton Marketing Board and Farmers' Co-op must return to co-operative ownership.

111. The Zimbabwe Project must be re-established to assist the re-establishment of collective farms and this must be facilitated by government.

112. Where possible and necessary, such as in the Nuanetsi scheme, government must establish state farms. In some cases government should take over agro-industrial estates.

MINERALS

113. The first principle to be understood is that the minerals of Zimbabwe are the common property of its people.

114. The second principle is that the people of the province and the district in which those minerals are found have preference of interest over those from other parts of the country.

115. The third is that having understood the first two, any mining company, local or foreign, which can provide the expertise to mine those minerals and to market them, will, once a contract is signed, have those rights and terms secured by government, without interference for the duration of that contract.

116. In furtherance of these principles, the standard outline form of agreement should be as follows. Negotiation around these fundamentals being allowed.

117. Within a maximum 10 year period, ownership of any mining venture should be shared by the Zimbabwean people and a commercial mining company in the overall ratio 51% to 49%.

118. The Zimbabwean interest should be divided in the ratio of 31% to government, 20% to the employees.

119. In line with the policy of devolution of power, the government owned proportion should be divided thus: 15% ownership should be controlled by national government, and 16% by local government. This should be further broken down so that 8% goes to the provincial government and 8% to the district.

120. The share going to the employees should be sub-divided in three, 50% going to the general workforce, 30% to middle-management and technical staff, 20% to senior management. The shares would be equally divided according to category and be given to those who had at least one year's service. Shares would be surrendered on leaving the company except for those retiring from the company. Shares would also be made available to the families of those dying whilst in company service. This policy would give a degree of control, responsibility, pride and motivation to the workforce. It would also add to the programme of devolution, putting money back into the community and creating stability.

121. Interest for potential investors would be created through a ten year induction period. In the first two years the investor would have total control. The collective Zimbabwean share would rise to 25% in the next four years, 33% in the following four years rising to 51% after 19 years. The investor would not be taxed and would have freedom to repatriate his money. Contracts would be for ten years at a time. Should there be a move by an investor to pull out prior to accepting a 49% share, government would retain the right to nationalize completely with the total shareholding within the nation being divided as above.

122. Government would retain the right to buy shares on the open market of mining companies operating in Zimbabwe.

123. Closure of mines must be followed by rehabilitation of land and establishment of new industry for the community, which should be built into the programme.

124. A mining parastatal must be established in Zimbabwe quickly but not hastily. It must be led by people who have a combination of skill, dedication, honesty and devotion to the concept of having an efficient, nationally-owned company in which the workers have a share and which co-operates with the local people wherever it operates.

SECONDARY INDUSTRY

125. It has been frequently pointed out that we should add value to products before exporting; that we should endeavour to export finished goods rather than raw materials. This concept is not wrong. However, we cannot make finished products without firstly paying attention to the problem of the energy needed to produce it, which has been dealt with earlier in this document; secondly we need to properly develop secondary industry, particularly with regard to minerals. For instance, we have iron, nickel and chrome, but we do not produce stainless steel – before we can produce ball-bearings and stainless steel pots, we must be able to produce stainless steel. Before we can weave cotton cloth we need to spin the cotton. We must aim to be as self-sufficient as possible as a nation so that never again can sanctions bring us to our knees: to achieve this, we need to prioritize, to understand the steps needed to get to where we are going and not to do things haphazardly.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

126. Some large scale companies – Zisco-Steel, Tregers, should be largely under government control. However, it is in the manufacturing sector that private initiative can play an important role, especially where import substitution or export is concerned. Those with innovative ideas must be encouraged to develop those ideas. Venture capital must be made available to such people. Our universities and research institutes must be empowered to help those who wish to bring their ideas into commercial usage. In the past, innovative ideas, such as those developed by the Building Research Institute in Harare and the Matopos Research Station have either been ignored or actively blocked by government officials and even ministers. We need pro-active officials who see their job as facilitators of economic growth rather than as blockers. Those who are not interested in performing must be dismissed. Those who actively misuse their positions for private gain must be either imprisoned or stripped of their illegally gained property.

127. Like in agriculture, industry can only grow if the workforce is properly remunerated. As stated in our introduction, those skilled Zimbabweans effectively expelled by ‘indigenous entrepreneurs’ with the collusion of the ZANU(PF) government, need to be offered reasonable remuneration, conditions and stability in order that they may return home. Without them there can be no growth. Wage and salary settlements should grow with the economy. They must NEVER fall below the annual inflation rate. A steady rise in real wages for the working-class actually stimulates the economy. Unlike the bosses, they are more likely to spend their money on locally produced goods than on expensive imported commodities, and are more likely to save their money for the future, if they have a surplus to save. People who have worked hard for their money are far less likely to squander it than those who have had windfalls of unearned income. Policies must be put in place to ensure this. Therefore a social contract is needed, but not one which sub-ordinates the interests of the workers to capitalist greed and short-sightedness – rather one that will ensure a steady rise in the living standards of the workers whilst maintaining uninterrupted production.

128. No-strike agreements can be made in return for workers receiving a substantial part of company profits, membership of boards of directors and access to company accounts. Workers’ organizations should also be engaged in buying shares which are then co-operatively owned and managed by the workers of that company.

COMMUNICATIONS

129. In the past, enormous sums of money were spent to maintain the prestige status of Air Zimbabwe when rural untarred roads could not even be graded. Though a huge amount needs to be achieved in the communications sector, priorities need to be established in line with the general economic growth. plan

130. Zimbabwe needs a national road-building programme linked to economic growth. Proper maintenance of rural roads must be the priority in terms of the communication structure. Regular grading of untarred roads must take place as must the extension of the tarred road network. Innovative methods of road-making must also be investigated. In the past, most of the wealth of Zimbabwe has been produced in the countryside, through mining and agriculture but has been consumed in the towns and cities. This parasitic arrangement needs to end in order for rapid growth to take place.

131. As discussed in the section on energy, we need a massive renewal of the railways. Because of the ability of railways to move huge bulk cargoes by rail cheaply and efficiently with minimum fuel usage, they are expanding again worldwide. In many cases, including Zimbabwe, private road hauliers have in the past deliberately and corruptly persuaded governments not to invest in their rail systems. National Railways of Zimbabwe needs a nationally owned road service section which will ferry goods from railway stations to their destinations.

132. It is very important to improve rail links to all the surrounding countries. Most important of all is the link to the port of Beira. It is also very important to create new links to Angola and DRC in conjunction with SADC.

133. Passenger transport should also concentrate on increased rail transport. Within the bigger cities, particularly Harare and Chitungwiza, we need to look at an internal rail network which may be conventional, underground, monorail or a combination of all three. A few years ago, the attempt to reintroduce ZUPCO buses nationally was welcomed by all the travelling public. Its sabotage by ministers was both a tragedy and a reminder of the depths of corruption to which the ZANU(PF) government had sunk. An affordable, subsidized public transport system exists in every major city in the world. Subsidized public transport is an incentive for private vehicle owners to keep out of the city centre, thus avoiding congestion and lessening wear and tear on roads.

134. Private transport operators must keep their vehicles roadworthy and ensure that their drivers are properly trained and keep to the rules of the road, particularly with regard to speeding. The argument that “they are indigenous and we mustn't be too hard on them” does not hold water. The people they murder through their recklessness are also indigenous. Those who habitually avoid regulations must have their licenses removed.

135. Posts and telecommunications must be returned to public ownership and an integrated system re-established. The nationally owned cell-phone service provider should keep its rates moderate, and the two alternative providers will be forced to keep their rates moderate.

136. Though air travel is not the immediate priority, it is still important especially for the tourist industry. At this point in time, functioning and efficient airports are more important than maintaining a national airline. The establishment of a regional, SADC airline should be pursued. It has been discussed in the past but not implemented. This is an area where private enterprise might play a role. The success of Etihad and Emirates Airlines in the Gulf should be studied and, if possible, emulated.

GOVERNMENT

137. The focus of government must be on economic recovery. The size of government, whether of cabinet, Members of Parliament, local councillors, civil servants or local government officers is secondary. Their efficiency, focus and relevance to the task at hand is primary.

138. Government which is too large and unfocused is merely ‘jobs for the boys’ and a burden on the productive sector of society. Government which is too small and has minimal control is profoundly undemocratic as it reduces the power of the people through their elected representatives and hands it to the sharks and criminals who buy, sell and manipulate without constraint.

139. Size, then, must be related to function and performance. We do not need a ‘Minister for Political Affairs’. But if it is decided that in the all important Ministry of Energy that two or even three Deputy Ministers **with specific functions** are needed to organize the energy needs of Zimbabwe within a given time frame, then it must be done.

140. Every minister must be given a performance contract or go. The same goes for every government employee down to the office cleaner.

141. Remuneration of MPs, ministers, civil servants and the President himself must be related to the salaries and wages of the Zimbabwean people as a whole. Annual increases must be based on a formula which relates to the percentage increases in a basket of salary increases found in Zimbabwean Industry. Ministerial cars must be at least assembled in Zimbabwe. Professionals working for government should be paid in line with salaries found generally in their profession. When travelling around the country, or to other countries, expenses must be modest as must hotel accommodation. All government and local government departments must have audited accounts, with criminal penalties for those who fail to provide them. Most of all, civil servants should stop behaving as the people who say 'no', and see themselves as the facilitators of growth and national recovery.

THE CLASS NATURE OF THIS PROGRAMME

142. Because of the specific problems of Zimbabwe, because of the almost total destruction of the economy by the parasitic black bourgeoisie, we have the situation where most of the working-class is either involved in the informal economy or is in exile. At this stage there is no possibility for immediate socialism, but the demand for National Planning and return to a form of economy that was in place prior to ESAP is attractive to most Zimbabweans regardless of class.

143. Therefore this programme is a multi-class programme of a kind originally espoused by the national liberation movements rather than by the Communist Parties. The almost total take-over of the liberation movements by the black-parasitic bourgeoisie has meant that this intermediate stage of development between capitalism and socialism must now be led by Communists. However, we must be mindful of the errors of the past. We must be mindful of the dangers of a multi-class programme — even though it is the only way forward at the present time. We must also be mindful of the dual nature of the African struggle. Our Communist Party is made up of both former members of ZANU(PF) and former members of MDC.

144. The ZANU(PF) government has frequently adopted a principled stand against imperialism, especially with regard to the Congo War of 1998-2003. Many of the positions of the ZANU(PF) government, such as on the question of democratization of the United Nations are still anti-imperialist and in line with what we think as Communists. But at home, that government and that party are totally under the control of the parasitic black bourgeoisie which has plundered the economy and impoverished the people.

145. MDC, or the idea for MDC came in the mid-1990s after the effects of ESAP began to seriously affect the living standards of the working-class. They opposed corruption in the ruling party and put forward the idea of the creation of a Labour Party.

But who was going to fund them?

Following the fall out with the imperialist centre following Zimbabwe's intervention in the DRC, opposition forces which involved the working-class on one side and old white Rhodesian capital on the other came together to form the MDC. Instead of a programme which would advance working-class interests, there was a totally neo-liberal programme of 'minimum government and foreign investment' put in its place.

146. We as African Communists must, therefore, advance the concept of the Dual Struggle — Against Imperialism — Against the Parasitic Black Bourgeoisie — for an autonomous National Democratic Economy and a prosperous Zimbabwe, a prosperous Africa.

147. But because of the dangers of the hi-jacking of this multi-class programme, we as Communists must make sure that the working-class and the peasantry lead this process, because the next phase is Socialism. There will still be class-struggle. Whether or not the transition from a National Democratic economy to a Socialist economy is relatively smooth or requires a militant or even violent revolution will depend on the strength of the working-class and the leadership of the Zimbabwe Communist Party,

NICARAGUA

A social solidarity economy in living practice

Self-employed (own-account) workers make up nearly two-thirds of Nicaragua's workforce and generate half the country's GDP, writes **Pat Horn**

This article, of great importance to Zimbabwe where we have similar conditions, was published in the theoretical journal of the SACP "African Communist" 1st Quarter 2017 Issue 194

In our global neo-liberal capitalist world, not much is known about low-profile alternative socialist practices which are making a difference to the lives of ordinary people in small corners of the world. In what can be best described as anomalies in the overall neo-liberal economy, there exist pockets of what is known in countries such as Brazil and Argentina as the Solidarity Economy. This is where members of the working poor provide goods and services for the benefit of their communities rather than for profits, according to rules which are not governed by capitalism.

In Nicaragua, what is known as the Social Solidarity Economy is more than an anomaly in the economy – it has been institutionalised into a national system. A key actor in this process has been the trade union confederation of own-account (self-employed) workers CTCP (*Confederación de Trabajadores por Cuenta Propia*).

CTCP developed from an association of traffic-light vendors into a confederation of federations and unions of different sectors of own-account workers. Established in 2005, CTCP “brings together people who work in the streets selling all kinds of cheap goods and services. They produce food such as tortillas, soft drinks and traditional sweets.

Some are the owners of small and micro-businesses, while others have workshops for mechanics, carpentry and tyre repairs. Others work as *cambistas* (money-changers), artisans, tailors, seamstresses, barbers, grocers, porters with handcarts, litter pickers and hawkers, taxi drivers, rickshaw tri-cyclists, lottery sellers and mobile phone sellers. Some work in people's homes as plumbers, labourers or electricians; others are professional people and craft workers¹”.

CTCP's approach is based on its analysis of the political macro-economy within which it operates as a representative organisation of own-account workers — documented in the *First Self-Employed Workers' Manifesto* of the CTCP-FNT authored by Dr Orlando Núñez Soto. In the section of the manifesto entitled “The construction and consolidation of a social economy: programme, strategy and tasks” it describes “the birth of what today has become a self-employed proletariat which now seeks a place in anti-establishment theory and practice, rather than merely being counted as poor or as an electoral mass when an election year comes around”.

It goes on to argue for the importance of organising this self-employed proletariat into “a social movement which aims to improve the correlation of forces in their country of residence, struggling to improve their standard of living, not only in terms of their own income, but also by gaining access to national surpluses — specifically to the nation's budget, as they are the group that proportionally pays the highest taxes. This is so because in their countries indirect taxes are far higher than direct ones, a burden that must be carried by the vast majority of the population, among them the self-employed proletariat. But most important is the objective of advancing towards the individual and associative control of production, transport, local and international trade, distribution and consumption.” Own-account workers were mobilised to join CTCP as part of this strategy, which is consciously differentiated from the way in which CTCP perceives mainstream development strategies which objectify the poor as being in need of social aid instead of recognising them as impoverished “worker-producers” capable of being the agents of social transformation.

For the CTCP, the objective is to move from a trade association to the next level. “Once organised by trade association it is necessary to rise to the political level to become a large social and national movement and to exert pressure on public institutions and State social and economic policies”. The CTCP has been largely successful in achieving this. It has succeeded not only in substantially influencing government policies in relation to own-account workers, but also in calling in the commitment of the FSLN (the *Sandinista National Liberation Front*, the ruling party) to the restitution of rights to those who have been impoverished by neo-liberal economic policies.

Affiliated to FNT7 (*Frente Nacional de los Trabajadores*), one of many Nicaraguan trade union confederations, CTCP has 58 186 members in 156 unions and eight federations, with a women’s committee and a youth committee. A serious development of mainstream women’s leadership has occurred in CTCP since my first visits to Nicaragua in 2009 and 2012. CTCP now has key women leaders (not confined to the women’s committee only). The deputy general secretary and president of the youth committee are, for instance, women.

About 65% of their members are between the ages of 16 and 36. There is a high level of poverty in Nicaragua, though social and economic inequality has decreased in recent years, and life expectancy has increased to 74,5 years. Nicaragua has a population of about 6,5-million people, of whom some two million are own-account workers. About 80% of food is produced locally by *cuentapropistas* (own-account workers). Despite their central importance in the economy, from 1990-2007 own-account workers were excluded from public policies.

Half of CTCP’s membership is estimated to be in the Nicaraguan capital, Managua. The other 50% is in the following regions: Matagalpa, Jinotega, Chinandega, Boaco, Carazo, Chontales, Condega, Esteli, Granada, León, Masaya, Matriz, Nueva Segovia, Río San Juan, Rivas (bordering Costa Rica). The regions where CTCP has not yet managed to organise members are Bluefields and the Coastal Caribbean (Zelaya region) – the distance to these areas from Managua requires substantial resources to travel to organise. In the region of Rivas, which borders Costa Rica to the south, there is a *Programa de Integración Fronteriza* (Programme of Frontier Integration) for construction of indigenous markets (*tiangués*) with provision of capacitation, technical assistance and credit for cross-border own-account workers.

CTCP has a strategic work-plan for 2015-2020. The organisation’s development objective is to reduce the factors that prevent people from coming out of their precarious situation.

CTCP says this is possible because the government has placed people at the centre of development, with poverty reduction as the main objective and with own-account workers the priority. Specific objectives are the involvement of the sector in the plans, programmes and projects which promote the “Christian, socialist and solidarity” government of Nicaragua; and socio-economic development to stabilise the lives of own-account workers, in line with government’s human development plan.

For the protection of its members, CTCP relies primarily on a government decree of 1 June 2009 prohibiting the eviction of street vendors and informal traders from their places of work. The decree reminds municipalities of their obligation to facilitate all forms of work which provide food security and the dignity of a fixed income, without creating legal obstacles or modernisation processes which continue to replicate the extreme poverty created by neo-liberalism in Nicaragua.

The Nicaraguan government has established a “Dialogue, Negotiation and Consensus” model to promote tripartite agreements between the state, private enterprise and workers. This has helped consolidate macroeconomic stability and improved governance in the country. When there is a development project that impacts on own-account workers, inter-institutional commissions are activated, such as the National Commission for Customs Integration, the National Transportation Commission, the National Commission for Education, the National Commission for Youth Employment and the Commission on a National Minimum Wage.

As a result of the CTCP’s work on the ground, there is now much greater government recognition of the central role played by the own-account sector in Nicaragua. The sector generates between 60% and 75% of all jobs, and it around 50% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Moreover, the sector re-distributes economic surplus more equitably than the so-called “mainstream” capitalist economy.

FNT, to which CTCP is affiliated, was established in 1990. For FNT and CTCP, building on the proclaimed “Christian, Socialist, Solidarity” values of Nicaragua, the practice of associativity is the key to encouraging people to work together. For an economy of small producers to be able to compete in a capitalist-dominated open economy, they have to be able to produce a better quality than they could do individually – hence their focus on the Social Solidarity Economy, as developed in the “Self-Employed Workers’ Manifesto of the CTCP-FNT”.

From 1997 the FNT entered into a new phase in its relationship with the ruling FSLN, forming an alliance with mutual recognition. In 1999 a single platform was launched by the FSLN and FNT, and a joint municipal strategy was designed.

Relationship with local government in Managua

There are seven districts in the capital city of Managua, each with a mayor (*Delegado*) appointed by the party in control of the district municipality. Not all the municipalities are *Sandinista*-controlled, but they are all governed by a National Development Plan coordinated at municipal level, financed by means of national transfers to local government, as a key part of nation-building. Communication and social dialogue is central to the approach, and relies on a consistent high level of political will to respect the rights of own-account workers.

Eric Canale, Delegado of District 3, Managua has been working with CTCP for five years in the Central Managua and UCA (Universidad CentroAmericana) area, collaborating on the orderly management of space. District 3 is part of the Municipality of Managua, as the *Delegado* Canale has the political authority to direct the work of municipal officials assigned to that district.

Currently, stationary vendors in fixed workplaces pay taxes to the municipality, mobile vendors are exempt from paying direct taxes, but all pay indirect taxes. According to Canale, the strategy that has been followed is to restore rights and to dignify work by providing them with fixed workplaces. Because of the 2009 decree, there is no question of simply evicting them. The municipality relies on their credibility with CTCP. The main problems for the municipality arise when they have to deal with informal traders who are not members of CTCP (the most representative, and only known, organisation of informal traders). They have to continue to negotiate and engage in dialogue to find mutually acceptable solutions, even though the negotiations are unstructured (i.e. there were no terms of reference or signed agreements at the time of writing this report).

Responsibility for building kiosks for vendors is shared, and there is a tripartite arrangement that includes the private sector that owns the malls. There is a national commission for regulation of the transport sector, and CTCP participates directly in this commission.

There is also an ongoing discussion with the finance ministry about undertaking the task of institutionalising own-account workers as a sector of the economy. Through the Central Bank, statistics have been collected about the contribution of own-account workers to the economy. In 2015 their contribution was found to be around 50%.

Speaking to members of CTCP, it is difficult to discern any evidence of the tensions, contradictions and dislocations between the national and local levels of government that so commonly prevent smooth management of street trading in other countries. It has to be interrogated whether this can be attributed to a genuinely higher level of political will, as claimed by CTCP and the *Delegado* of District 3 of Managua — and if so what would make Nicaragua so different from other countries in this respect.

Could a higher level of genuine political will in practice be attributed to Nicaragua being a “home-grown” socialist country, eschewing neo-liberalism and consciously evolving and practising a bottom-up form of democratic socialism? The difference between traditional socialism and the current-day *Sandinista* socialism is explained in the CTCP Manifesto as “the goal is not that all means of production become property of the State, as happened in the State socialism of the past century, as these too would have to be expropriated.

It is desirable that strategic companies be public, at national or municipal level, and furthermore be under some degree of democratic control of society as a whole. The point is to move forward in order to progressively incarnate the old idea that power should rest in the councils, from the economic, political and cultural points of view: councils of workers, women, soldiers and small farmers, employees in any of the services, consumer groups and other like-minded associations among the population at large. No one is excluded from setting up the organisation he/she wishes to in order to advocate for collective and common interests for themselves and the remainder of society.”

Trade union context

When we met representatives of the FNT (*Frente Nacional de Trabajo*), Secretary General Dr Gustavo Porras, National Executive Secretary Lic Jose Angel Bermudez and Jose Antonio Zepeda and Maritza Espinales¹⁰, we discussed the motivation for the *Sandinista*-led Government of Reconciliation and National Unity to call the country a “Christian, Socialist, Solidarity” Nicaragua. The motivation for calling it socialist was clear – promoting new forms of production and distribution, and the restitution of rights. The reference to Christianity, I was told, was not intended to mean a religious preference, but rather to affirm human values. The National Development Plan is centred on humanity and human beings – and the concept of dialogue has been key to creating the political and economic stability that currently exists in Nicaragua. There have been successes in health through a community health approach, and there is public free education up to tertiary level. An approach of equal opportunity and women’s empowerment has been introduced in each social and economic sector. The revolution is being consolidated by the wide-spread practice of decision-making at popular level. The FSLN learnt a lesson after losing elections in the 1970s — it had to become more intelligent in recognising what the people want.

This is what led to own-account workers being taken into account. Notwithstanding the fact that Nicaragua is a socialist country, it has to survive within the reality of a global economy. Investors need stability, space to operate, and certainty about the situation they invest in. The Nicaraguan government has been increasing social security by 8% per year. The State cannot provide major employment, but has to facilitate a favourable environment for people to be able to work. The Nicaraguan government has recognised the importance of family work in Nicaragua, and established a Ministry of Family Economy and Cooperatives (in addition to the Ministry of Public Finances and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry). This Ministry was formed by consolidating two previous bodies (the IMPIME institute of SMEs and the Ministry of Rural Development) into one new Ministry.

FNT confirmed that the CTCP developed after the initial establishment of the FNT, not by design but out of necessity. National police, who were *Sandinistas*, had to make peace with the *vendedores semoforos* (traffic-light vendors) and recognise their situation from a basic foundation of humanity. This is where it started. Since between 60% and 70% of the workforce consists of own-account workers, it became clear that they had to be organised as workers.

The aim of the National Development Plan is to end poverty by 2030. Self-reliance and improvement in the livelihoods of own-account workers is clearly integral to achieving this.

Other alliances and working relationships

CTCP has sought collaborating partners who share their vision of transforming the system, rather than project-based collaborations limited to selected groups of beneficiaries, which is often promoted by development partners.

At international level, this was what led to CTCP seeking affiliation with StreetNet International, as a space for developing international solidarity with own-account workers world-wide. At regional level, CTCP took on the role of coordinating the Red SEICAP (*Red de Sindicatos de la Economía Informal de Centroamérica y Panamá*) of workers of the Social Solidarity Economy of America.

Internationally, CTCP is affiliated to WFTU (World Federation of Trade Unions) while FNT is affiliated to ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation).

This article was written in collaboration with CTCP in Nicaragua.

The author, Comrade Horn, is co-ordinator of StreetNet International, an alliance of street vendors launched in Durban in November 2002. Membership-based organisations (unions, co-operatives or associations) directly organising street vendors, market vendors and/or hawkers among their members, are entitled to affiliate to StreetNet International.

The aim of StreetNet is to promote the exchange of information and ideas on critical issues facing street vendors, market vendors and hawkers (i.e. mobile vendors) and on practical organising and advocacy strategies. He is a member of the SACP.

SOUTH AFRICA IN CRISIS: THE SACP SPEAKS

Recent events in South Africa, especially the opposition of both the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) to the continued Presidency of Jacob Zuma have led to many questions and misunderstandings among Zimbabweans — even among some Communists. Vanguard is therefore re-publishing three statements by the SACP relating to the current crisis.

THE GUPTAS AREN'T THE ONLY THREAT TO OUR NDR — JUST THE MOST OBVIOUS

Editorial from the SACP journal African Communist First Quarter 2016, Issue 191.

A week in politics, as they say, can be a very long time indeed. At the end of February, in its Political Report to the Central Committee, the National Secretariat of the Party focused on the dangers of corporate capture of the state. The report identified the Gupta family as a particularly dangerous, although not the only, threat in this regard. The political report went on to say:

“It is time now that the SACP and the rest of the working class speak out more forcefully against these parasites.”

That was just a few weeks ago. At that point in time, the SACP was more or less alone from within the ANC-led Alliance in publicly condemning the activities of the Gupta family. This was a few weeks before Comrade Mcebisi Jonas, Deputy Finance Minister, confirmed that he had been approached by members of the Gupta family in their incessant meddling endeavours in the appointment (and demotion) of Cabinet Ministers. And it was a few more weeks before the ANC's National Executive Committee finally decided to investigate the role of the Guptas. Of course, this was not the first time that the SACP had raised the alarm around the role and influence of the Gupta family. At May Day 2013 rallies throughout South Africa, SACP speakers (and at least one ANC speaker, Secretary-General, Comrade Gwede Mantashe) roundly condemned the shameful landing of Gupta wedding guests at the Waterkloof airbase the day before. We called for an investigation into the circumstances. SACP speakers warned of South Africa being turned into a banana republic. More recently, on behalf of the SACP leadership collective, our Deputy General Secretary, Comrade Solly Mapaila has led the way in speaking out about the Guptas.

The SACP's role in all of this has, of course, not pleased everyone. Irvin Jim, in a *Daily Maverick* “Opinionista” column, spends more time attacking Comrade Mapaila than the ostensible targets of his intervention — state corruption and “white monopoly capital”. Jim, with all of his vanguardist ambitions, is clearly miffed that he is a peripheral voice in this critical struggle. He has only himself to blame. Jim has marginalised himself because, unlike the SACP, he has failed to understand that, with all of its risks, the trajectory and contested future of our struggle will still have to be determined to a considerable extent, one way or another, from within the state and from within the ANC and the Alliance it leads. Jim has walked away from that responsibility.

The basic line of polemic pursued by Jim is to argue that the Guptas are a distraction from the “real” corporate capture of the state by “white monopoly capital” (would “black” monopoly capital, whatever that might mean, be okay?). In this, ironically, Jim is not very far from the counter-offensive strategy waged by the Gupta-controlled media (*The New Age* and *ANN7*). Hired gun Andile Mngxitama, writing in *The New Age*, for instance, portrays the attack on the Guptas as a “story hatched by the global white capital propaganda machine”.

Regular *New Age* contributor, Pinky Khoabane, argues, in effect, in several columns that if you think the Guptas are bad what about Johann Rupert and his mega-rich clan? It was Khoabane who wrongly claimed (she has since back-tracked somewhat) that Rupert flew out from London to meet with Deputy President, Comrade Cyril Ramaphosa in December to “instruct” the state to hire Comrade Pravin Gordhan as Finance Minister.

In responding to Jim, Mngxitama, Khoabane and others, it is useful to note that the SACP, in defence of our democratic national sovereignty and in the face of the dangers of corporate capture, has not focused exclusively on the Guptas. Take the February Central Committee political report for instance. Readers will note that, while several paragraphs are certainly directed against the Gupta family, the Rupert family, the Oppenheimer family, and Koos Bekker’s Naspersempire (a conglomerate that includes media giants Media 24, Multichoice and extensive printing and publishing operations) are all critically flagged.

At the same time, we need to analyse more accurately and strategically the different and complex ways in which capital and its agents (shareholders, CEOs, fund managers, ratings agencies, them IMF and World Bank, neo-liberal ideological high priests, and their diverse lackeys and hangers-on) might undermine the democratic mandate of the post-apartheid South African state. Simply treating corporate capture as a monolithic “plot hatched by global (white) capital”, or, conversely, as the doings of the Gupta clan, leaves us strategically and tactically disarmed. We are not about to abolish capitalism globally, and simply dealing with the Guptas won’t make our challenges miraculously disappear. An effective anti-capitalist, and therefore an effective anti-corporate capture strategy, needs to understand the terrain much more accurately. Obviously there is not the space in this brief Editorial Note to undertake a comprehensive analysis. But here are some pointers.

In the first place, it is important to recognise that, while they will all be hostile to the SACP, the working class, a radical national democratic revolution and socialism, the Guptas, Bekkers, Ruperts and Oppenheimers have different and in some respects conflicting agendas.

Johann Rupert’s extensive business empire was inherited largely from his father Anton, a Broederbond and at one time the National Party Cape Province’s favoured replacement for Verwoerd as apartheid Prime Minister. The Rupert empire is centred on two major corporations that emerged from the South African tobacco giant, Rembrandt — Remgro and Richemont. Remgro is an investment company headquartered in Stellenbosch with interests in finance, mining and industry. Richemont is a Swiss-based luxury goods company. The Rupert business empire embraces hundreds of companies in 35 countries and on six continents. It is an empire that does not depend on South African government tenders. Johann Rupert can leave the schmoozing of Ministers to others. He can leave the bullying of the South African government, the heavy lifting to “market sentiment”, to the ratings agencies, while he enjoys a weekly family meal at the Ruperts-only reserved table in his favourite Stellenbosch restaurant when he is not on holiday in one of the family’s properties in the Seychelles or in Onrus.

Koos Bekker’s personal trajectory has both similar and distinct features. Like the Rupert empire, Bekker’s current empire was based on Afrikaner capital accumulation — in the case of Naspers dating back to 1914. Several directors and editors in Naspers were prominent apartheid-era politicians, including DF Malan, Hendrik Verwoerd and PW Botha. As the NP’s favoured newspaper and school textbook publisher, the company benefited extensively after the NP’s accession to power in 1948. Bekker’s own involvement in Naspers came in 1985 when, as a young post-graduate, he helped launch MNet, one of the first two pay TV services anywhere in the world. Most of the funding came from Naspers. Like the Rupert empire, Naspers is a multi-national. It operates in 130 countries, and it is listed on the JSE and in London. A major investment and money-spinner has been the Chinese-based media and entertainment company, Tencent in which Naspers has a 34% holding. However, unlike Johann Rupert who operates in a somewhat aloof if not downright disdainful manner towards the post-apartheid ANC-led government, Bekker’s Naspers South African media have other requirements. They are active within highly regulated sectors and there have been constant interventions from these corporate quarters to influence and suborn ANC MPs and government officials.

As numerous SACP statements have indicated, Naspers has, with the connivance of some ANC politicians and the current leadership of the SABC, subverted and undermined the public mandate and responsibilities of what is meant to be our public broadcaster. The much-delayed digital conversion also has everything to do with Naspers interference and partial corporate state capture.

By contrast with both the Ruperts and Bekkers, the Gupta family, arriving in South Africa in the mid-1990s, has been entirely parasitic for their wealth accumulation on corrupting parts of the post-apartheid state. In particular, they have targeted key parastatals, among them Eskom, Transnet, Denel and SAA, as well as provincial governments. The Ruperts and Bekkers, part of the so-called Stellenbosch mafia, appear to have some degree of commitment to South Africa, presumably both for wealth preservation and sentimental cultural reasons. (Rupert is reported to have cancelled all Richemont advertising in an overseas publication that once crassly described Afrikaans as “the ugliest language in the world”.) The Ruperts and Bekkers repatriate some of their considerable global earnings back into South Africa. By contrast, the Gupta family is reputed to be shipping its ill-acquired wealth post-haste out of the country to Dubai in anticipation of a loss of political influence in the near-term.

A greater attachment to South Africa does not mean that Rupert and Bekker are “good capitalists” while the Guptas are “bad capitalists”. Nor does the difference between a Remgro and a Naspers make Johann Rupert a nicer capitalist than Koos Bekker. Capitalism itself, however innovative, dynamic and durable it can sometimes be, is a thoroughly exploitative system, and, in civilizational and ecological terms, it is unsustainable. The SACP is not alone in recognising this reality: the current head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis, for instance, is outspoken in his recognition of this fact.

For the SACP it is not the Ruperts, or the Bekkers, or the Guptas, but capitalism as a global system that constitutes our principal and formidable strategic challenge. But how to deal with it? How do we safeguard our hard-won democracy? How do we defend our electoral mandate? How do we roll back the profit-maximising agenda of capital? What tactical and strategic programmes do we undertake?

Again, within the confines of an Editorial Note, we can only indicate some issues in broad brush-strokes. So let’s take one topical area. If we are to advance a second radical phase of the National Democratic Revolution, as we surely must, we require among other things a strategically disciplined, professional National Treasury and South African Revenue Service (SARS). The Guptas’ smash-and-grab, parasitic agenda has no such interest. A National Treasury that blows the whistle on the squandering of public resources on corrupt tenders, or that asks rational questions about a mega nuclear build programme, or a SARS that probes high income earners, are all anathema to the Guptas.

By contrast, the Ruperts and Bekkers for both sentimental and wealth preservation reasons, would like to see an effective Treasury and SARS capable of staving off a South African economic meltdown. But for them and much of the rest of South African monopoly capital, a strategically disciplined and professional Treasury and SARS would be institutions that essentially imposed a neo-liberal, investor friendly macro-economic policy programme that continued to lock South Africa into its semi-peripheral global positioning within the wider imperialist value chain.

Against the parasitic agenda of the Guptas and others, the SACP supports the defence of a strong and professionally effective Treasury and SARS, but the strategic discipline we have in mind is radically different from that of the Ruperts and Bekkers. We recognise the imperative for macro-economic, monetary and fiscal strategic discipline and professionalism in support of a radical second phase of the NDR. This includes macro-economic policy aligned to re-industrialisation, a major state-led infrastructure spend programme, job creation and sustainable social redistribution. In short, we require an effective Treasury and SARS, along with development finance institutions, which form important pillars of a democratic, developmental state. This is the only way that we can begin to roll back the neo-liberal agenda of the Ruperts and Bekkers.

But the very state and parastatal instruments required for this developmental agenda are the ones that are actively and wilfully eroded by the Gupta agenda. In short, exposing and putting an end to the parasitism of the Guptas and others like them is not a diversion from confronting monopoly capital as personified by the Ruperts and the Bekkers. Defeating parasitism is essential to confronting monopoly capital and advancing, deepening and defending our National Democratic Revolution.

THE SOCIAL GRANTS CRISIS HAS EXPOSED HYPOCRISY, BUT CERTAINLY IT NEEDS AN INDEPENDENT FORENSIC CORRUPTION INVESTIGATION TO GET TO THE ROOT OF THE MATTER

*From SACP online journal Umsebenzi Online, Red Alert, Volume 16, No. 07
16 March 2017*

The issue whether social grants will be paid on 1 April has taken the centre stage in our national discourse. On a lighter note there are many possibilities on that day given that it will be April Fool's Day. The social grants payment uncertainty crisis resulted on Wednesday 15 March to the Constitutional Court sitting to hear arguments about the situation and the way forward. There must be an independent forensic and corruption investigation into how as a country we were driven to this point. All those who have been involved in building up the situation, whether by omission or commission, must be held accountable for their negligence, complicity and other forms of wrongdoing!

The Department of Social Development under the political leadership of Minister Bathabile Dlamini supported by President Jacob Zuma recently assured the country that the grants will be paid. The social grants were paid but by means of an unlawful tender awarded to a foreign monopoly capital, the United States based NET1 UEPS via its Cash Paymaster Services (CPS) in South Africa.

Rather than whether the grants will be paid, which is, of course, itself a matter of grave concern, a deeper problem lies in the activist posture by, and that makes, the Department of Social Development appear to be dedicated at having the illegal contract awarded to the CPS extended. All indicators in the conduct of the department point to a consistent effort to have the extension of the illegal contract become the mechanism by which the social grants will again be paid. This directly contradicts the countless pronouncements by the ANC-headed Alliance and government to fight corruption and move our democratic transition on to a second radical phase with radical economic transformation as its key pillar. The vexing question that the South African society will have to answer through history is what underpins the inconsistency.

It is nevertheless important to note that there are state entities that display an encouraging commitment to national democratic transformation.

In this regard the South African Post Office (SAPO) must be congratulated.

On Wednesday SAPO told the Constitutional Court that:

“We approached this court as *amicus curiae* [friend of the court]. In our submissions what we seek to propose to this Court, having regard to the fact that we are faced with a national crisis, and further to that there is the very uncomfortable aspect that a private institution or private institutions can hold the state as it were into ransom in a contract...

“But what is the fundamental aspect of how does the state provide services to the most marginalised in society? And, in having regard to that, SAPO has come out with an alternative, which it says, it is an organ of state, it can provide an alternative solution.”

SAPO further exposed the rhetoric that was used to feed the interests of the illegal CPS social grants contract when it said:

“The issue that was bandied about was the CPS was the only party capable of carrying out this task. The South African Post Office has indicated that it is equally capable of carrying out the task. Now the question that we want and we support, and we want this court to promote, is the idea that where there are intergovernmental organisations and organs of state, that those organs of state, if they are capable of performing the functions, and if they are properly capacitated, and if they have the sufficient resources, that organs of state need not look out, to private institutions. This is in promoting the constitution. It is also promoting the values that are set out in the Inter-governmental Framework Act.”

What the Court was sitting with, and indeed faced with as SAPO said, was an issue of extending the social grants contract that was illegally awarded to the CPS. SAPO was absolutely right, both in terms of the fundamental principles that it articulated and the illegality of the social grants contract that was awarded to the CPS. It is in fact the Constitutional Court itself that ruled almost three years ago, on 17 April 2013, that:

“The Contract for the Payment of Social Grants between the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and Cash Paymaster Services (Pty) Ltd (Cash Paymaster) dated 3 February 2012 is declared invalid”.

The Department of Social Development supported by the President should actually have been the one seen both in policy and practice elaborating the fundamental principles articulated by SAPO. This is part of a contribution towards the realisation of a democratic developmental state with strategic discipline, professional and technical capacity that we seek to build rather than rely on unlawfully awarded tenders to deliver on its mandate.

The failure to establish a lawful social grants disbursement mechanism through the state for a period of five years, from 3 February 2012, including the approximately three years from 17 April 2013 when the Constitutional Court ruled that the social grants contract with the CPS was unlawful, must be viewed in a serious light. It is also important to recall that there was no independent forensic or corruption investigation following up on the ruling to get to the bottom of the matter, expose and decisively deal with all the private interests underlying this fiasco.

The defenders of the rise of the Gupta oligarchy have been engaging in loud-mouthed rhetoric appearing to be genuinely campaigning against economic dominance by “white monopoly capital”. They have now been exposed for all to see. Their silence about the problematic activism displayed by the Department of Social Development to extend the illegal social grants contract with the CPS is deafening.

In addition, the CPS’s banking partner is Grindrod, which is owned, among others by the Ruperts of this world. Remgro Limited is holding a major stake in Grindrod. Johann Rupert is Remgro Limited's Chairman. In its website, Grindrod states that:

“Grindrod Bank proudly provides banking services for the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) grant recipients, paying 17 million grants to 10.6 million distinct cardholders amounting to R11bn per month in close association with CPS who provide the card technology and manage the card programme on behalf of the government of South Africa.”

Further, according to Grindrod: “Each grant recipient has a Grindrod Bank account”.

During his presentation in Parliament early this week on matters relating to this contract, the Minister of Finance Pravin Gordhan correctly stated that the interests generated by the manner in which the money is transferred to pass through the hands of the Grindrod Bank must be returned to the state because they belong to the state. The pseudo-radicals who have been defending the Guptas and displaying “militancy” against “white monopoly capital” have gone silent. The factionalist essence of their rhetoric and their vulgar radical economic transformation has been exposed for all who care to see!

By the way the fundamental principles presented by SAPO to the constitutional court are very much similar to the perspectives articulated by the ANC-headed Alliance. The Alliance has been calling for SAPO, through the Post Bank, to be fully capacitated, equipped and transformed as a state bank to handle social grants and other public finances and provide developmental banking services to our people as opposed to commercial banks that are interested only in profit.

The CPS-Grindrod social grants disbursement-baking contracts directly contradict what the Alliance has pronounced on. This is clearly part of the decisions that are ruining the capacity of state entities in addition to disempowering them, in manners similar to the way that SAPO was disempowered of social grants disbursement. This begs the question as to who else are benefitting directly or indirectly from such defiance against the ANC-headed Alliance’s shared policy perspectives and the rule of law.

RADICAL ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION: CONTEXT, WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

*From SACP online journal Umsebenzi Online, Red Alert, Volume 16, No. 06,
28 February 2017*

by Solly Mapaila
(2nd Deputy General Secretary SACP)

Context

Radical economic transformation (RET) is very important to South Africa's (SA's) democratic transition towards the vision of a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous society as succinctly summarised in Freedom Charter. In 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) in alliance with the SA Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of SA Trade unions (Cosatu) supported by mass democratic organisations achieved a radical democratic breakthrough dislodging the apartheid regime.

Apartheid state machinery was replaced with new state institutions laying the foundation for the development of democracy. Millions of South Africans, especially the historically oppressed, realised an improvement in their conditions of life. This was further enabled by the new constitution recognising human rights, including workers and socio-economic rights, and massive social redistribution programmes. However, there was no RET to support broader democratic social transformation. This reached a point where it undermines the expansion of social redistributive programmes. It is now the new problem we are facing as a nation.

The Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy imposed as overarching government economic policy in 1996 contradicted the economic goals of the Freedom Charter. It resulted in de-industrialisation as imports surged because of its neoliberal shock therapy, imposed without regard to the necessity of developing national production.

Manufacturing sectors such as textile, clothing, leather, footwear and household appliances, were almost completely destroyed. The expansion of housing and electricity was not underpinned by industrial strategy to develop local production of household goods. As a result, almost all electronic devices and electrical appliances sold in South Africa are now imported.

Massive retrenchments followed, contributing to what was already a crisis level of unemployment. Inequality widened and poverty persisted.

The raw materials boom that was largely driven by manufacturing in China contributed significantly to growth in the early 2000s. This occurred not only against the backdrop of massive retrenchments but also aggressive restructuring of workers. Capitalist bosses increasingly started replacing permanent employment with insecure labour brokering, casualisation and temporary employment to suppress wages. This “golden period” of growth post-1994 was severely interrupted by the eruption of the ongoing capitalist economic crisis in 2008 worsening inequality, unemployment and poverty.

The lack of RET was exposed.

Close to one million workers were retrenched as raw materials demand plummeted. Retrenchments continued, acting against government policies to reduce unemployment. According to Stats SA’s Quarterly Employment Statistical release in June 2016, the mining sector alone, for example, dismissed 32, 000 workers year-on-year at that point. Very recently, AngloGold Ashanti declared that it was contemplating retrenching about 850 workers.

It was in the context of the crisis that the ANC in 2012 adopted the perspective to advance RET. This belated decision came after more than a decade of campaigning by the SACP and Cosatu for the Alliance's shared programme of the national democratic revolution to be radicalised on the economic front.

What then do we mean by radical economic transformation?

Firstly by RET it is meant not private corporate, not personal, not state-captured, family interests propagated in the name of all Black people. Corporate capture of strategic levers of power and corruption, all of which the SACP has been fighting, are worrying. It is reasonable, therefore, based on the experience, to believe that even where the conventional formula “Blacks in general and Africans in particular” is invoked on ownership transformation what is at play in so far as some fellows are concerned is the self, the “me”, “my family”, hangers-on, corporate capturers, blind loyalists.

Constitutional prerogatives must not be used to feed the root of such interests or other private agendas. RET cannot be about producing new layers of the Gupta phenomenon, an elite club of new billionaires based on inequality, and, in the sea of poverty and unemployment.

In fact class inequality, which in SA is further articulated along the lines of race, gender and geography, is driven, primarily, and historically, by capitalist accumulation of the surplus (wealth) socially produced by workers. Workers get nothing from the surplus appropriated by capitalists as profit. Their wages are, to capitalist exploiters, a cost that must always be suppressed to maximise profit.

Capitalists always insist on economic growth. But rather than the common good of the people as a whole, they are selfishly interested in increasing the rate of their private surplus appropriation. There will be no RET without altering this social equation and ultimately turning it on its head! As Karl Marx said long ago in 1844, by being radical it is meant grasping the root of the matter, and proceeding from the root. This is it!

RET must be seen as a democratic programme to restore production surplus to those who socially produce it, to each according to their contribution. This must fundamentally define what is meant by shared growth.

It is not radical to transfer ownership to an individual who is interested only in joining in the exploitation of the masses and privately accumulating the wealth they socially produce. This is why the SACP has called on workers to fight exploitation and assert their primary objective of socialised, and public, ownership and control to reduce class inequality.

A project for elitist groupings, regardless whether they are Black or White, to loot or share in the loot of the social surplus produced by labour in our economy is not genuine RET but vulgarised RET. The working class must stand up and confront such an insult, an undermining of its intellectual capacity. The working class is not a tool to be mobilised on the basis of a racial sounding rhetoric for the enrichment of a few individuals who can only become rich on the basis of joining in the exploitation of the very working class.

RET must drive a mass-based empowerment of the labour force involved in production. It must take care, through social redistributive programmes, including a comprehensive social security, of those who are yet to be directly involved in production, those who have retired, and those who have disabilities preventing them to be actively involved in productive activity. RET must, simultaneously, systematically expand national production to give effect to the Freedom Charter's principle for everyone to have access to productive work from which they can lead a decent life.

RET must secure our independence: democratic national sovereignty. Freedom from imperialism is very much part of its core, as it is with, ultimately, freedom from economic exploitation. RET must eliminate the colonial character of the structure of our national production and its terms of international trade. This requires increased investment in innovation, research and development, radical curriculum transformation and improvement in the quality and outcomes of teaching and learning. We must surpass the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) target of 1% gross domestic expenditure on research and development (GERD). According to a UNESCO's study published in September 2014, at that time our GERD was 0.7%. We did not have any radical increase in our GERD since then.

Related to the above, and in fact all aspects of RET, is the important question of how it will be funded and where the revenue will be generated. This requires another instalment over and above the present intervention. The focus of this intervention is on the fundamental principles which must define the basic content of RET.

Flowing from the above, especially the imperative of raising our levels of productive engagement and output in and funding of innovation, research and development, we must pay greater attention to, and increase the number of learners, students and graduates in mathematics, technology, natural and life sciences to pursue scientific solutions through made-in-SA inventions, discoveries and designs. This is one of ingredients for driving manufacturing expansion and diversification for local use and international trade to eliminate the colonial structure of our economy: Our economy was colonially structured to rely on exports of raw materials and primary goods and to be dependent on imports of finished products.

RET must build democratic control of our mineral resources, including through new pricing structures to build strategic advantages for localising production and creating jobs through value adding processes.

Among other measures, we must eliminate both export and import parity pricing on our raw materials and primary goods specifically to support national production development through manufacturing expansion and diversification. We must introduce developmental pricing to support production localisation. Our mineral resources must largely benefit the people as a whole compared to private economic interests concerned only with profit maximisation and private capital accumulation.

RET must speed up land redistribution. But, we must assist historically disadvantaged people who already have land to use it productively. This requires support in the form of materials, inputs, equipment, water supply, training and monitoring to ensure maximum results and, on a consistent basis. We must guard against collapsing production in the name of radical land redistribution.

Democratic national sovereignty is, to emphasise, fundamental to RET. We must not allow it to be handed over or subordinated to monopoly capital, corrupt economic forces, oligarchies or oligopolies, Black or White. RET must eliminate private dominance, monopoly, oligopoly and deal more decisively with collusion. It must build public and socialised ownership, collective and democratic worker control and management, including thriving co-operatives in all sectors of the economy.

In addition, therefore, thoroughgoing anti-monopoly institutional, legislative and regulatory changes are required, including anti-oligopoly, anti-oligarchy, anti-concentration, anti-collusion, anti-price fixing and anti-all other sorts of manipulative economic ownership structures and market conduct!



Statement of the PCUSA Peace and Solidarity Commission on Global War: April 21st, 2017

US imperialist aggression and military preparations throughout the world are solely menacing an imminent outbreak of WWIII. All its desperate confrontational maneuvers in every embroiled theatre, whether through a growing number of European states to threaten the Russian Federation, or in Syria, Iraq or Yemen, on the Korean Peninsula or in the South China Sea threatening China, are toward that unified (rationally unthinkable) strategic objective. US provocative actions globally are one in purpose; they are not at all comprehensible as interventions in separate conflicts. US disturbance in other countries is posed conjunction with its major front, NATO, through US inspired neo-Nazi movements in several European countries (notably the Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, and Romania); with its highly reactionary regional vassal states in Middle East (Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the Persian Gulf principalities), with its subordinates in Asia (Japan, South Korea, and Australia); by its promotion of civil unrest in Latin America (prominently in Venezuela at the moment); and by its rapidly increasing militarization of the Arctic in conjunction with its servant Canada.

US military and political involvement raising protracted regional tensions has instigated violent crises in several countries in both hemispheres, whether by wars of indirect or direct aggression or subterfuge. Intervention is simply an empty pretext: it is not predicated on independent or pre-existing civil conflicts in other countries or propagandistically imagined threats to the peace of the world by other states. Neo-Nazi movements in Europe would not exist without US organization and funding for previously suppressed and dispersed criminal elements in those societies. There is no civil war in Syria, inherently a stable, secular society and republic, not divided ethnically or religiously. The war there is one of indirect aggression on the part of the US since 2011 through brutally barbaric foreign mercenary terrorists, not Syrian rebels, from over 80 countries, ostensibly seeking to impose a theocratic autocracy but serving as a purely invented rationale for intended US-Saudi-Turkish partition of Syria. Indirect aggression and the pursuit of pretext for intervention leads of false flag operations, such as the sarin gas attack in Syria in 2013 and the currently alleged sarin gas attack in that country, when the known supplies for sarin gas to US-backed terrorist elements in Syria is coming from NATO through Turkey. The struggle in Yemen is not one of an Iran allied Houthi minority posing a threat against a US ally, the Absolute Monarchy of Saudi Arabia, but the opposite: a national resistance struggle of all popular democratic forces in Yemen against US-Saudi imperialist aggression. Oppositional elements in Venezuela are being directly organized and funded by the US, which would otherwise have no power to disturb the political order of that popular Bolivarian state.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, seeking only to defend itself from constant US threats for its destruction throughout its existence after an artificially US imposed partition empowering Japanese collaborationists among Korean capitalists and landlords against the unified Korean anti-imperialist resistance, is being demonized absurdly as if representing a threat of global aggression. All conflicts threatening the peace of the world today have been instigated or contrived by US imperialism, which are being resisted at national levels by popular and progressive forces in the different forms confronted.

The political style of US aggression, whether conducted at the sole initiative of the presidency or with the consent of the Congress (by either declarations of war or authorizations for the use of force), is not the issue: US imperialist designs now threatening WWIII are. The constitutional question is a serious misdirection of the US peace movement. From 1812, the Congress of the United States has overwhelmingly supported all US wars, whether apparently defensive or aggressive.

The US Congress today is fully behind all current US wars of indirect aggression and of military strike build-up throughout the world. Formal declarations of war or stronger resolutions of authorization will only give the appearance of popular support for continued and intensified aggression that does not exist and provide a pretext for treating opposition as treasonous, as is already occurring within the government under the anti-Russia hysteria generated during and since the 2016 US presidential elections.

What needs urgently to be done as a first step to stop US imperialist aggression in the world is the illegalization by the General Assembly of the United Nations of all wars of indirect aggression, as the Soviet representative to the League of Nations, Maxim Litvinov, appealed for prior to WWII but failed to achieve, and of any moves outside the UN framework to disarm other states. The Peace and Solidarity Commission of the Party of Communists, USA, calls on all domestic peace and anti-imperialist organizations to support the illegalization in international law of wars of indirect aggression and to support universal disarmament by negotiations under multilateral treaties (the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in particular), and the illegalization of any show of force by one state to compel other states to disarm.

THE INTERNATIONALE AND THE RED FLAG

Formal meetings of the Zimbabwe Communist Party should always start with the singing of the first verse of *The Internationale* and end with the singing of the first verse of *The Red Flag*.

We should know the history of these two revolutionary songs.

THE INTERNATIONALE

The Internationale was originally written in French by Eugène Pottier (1816-1887) soon after the defeat of the Paris Commune. The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first successful worker's revolutionary government in history. It existed in Paris, the French capital, from 26th March to 28th May 1871.

In 1870 war broke out between France, then ruled by Emperor Napoleon III and the Kingdom of Prussia led by its Chancellor Otto Bismarck. This is known as the Franco-Prussian War. Bismarck was at that time uniting Germany into one country in which the King of Prussia was to become the Emperor of Germany (achieved on 18th January 1871). Napoleon III was taken into captivity on the 2nd September 1870 at the Battle of Sedan. On 4th September 1870 a Government of National Defence was formed. Paris was besieged by the Prussians from 19th September 1870 until 28th January 1871 and there were acute food shortages after which Paris fell to what had become the German Empire..

Paris workers reacted angrily to German occupation, and refused to co-operate, limiting the area of German occupation to only a small corner of the city. On 18th March 1871, the French government, in collusion with the Germans, sent its army to Paris to disarm the Paris workers but they refused. On 26th March 1871 a municipal council composed of workers and soldiers — the **Paris Commune** — was elected. Among those elected was Eugène Pottier.

In its short existence the Paris Commune introduced many reforms: it made the National Guard, in which all citizens capable of bearing arms were to be enrolled, the sole armed force; it remitted all payments of house rent from October 1870 until April 1871, amounts already paid were to be reckoned as part of future rent period; some foreigners were elected to the Commune because “the flag of the Commune is the flag of the World Republic”; a maximum salary of 6,000 francs for all employees and elected members of the Commune was established; the Vendôme Column celebrating the military victories of Napoleon I was demolished as a symbol of chauvinism and war; factories closed down by the manufacturers began to be re-organized as workers co-operatives.

The French army based at Versailles just outside Paris started to attack the Commune at the beginning of May, by 28th May 1871 the last stronghold was defeated. Some 20,000 workers were shot in the streets, thousands more were deported to French penal colonies.

It was in June 1871, just after the defeat of the Paris Commune that Eugène Pottier wrote *The Internationale*. The name refers to the International Working Men's Association (IWMA) otherwise known as the First International (1864-1876) in which Marx and Engels were the most outstanding leaders.

The music was written in 1888 by the Belgian Pierre De Geyter (1848–1932). After the Russian Revolution, *The Internationale* was used in lieu of a national anthem until replaced by the *Hymn of the Soviet Union* in 1944. In 1927, Pierre De Geyter was invited to the 10th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution where he was awarded a Soviet pension by Stalin.

There are 6 verses to *The Internationale* which has now been translated into many languages. Normally only the first verse is sung.

There are a number of translations into English; the Zimbabwe Communist Party uses the same version as the South African Communist Party.

THE INTERNATIONALE

Arise ye prisoners of starvation
Arise ye toilers of the earth
For reason thunders new creation
Tis a better world in birth
Never more traditions chains shall bind us
Arise ye toilers, no more in thrall
The earth shall rise on new foundations
We are but naught: we shall be all

Then comrades come rally,
Tis the last fight we face
The Internationale
Unites the human race. (*REPEAT*)



THE RED FLAG

The revolutionary anthem *The Red Flag* was written by the Irishman Jim Connell (1852-1929) at the time of the 1889 London Dock Strike.

The Red Flag as a symbol of revolutionary struggle goes far back in history; it is first recorded as being used by slaves in revolt against ancient Rome; it is also recorded as being used in the Peasants' Revolt in Germany in the early 16th century; towards the end of the 18th century, the Red Flag was used as a symbol by the most radical forces during the Great French Revolution.

As a symbol of working-class power the Red Flag was first used in 1831 during the rising by coal miners in Merthyr Tydfil in Wales.

In the French Revolution of 1848, the Red Flag was again used when the monarchy of Louis Phillippe was overthrown and the Second Republic declared. But it was the use of the Red Flag by the Paris Commune in 1871 which secured it as the permanent symbol of workers' revolution and of communism.

Following the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 and the establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922, the Red Flag plus the Hammer and Sickle became the flag of the Soviet Union; later the Red Flag also formed the basis of the national flags of the People's Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Jim Connell was a member of Britain's first Marxist organization, the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) when he wrote *The Red Flag*, although he later fell out with H.M. Hyndman the rather difficult leader of the SDF and joined the more active, though less ideologically aware Independent Labour Party (ILP). In 1922, Jim Connell was given an award by Lenin for his work.

The Red Flag has 6 verses and is normally sung to the tune of *Tannenbaum* but originally intended to be sung to the lively tune *The White Cockade*. It has become a major revolutionary anthem in English-speaking countries.

In the Zimbabwe Communist Party we will normally sing the first verse to the tune of *Tannenbaum* at the end of meetings.



Eugène Pottier
wrote the words of
The Internationale



Pierre De Geyter
wrote the tune to
The Internationale



Jim Connell
wrote the words of
The Red Flag

THE RED FLAG



The people's flag is deepest red
It shrouded oft our martyred dead
And ere their limbs grew stiff and cold
Their heart's blood dyed its every fold

Then raise the scarlet standard high
Within its shade we'll live and die
Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer
We'll keep the Red Flag flying here

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