

Vanguard

27th February 2019

Vol.2 No.7

Organ of the National Steering Committee of the Zimbabwe Communist Party

REBELLION or REVOLUTION?



~ CONTENTS ~

EDITORIAL: Rebellion or Revolution	4
GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT	6
INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING – ZCTU International Labour Conference	10
OPEN LETTER TO ROBERT MUGABE from A.M. Babu (1980)	19
MONETARY POLICY STATEMENT 2019	23
ON THE MONETARY POLICY STATEMENT 2019 – ZCP	25
ECONOMIC DEBATE	27
Is the GNU the Answer to the Economic Crisis in Zimbabwe? by Samukele Hadebe	27
Currency Problems of Zimbabwe: Possible Solutions by Ben Mlalazi	30
ZIMBABWE DOCTORS' STRIKE 2018	38
SECURITY GUARDS HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS	45
AMALGAMATED RURAL TEACHERS' UNION OF ZIMBABWE – ARTUZ	46
ARTUZ Conference: Speech by ZCP General Secretary	47
Salary Caravan	49
Mthuli, We Are Here	58
ARTUZ Solidarity with Striking Doctors	59

Battling to Avert a Looming Catastrophe by Obert Masaraure	60
2019, ARTUZ Still Battling to Restore Teachers’ Dignity Through Dynamic Unionism	63
Salary Camp	65
GOVERNMENT THROWS OUT 1,000 FAMILIES FROM MASVINGO FARM	68
MNANGAGWA ANNOUNCES FUEL PRICE HIKE	70
FUEL PRICE INCREASE – ZCP STATEMENT	71
STATEMENT ON STAYAWAY BY ZCTU	72
SHUTDOWN OF ZIMBABWE	73
REPORT FROM <i>MY ZIMBABWE</i>	75
ARREST OF TRADE UNION LEADERS, INTERNATIONAL TU REACTION	76
ZCP REPLY TO OBERT MPOFU	80
From the ZANU(PF) paranoia sheet <i>The Patriot</i>	81
REPLY TO PATIENCE MURAVA IN THE PATRIOT by Samukele Hadebe	85
PRESIDENT MNANGAGWA’S CALL FOR DIALOGUE – ZCP	87
BATTLEFIELDS MINE DISASTER – NEWS24	88
STATEMENT ON BATTLEFIELDS MINE DISASTER – ZCP	89

GOLD CAPITALISM & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN ZIMBABWE – Lenin Chisaira	90
<hr/>	
VENEZUELA	91
<hr/>	
BRIEF HISTORY OF VENEZUELA	92
<hr/>	
THE WAR ON VENEZUELA IS BUILT ON LIES by John Pilger	93
<hr/>	
THE ROLE OF THE WORKING-CLASS IN VENEZUELA’S CRISIS – Pedro Eusse	97
<hr/>	
STATEMENT BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VENEZUELA	101
<hr/>	
THE GLOBAL ‘LEFT’ AND VENEZUELA by Lucas Koerner	103
<hr/>	

COMRADES, WHERE ARE YOUR ARTICLES?



WRITE !!

EDITORIAL:

Rebellion or Revolution?



There are those, especially among our youth, who imagine that violent action, especially against government, is always revolutionary.

But there is a huge difference between rebellion and revolution. Between a rebel and a revolutionary.

Rebellion is about undirected anger against the established order.

Rebellion may be an expression of the frustration of the oppressed.

Rebellion may also be reactionary, as with the Rhodesians who rebelled against the idea of “No Independence Before Majority Rule” and made the “Unilateral Declaration of Independence.”

Violence, in itself, is not revolutionary.

And rebels without direction and ideology can be used by reactionary forces.

Remember that conflict is not always between revolutionary and reactionary forces: conflict between two opposing reactionary forces is common: and opposing sides may be capable of employing workers to fight and kill each other.

There may, of course, be times when violence is necessary during the course of a revolution. But it is a dangerous weapon which needs to be used with discipline and caution. Reckless violence always becomes counter-productive and frequently counter-revolutionary.

Revolution, on the other hand, is about changing the mode of production and the class relationships produced by that mode of production.

Revolution in the modern era, is about advancing towards socialism, the social ownership of the means of production.

Revolution is not about bravely running into the bullets of the enemy like the Zulus at Blood River, nor even like the small but determined group which occupied Africa Unity Square demanding that “Mugabe Must Go” resulting in the abduction and disappearance of one of its members.

Revolution is about winning the working-class and peasantry around their own class-interests and eventually gaining power in those class interests. To carry out successful revolution we need strategy and tactics.

We need to know when to resolutely move forward, when to simply hold our ground and when to retreat in good order.

We need to know when to fight our enemy and when to negotiate.

We need to know when to compromise and when to refuse to compromise.

We need to know who are our strategic, long-term allies and who are our tactical allies, allies of the moment.

Our task as revolutionaries is not to prove how brave or how correct we are: our task as revolutionaries is to win.

In order to win, we must follow the words of Lenin, “Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement.” While Zimbabweans fail to understand the need to learn and apply revolutionary theory, our working-class movement will always be subverted and undermined by people with a different agenda. Exploitation and poverty will remain the order of the day.

The title of this issue of *Vanguard* was intended to be *The Working-Class on the March*. Action over remuneration was being initiated by doctors, teachers and security guards. Government and the employers of the security guards were being pushed into a corner. The corruption at the Reserve Bank was being exposed, as was the corporate capture of the state machine by the multi-national company Trafigura which has control of the pipeline running through Mozambique. Trafigura in Zimbabwe is represented by “Queen Bee” Kudakwashe Tagwirei.

Government was starting to squirm. It had little place to hide. Then came the explosion.

The justified stayaway initiated by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) against the unprecedented hike in fuel prices was hi-jacked by the MDC with its agenda of refusing to accept the outcome of the 2018 elections and trying to portray Nelson Chamisa as the “legitimate President of Zimbabwe”.

We have reports that MDC activists encouraged violence and looting as they did last year as we were waiting for the election results and is testified to in detail by the evidence submitted to the Motlanthe Commission. We also have evidence that the ZANU(PF) youth also engaged in the orgy of violence and looting — as did members of the police and armed forces. Further, that this was organised by the Chiwenga faction as part of their bid to post President Mnangagwa.

The ‘opposition’ and a ZANU(PF) faction deliberately subverted the workers struggle. A non-violent stayaway designed to bring necessary dialogue between organised labour and government over an inflationary fuel price-increase became a confrontation between those wanting a pro-imperialist “régime change” government and the most violent sections of the state security forces. Violent behaviour gave the green-light to the security forces to beat, kill and rape indiscriminately and methodically. Our trade union leaders who had called for a peaceful stayaway have been arrested, beaten and accused. The just demands of the workers have been buried by the fight between two bourgeois parties representing different capitalist interests.

It is convenient for the MDC to see the ZCTU as its appendage to be used for purposes which can further the class interests of its leaders and its funders.

It is just as convenient for ZANU(PF) to be able to represent any genuine workers’ struggle as being the work of imperialist forces.

THE NEED FOR THE ZCTU TO REPRESENT THE CLASS INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS AND NOT TO BE HI-JACKED BY THOSE WITH AN ANTI-WORKING-CLASS POLITICAL AGENDA NEEDS TO BE URGENTLY ADDRESSED.



THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT

We ended 2018 with the militant Amalgamated Rural Teachers' Union marching from Mutare to Harare (a distance of over 200km) demanding to be paid in United States Dollars and camping at the offices of Minister of Finance, Mthuli Ncube in Harare. While the Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union were marching from Mutare to Harare, workers in the health sector (nurses and doctors) were on strike.

The demands of the workers in the public sector were clear, "pay us in US\$". This important tactical demand does not mean they are limiting themselves to what Lenin calls "small, narrow activities on the basis of the existing system." This demand contains within it more than the simple demand for improved pay. It strikes at the corruption of the ruling élite in their management of the Reserve Bank and raises questions about the nature of the capitalist system itself.

In failing to understand the class character of the trade unions in Zimbabwe, the main opposition party, the MDC, opportunistically sought to hi-jack the National Stayaway by the workers, turning it away from the bread and butter issues into a narrow, bourgeois party political question concerned with the legitimacy question arising from the July 2018 elections. As we have maintained in our previous statements, both the MDC and ZANU(PF) are advancing a neo-liberal agenda which does not address the interests of the working-class in Zimbabwe. Both ZANU(PF) and the MDC consistently try to turn the unions from the socialist struggle. In 1908 after the International Socialist Stuttgart Congress held in Stuttgart, Germany, Lenin said:

"The class interests of the bourgeoisie inevitably give rise to a striving to confine the unions to petty and narrow activity within the framework of the existing social order, to keep them away from any contact with socialism; and the neutrality theory is the ideological cover for these strivings of the bourgeoisie... at the outset of the workers' political and trade-union movements in Europe it was possible to uphold trade-union neutrality as a means of widening the original field of proletarian struggle during the period when it was comparatively undeveloped and when the bourgeoisie exerted no systematic influence on the unions. At the present time it is quite indefensible, from the point of view of international Social-Democracy, to uphold trade-union neutrality."

V.I. Lenin, *Trade Union Neutrality* (1908) LCW Vol.13 p.466

[Note that prior to the First World War "Social-Democracy" referred to the international socialist movement led by Marxists.]

Read this passage by Lenin carefully and understand it. The trade union movement in Zimbabwe should be neutral in its relationship to the struggles between the bourgeois parties. It should not side with either ZANU(PF) or MDC and be side-tracked into being a subsidiary of either. But it must not be neutral in its attitude to the international struggle for socialism and against imperialism.

The Party as Vanguard

What then is the vanguard role of the Zimbabwe Communist Party?

In the Zimbabwean conditions, in building the ZCP as the vanguard of the working-class and peasants we must produce cadres schooled in Marxist-Leninist theory, committed to the working people and the struggle for socialism. Our immediate aim is to build a democratic economy linked to devolution of power to the people.

Since the formation of the ZCP in April 2017, we have been struggling to set up study groups and persuading people to read more than they find on social media. Without a clear understanding of Marxism – Leninism by ZCP members, we will fail to provide political leadership at a time when workers are looking for political guidance.

As a Communist Party we cannot claim the honoured title of “vanguard party” merely by proclaiming it. We must be guided by the correct application of Marxist revolutionary theory in leading the working-class and peasants. For us to achieve such, we must pay attention to our cadre development. We must go out there and win support of the unions, the primary representatives of the workers’ class interests, through our access to the most advanced theory we can guide them during this critical phase of a workers’ struggle. In our inaugural statement on 3rd May 2017 we said that our task as the ZCP is to unite the working-class in Zimbabwe. The National Shutdown saw unity of the workers in action; unity cannot be negotiated in boardrooms, it must be achieved in the trenches. We must take the lead of uniting the unions and turn them into militant, progressive unions under one federation. At the same time, we must develop cadres within the trade unions and transform their struggles into a dual struggle AGAINST imperialism and the parasitic bourgeois on the one hand and the struggle FOR national economic autonomy and socialism on the other.

In all this, our long-term objective including that of the working-class, is the creation of a communist society. Before we can create a communist society, we must first of all build a national democratic economy linked to devolution of power to the people, from there make the transition to a socialist society in which the working-class will control the means of production leading finally to the total elimination of classes, to a truly classless society — Communism.

International Solidarity

We appreciate the international solidarity with the workers of Zimbabwe from various trade unions across the globe. On the 1st February 2019, workers in Botswana and Nigeria marched to the Zimbabwean embassies in their countries to express solidarity with our struggle. A number of union federations, including the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions (MCTU), issued solidarity statements as did the Southern African Trade Union Co-ordinating Council (SATUCC), and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) went beyond issuing of a solidarity statement, it organised a picket at the Beitbridge border post on the 6th February 2019.

Workers in Zimbabwe must understand this as international solidarity not only against the government of Zimbabwe but also against imperialism and the parasitic bourgeoisie. This then means that, there must be a clear understanding of the attempted coup in Venezuela in which the US government backed by the EU and right-wing and fascist governments elsewhere, attempted to replace Comrade Nicolas Maduro, the elected president with their own nominee. We accept that the political leadership of Venezuela under President Nicolas Maduro made mistakes in advancing and protecting the ideals of the Bolivarian Revolution, a revolution which reduced poverty by more than half, but we cannot celebrate the imperialist onslaught against the democratically elected President of Venezuela. When we say we are engaged in a dual struggle against imperialism and the parasitic bourgeoisie, we mean we must never stand in the same corner as the imperialist powers.

The ZCP ought to guide the people of Zimbabwe in understanding the struggle against imperialism. It is unfortunate that because the ZANU(PF) régime mouths anti-imperialist sentiments while oppressing the workers, many workers simplistically believe that the governments of the USA and Britain are its friends.

We cannot seek solidarity for ourselves while failing to give solidarity to the working-class in Venezuela under attack from the USA and to the people of Palestine under attack from apartheid Israel.

We further support the people of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara) who are under illegal occupation by Morocco. We stand opposed to the decision of the African Union in readmitting Morocco when it is still illegally occupying Western Sahara.

We note the call by many of the people of Southern Cameroons for the establishment of a separate state of Ambazonia. The question is:

What is our ideological guide in supporting or not supporting such a call?

We condemn the killings that are taking place carried out by the government of long-time dictator of the Republic of Cameroon, Paul Biya and we call on the regional body and the African Union to facilitate dialogue that will end the killings in Southern Cameroons.

We will use the Israel Apartheid Week in March to engage our communities on the brutality by Israel against the people of Palestine. The confusion in our society which is deeply influenced by fundamentalist US-influenced Christianity is that, the modern state of Israel is believed to be the Biblical Israel. Our support for Palestine is then viewed as an attack to the Christian community, which of course it is not. In fact, the Christian community of Palestine, the oldest in the world, has suffered the same oppression from the Zionist state as the Palestinian Muslims. Our Commissariat department will produce a special bulletin in the month of March dedicated to the struggle of the people of Palestine and to show the difference between the Biblical Israel and the modern state of Israel and who are the Palestinians and who are the Israelis.

The Ethnic Question in Zimbabwe

As Marxists, we must not hide our heads in the sand and pretend as if we do not see what is happening in Bulawayo and other parts of Matebeleland. In the last two years, the militant separatist Mthwakazi Republic Party has been in the forefront in organising communities to reject workers who are not born from the region.

We condemn all moves which are aimed at dividing the workers in terms of ethnicity. Nevertheless, we cannot forget that last year at TM Hyper in the middle of Bulawayo, a new manager fired all local workers and bussed in Shona-speakers from Kwe Kwe.

In rural Matabeleland there is a genuine problem with teachers, especially at primary level not able to speak the local language. This includes not only Ndebele which is the most dominant language in the region but also languages such as Kalanga and Tonga. The 2018 Grade Seven results show poor performances by a number of schools in Matebeleland North.

The ZCP has consistently called for the implementation of the Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe, which, on the question of language, has this to say:

“6. Languages

“1. The following languages, namely Chewa, Chibarwe, English, Kalanga, Koisan, Nambya, Ndaou, Ndebele, Shangani, Shona, sign language, Sotho, Tonga, Tswana, Venda and Xhosa, are the officially recognised languages of Zimbabwe.

“2. An Act of Parliament may prescribe other languages as officially recognised languages and may prescribe languages of record.

“3. The State and all institutions and agencies of government at every level must —

“a. ensure that all officially recognised languages are treated equitably; and

“b. take into account the language preferences of people affected by governmental measures or communications.”

As Communists, we must facilitate an education indaba in Bulawayo which will be attended by stakeholders in the education sector to understand if the poor performance in the primary schools is linked to the language problem. If this is found to be true, we must then address this challenge with the Zimbabwean government in accordance with the Constitution.

As we publish this issue of *Vanguard*, there is dispute at the Rainbow Hotel in Bulawayo. We have been informed that the hotel is undergoing renovations and that, two buses were seen ferrying people from outside Bulawayo to be employed, but as Communists, we do not take action on such delicate and potentially divisive issues without first ascertaining the facts.

We again witnessed the ethnic tension over the election of the Deputy Mayor of Bulawayo. The MDC Alliance which controls the Bulawayo City Council elected as Deputy Mayor Tinashe Kambarami born in Masvingo. As councillors are elected by their communities and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are in turn elected by the councillors, we as Communists can never agree to any form of ethnic exclusiveness, more especially in a multi-ethnic city like Bulawayo.

The question, however, which we must attend to as Marxists is, what does this mean to the unity of the working class? How do we deal with the ethnic problem? [We recommend *Marxism and the National Question* (1913) by J.V. Stalin (and approved by Lenin) as important reading on this topic.]

We believe that Devolution of Power to the People and the introduction of full employment would significantly diminish ethnic tension. We would be interested to hear the views of Comrades in this debate, that is on how to deal with the problem. But contributions with anti-Shona or anti-Ndebele sentiments will not be considered, neither will anything else which expresses sentiments of racism or ethnic exclusiveness, superiority or inferiority of any kind.

Red Salute

Finally, red salute to our members who are in the trade union movement for their resilience against military onslaught by the military régime. In particular we salute the President of the Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union, Comrade Obert Masaraure for his dedication to the cause of the workers and to all Communists cadres in the trade union movement.

Communist Cadres to the Front!





ZCTU
International Labour Conference,
Jameson Hotel, Harare
6th-7th NOVEMBER 2018



INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING FOR BOTH EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION AND IDEOLOGICAL COHESION.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WORKER EDUCATION AND WORKER CONTROL

Paper by Dr Samukele Hadebe of the Chris Hani Institute

Abstract

Institutional capacity building for the revitalization of trade unions in changing work-places in particular and in society in general, is of urgent necessity. The changes associated with globalization and its neo-liberalism continue to impact negatively on the working-class. The informalization of the economy has resulted in the casualization of work and increased precarity while the simultaneous erosion of incomes further deepened poverty. Consequently, trade union density and influence plunge, exposing workers to vulnerability. To safeguard the rights and interests of the working people, the trade unions in Zimbabwe and in the Global South, need appropriate responses to this reactionary neo-liberal onslaught. Such a response entails institutional capacity building and ideological consciousness through enhanced worker education and effective worker control.

1. Introduction

“One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings’ consciousness”

Freire, 1970: p.33

Workers are at crossroads. Informalization. Casualization. Precarity. Abject poverty. Building an economy for everyone under the prevailing conditions is an arduous task though not impossible. The conference theme; *Workers at Crossroads Arise and Lead in the Struggle to Build an Economy for Everyone* aptly describes the challenges and contradictions facing trade unions under a neo-liberal capitalist dispensation while also calling the working class to rise to its historical mission and create a just and humane society. For years now, the workers in Zimbabwe have been subjected to a relentless onslaught by employers on the one side and on the other bad economic policies, grand political corruption and state repression.

All these setbacks are experienced against a backdrop of changes at the workplace as well as in society due to the changing nature of capitalist accumulation characterized by casualization of labour, migrant labour, erosion of incomes and hence deepening poverty.

The financialization of capitalism, for example, has not only prioritized maximization of profits for the few but it has also shifted investments to financial activity away from the production of goods and services hence exposing the workers to economic vulnerability and instability. As a result, the phenomenal job losses resulting in declining trade union density in the Global South in general and in Zimbabwe in particular are not accidental. The tragic conditions of the majority poor are attributable to capital in the same measure as to the complicity of the post-colonial state whose hostile posture against organized labour is undisguised.

Notwithstanding, trade unions are still expected to service their members and defend workers' rights. As workers lose jobs and as their poverty deepens they look upon their trade unions not just for protection but for explanations as to why their conditions deteriorate. For effective and appropriate responses, trade unions particularly the Zimbabwe Congress of Trades Union (ZCTU) must adapt accordingly to both the changing workplace and changing conditions in society. It is not exaggerating that worker education plays a crucial role in this transformative process that includes institutional capacity building as well as the requisite ideological cohesion needed for a protracted working-class struggle. Since worker education and worker control are central in my proposal for both institutional capacity building and ideological awareness, a historical background is given to contextualize worker education and worker control.

2. Threads from History

Perhaps institutional capacity building for both effective organization and ideological cohesion could be better appreciated against the history of trade unionism in the region in general and in Zimbabwe in particular. Of interest here are organizational weaknesses, ideological problems, lack of worker control, worker education and fractionalization. For the record, the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), the earliest black trade union (formed in Cape Town in 1919)¹ and forerunner to the region's trade union movements, declined largely because

“...the organization had no clear structures ensuring worker control, and suffered from serious differences as well as widespread corruption... the expulsion of Communist Party members robbed ICU of a number of people centrally involved in worker education.”²

In addition, there developed personality conflicts between Clement Kadalie and W. Champion which we could perhaps say marked the beginning of factionalism in the incipient labour movement. It would seem that generally not much was learnt from this history of the very first black trade union as these shortcomings were bequeathed to subsequent and successor organizations.

In the Zimbabwean context, as early as the 1940s the African workers had realised the need for a single trade union federation but its actualization remained elusive. Inference can be drawn from colonial archives where a police officer in 1947 noted that:

“...there is a growing, although as yet only incipient tendency among natives to realise that from their point of view, the adage ‘*Ex Unitate Vires*’ is particularly applicable.”³

¹ K. Luckhardt & B. Wall (1980) *Organize or Starve! The History of the South African Congress of Trade Unions*, p.40.

[Editor's Note: This is an error. The first African trade union was the Industrial Workers of Africa formed in 1918 which led the Johannesburg Bucket Workers' Strike also in 1918. However, the IWA soon merged with the larger ICU.]

² S. Vally, M. wa Bofelo & J. Treat (2013) *Worker Education in South Africa: Lessons and Contradictions*. *McGill Journal of Education*, Vol.48, No.3 pp.469-490.

³ ZBZ 1/2/1, Staff Officer to the Commissioner of Police of Native Labour, 9th October 1947.

Trade unions in colonial Zimbabwe, as in some countries in the region too, were some of the early centres of anti-colonial resistance that gave birth to the modern nationalist liberation movement. Even an attempt in 1953 through a conference held in Gwelo (now Gweru) to form a single trade union federation could not get all stakeholders, eventually in January 1954 the Southern Rhodesia Trade Union Congress (TUC) was launched but still two labour centres remained as the Reformed Industrial Commercial Union (RICU) as a separate entity.²

Yet at the attainment of Zimbabwe's independence, organized labour had been side-lined and rendered politically irrelevant due to divisions and that it was organizationally weak³. Similarly, at its infancy in the 1980s, the ZCTU remained largely ineffective as the voice of the workers due to weak leaders, poor management and its subordination to the government through the ruling party⁴. It is on record, that at the zenith of its militancy and anti-ESAP struggles, the labour centre supposedly fractured as a rival federation, the ZFTU (Zimbabwe Federation of Trades Union) was sponsored and hence dividing and weakening the workers' voice.

Why are we reminded of these unpalatable if not painful episodes in the history of the workers' struggle?

Firstly, it is to show that some challenges, be they organizational or ideological, are not new to organized labour but are characteristic of workers' struggles. Hence, workers should have learnt from the past and acted even wiser. Secondly, and perhaps meaningfully, is to demonstrate the difficulties under which trade unions have always organized and their resilience in the face of enormous adversity. Thirdly, it is to reveal continuities and discontinuities in the workers struggle as punctuated by successes and failures. In the process, we underline the centrality of trade union principles and values as internationalist organizations struggling for a better humanity. Of course, these values and principles are tested in the real battles by the workers. For example, while COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) was calling for a one country one federation, it splintered itself, and yet another federation was added to already a number that was existent. The workers' struggle is therefore not linear as it has many previously unforeseen detours. Therefore, the current state and stage of the workers struggle in Zimbabwe should be viewed within the prism of historical developments and observable trends in the country, region and the Global South.

3. Primacy of Worker Control — the worker at the centre

Any institutional capacity building for both effective organization and ideological cohesion must put the worker at the centre of trade union activities. It is typical of organizations to drifting away from their original purpose as they grow and expand their activities. Similarly, trade unions are bound to decline once the workers as owners of the unions are marginalized and alienated from it. The worker is and must be at the centre of trade union work. The trade union is an organization of workers by workers and for workers and nothing in it must be done without their consent. Nothing for us without us.

Sometimes labour officials develop patronizing attitudes suggesting that certain organizational issues were beyond the understanding of and hence decision-making of workers. Therefore, decisions are made on behalf of members without consultation and hence creating a chasm between members and their leadership. It results in a demoralized membership that loses interest in trade union activities as those programmes would have been planned without their active participation.

²T.H. Mthibhe, (1996) Zimbabwe: Working-Class Nationalism (1957–1963) *Zambezia*, Vol. XXIII, Issue 2.

³ B. Raftopoulos, (2001) 'The Labour Movement and the Emergence of Opposition Politics in Zimbabwe' in Raftopoulos, B. and Sachikonye, L.' (eds). *Striking Back: The Labour Movement and the Post-Colonial State in Zimbabwe*, Weaver Press: Harare.

⁴ Raftopoulos, Op. cit. 6.

Worker control should characterize all aspects and processes of a trade union. But worker control does not happen by itself automatically nor is it easy to achieve. It is attainable through systematic programmes and appropriate worker education and ideological consciousness. Therefore, worker control is closely tied to worker education.

4. The Role of Worker Education

4.1 Building of strong organizations

Worker education has been aptly defined in the NALEDI Report as:

“...education of workers by workers (through their organisations), for purposes that they themselves determine. Worker education is worker-controlled and working-class orientated with a core objective of building working class unity, collective organisation and solidarity. It is aimed at building working class consciousness for the purpose of advancing working class struggles for progressive alternatives and against capitalism.”⁵

As alluded above, the worker is not only the purpose, focus and prime beneficiary of worker education but is simultaneously at the centre of it and in full control of the process and the outcomes. The ability of trade unions to mobilize and make impact is partly depended on the worker education received by the membership. Education is inseparable from organization. Some of the worker principles include the following pedagogical practices:

- Education to be active and not passive;
- Education to actively use the experiences of course participants to highlight significances of events affecting them;
- Education to be based on the needs of those receiving it thus respecting their self-determination;
- Education to equip those receiving it to help themselves.⁶

In the final analysis, workers' education should serve the purpose of not just equipping workers with more skills or acquiring certificates from a formalized system, rather it should expose workers to the realities of their own situation and society, broaden their horizons, make them identify their own interests and through their organizations, strive to combat all forms of exploitation.⁷ Therefore, worker education is not prescriptive but adaptive to the prevailing conditions and responding to the workers needs as they themselves perceive them.

⁵ M. Koen, L. Orr, E.K. Hassan, M. Malabela & S. Tyiso (2018) A Summary of the Research Report on Worker Education. NALEDI. Johannesburg. p.23.

⁶ Urban Training Project (UTP). (1985). Prospectus, 1985. Johannesburg: UTP Collective. p.5.

⁷ H. Mote (2018) Worker Education in Africa and Beyond. Presented at HRDC Worker Education Conference, 22-24 August 2018, Birchwood Hotel, Johannesburg.

4.2 Deepening of Ideological Consciousness

Worker education by design is central to deepening workers' ideological consciousness. The view is best expressed by the worker educationist Paulo Reglus Neves Freire when he wrote that:

“One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings’ consciousness. Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the *praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.*”⁸

Freire, 1970: p.33

The crucial feature in worker education as far as ideological depth is concerned is on critical thinking and practical application of knowledge and skills so acquired. The reflection and action are inseparable in enhancing workers' consciousness and the rejection of the taken for granted status quo. Also, Gramsci noted that institutions of the workers' movement should provide an educational context that should effect a radical transformation of the worker mentality⁹. Trade unions have lost their militancy partly due to waning ideological thrust in worker education. Mote (2018) laments this unfortunate shift in education focus;

“In recent times, much of the education is geared towards making union leaders better administrators instead of critical thinkers and leaders who internalize and practice the values of trade unionism. The education programs that have a critical edge and are aimed at raising consciousness of the values of trade unionism and leaders and members who are critical thinkers who understand that unemployment in Africa is not just high by chance, but because of a mixture of variables including as a legacy of colonialism and continued interest by Western countries in Africa’s dependence on exportation of natural resources, the failure of post-independent economic policy prescriptions and choices and the chronic absence of visionary and developmental leadership.”¹⁰

But the ideological contestation has other variables in the Global South which was once a site of cold war contestations that permeated trade unions. Exacerbated by strings attached to donor funding, trade unions have been found to be vacillating ideologically and, in some instances, even supporting the positions of anti-worker forces. These rivalries for ideological hegemony have also found regional and international federations as conducive sites for contestations¹¹.

4.3 Reflections on Zimbabwe’s Ideological Question

On the Zimbabwean context and particularly with reference to the ZCTU, concerns over ideological clarity and coherence have been noted before by writers. For example, Bond talks of ‘ideological fudging’ and the need to ‘unpack ideological spaghetti’ as well as the ‘contestation between left-wing and right-wing tendencies within the trade union movement’¹² and Hadebe’s reference to the ‘shaky and shallow ideological standing’¹³ all point to lack of ideological clarity and consistency.

⁸ P. Freire (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, New York: Continuum. p33.

⁹ Gramsci, A. (1971). Antonio Gramsci: Prison notebooks (Q. Hoare & G.N. Smith, editors.). London, Lawrence and Wishart.

¹⁰ H. Mote, op. cit.

¹¹ P. Yeros (2001) ‘The ZCTU’s Internationalism in a Global Era’ in Brian Raftopoulos & Llyod Sachikonye (eds.) *Striking Back: The Labour Movement and the post-colonial state in Zimbabwe*, Weaver Press, Harare.

¹² P. Bond (2001) Radical Rhetoric and the Working Class during Zimbabwean Nationalism’s Dying Days’ in Brian Raftopoulos & Llyod Sachikonye (eds.) *Striking Back: The Labour Movement and the post-colonial state in Zimbabwe*, Weaver Press, Harare. p 26 & 27.

¹³ S. Hadebe (2018) ‘Trapped in Uncertainty: The existential challenges of the trade union movement in Zimbabwe after 2000,’ presented at the Sociological Association of South Africa Conference, 1-4 July, University of Western Cape.

The scathing criticism comes from the fact that while ZCTU distinguished itself in the anti-ESAP struggles in the 1990s it paradoxically supported neo-liberal economic policies, especially through the MDC. This paradox should be understood against the background of the ruling party's ultra-nationalist and left-sounding rhetoric although in reality the government was strongly imbedded to international capital. Actually, what Mandaza had observed as early as 1986 that

“International finance capital has, since the Lancaster House Agreement, been the major factor in the internal and external policies of the state of Zimbabwe”¹⁴

is still applicable now as it was then. Yet responding to this radical nationalist posture by Zimbabwe's ruling elite, the ZCTU vacillated ideologically, hence Yeros (2001) concluded that:

“The success of the ZCTU in the 1990s, therefore, is as much a triumph of the liberal project and its transformative power.”¹⁵

Could it be then concluded that the anti-ESAP stance was opportunistic?

Actually, Yeros elucidates this problem by highlighting the complexities in conceptualizing the working class in the context of the Global South and the privileging of 'nation' above everything else including 'class'.

It is my humble submission that a Marxist-Leninist class analysis of society perhaps would help unpack the ideological logjam for the ZCTU. Otherwise, a distorted and fragmented view of the working class would result leading to wrong prescriptions to the problems of the working class and hence its demoralization and demobilization. With a solid ideological foundation, the trade unions are placed in more strategic positions when engaging employers, the state or in making strategic alliances and partnerships with regional and international federations, even those of differing political views. Actually, a clear and consistent ideological standpoint would further enhance organized labour leadership of other civil society organizations, unorganized workers, informal workers and unwaged workers towards the desired socio-economic and political transformation in Zimbabwe. The comparatively weak influence of organized labour within Zimbabwe's rural population has been exploited by the retrogressive elements to frustrate the transformative agenda.

5. Institutional Capacity Building and Organizational Work

With effective worker education that not only responds to the changing workplace but that which also enhances worker control, capacity building and institutional strengthening can effectively take place. Equally crucial is acknowledging the changing nature of trade unionism in the face of globalization, neo-liberalism as well as the 4th Industrial Revolution. The traditional and narrow conceptualization of worker as formally employed, urban and male is fast-changing hence building trade unions for the future would of necessity demand encompassing those in spaces previously ignored like; the rural, women, migrant labour, informal, the unorganized and the unemployed. But before trade unions can broadly be inclusive of the working class in its broadest sense, it is important to strengthen them organizationally as follows below.

¹⁴ I. Mandaza (1986) 'The Post-White Settler Colonial Situation' in Ibbo Mandaza (ed.) *Zimbabwe: The Political Economy of Transition*, 1980-86, Codesria, Darkar, p. 53.

¹⁵ Yeros, Op. cit.

5.1 Strengthening Internal Democracy

Revitalizing trade unions should be done with reflection of circumstances and conditions that buoyed the organization in the past and similarly what characterized its low ebbs. Invariably, when workers feel a sense of purpose and ownership of the struggle, then the union gets the necessary strength to challenge the employers.

But how has that sense of purpose and ownership been attained before?

It is through democratic practice that must always be central in any workers organization. It is crucial to strengthen internal democracy systems and periodically make a review to ascertain their effectiveness. Most often there develops a distance between trade union leadership and members. While representative democracy is actually democracy by delegation it could easily be susceptible to manipulation and top down leadership tendencies. Trade unions become bureaucratized in the process and the workers voices supplanted by the interests of the officials.

Apart from the importance of adherence to the constitution and various organizational policies, it is important to proactively promote the values espoused like non-sexism and non-discrimination, for example. Not just because traditionally the trade unions tended to be male spaces but also that patriarchy has had hegemonic grip in religion, customs, beliefs, law, education and in artistic productions it therefore calls for gender conscious efforts to open spaces for women participation in all organizational spheres including in decision-making. Democracy becomes hollow if reduced to majoritarianism and workers organizations should be sensitive to these societal dynamics.

5.2 Information Sharing

The labour movement, particularly in the Zimbabwean context, is under siege not only from the obstinate employers but also from a hostile state. Actually, the hegemonic neo-liberal agenda has created a believable yet erroneous assumption that Zimbabwe's economic recovery can only be through further sacrifices by workers and maximization of profits by capital. The promotion of labour flexibility and the ease to hire and fire workers by employers as pronounced by some government officials as recent as 2018, is reflective of the neo-liberal capitalist thinking that we have all along suspected would characterize the post-Mugabe era.¹⁶ It is paramount, therefore, to proffer alternative economic and social policies and development paradigms different from the exploitative capitalist model. The trade union movement should therefore be strong in knowledge production and information sharing with workers and other progressive forces. There is no substitute to information dissemination and rising to a higher pedestal in the battle of ideas. Zimbabwe's economic trajectory as currently pursued is anti-worker and it has to be challenged while alternative options are put forward.

5.3 Research and Training

Capacity building and organizational work towards a revived labour movement need to be anchored on a critical assessment of the socio-economic and political landscape and guided by evidence-based analysis. However, research costs money which more often trade unions do not have and external donors' support is shrinking, seasonal and project-focused. These are perennial challenges of the Global South and such problems are not confined to trade unions but other institutions including universities.

Notwithstanding, something can be done in the immediate but with an eye for the long term. For example, already research is on-going in various universities in Zimbabwe, in the region and internationally which the labour centre should tap from at minimum or no costs at all.

¹⁶ S. Hadebe (2017) Zimbabwe: Opportunities for transformation, *African Communist*, Issue 196, pp 91-97.

It should be interesting for example to establish which areas of focus are preferred by university researchers and which areas are less focused on and why the variance. With the internet facility this should not be a problem. Also, the trade unions should have a systematic working relations with departments of sociology, economic history, labour studies and the like, and have an internship programme.

Usually, once students start working in a particular subject area they tend to further their studies in that area even later in their academic life and that way a pool of scholars are developed. However, that does not substitute for setting up various multidisciplinary research institutes dedicated to labour, beyond just economics and labour law.

The research approach should be set up in a way that would involve workers themselves as part of self-education, capacity building and enhancing of skills. The bourgeoisie scholarly tradition of exploiting workers as just sources of raw data or subjects of study should be rejected in its entirety.

Knowledge production should be a collective responsibility such that the knowledge so produced is not used to alienate and imprison workers in continued exploitation. Since the nature of work is changing so is the character of trade unions. To revitalize the trade union movement, it would be crucial to first determine the contemporary character of the trade unions. For example, there is a need to establish trade union membership profile in terms of, let us say, public sector union versus private sector unions or services or commercial and industrial unions. Profile in terms of age, gender, and level of education attained and the percentage of trade unions membership against employment by sectors.

Such researched information would be useful in setting the vision, objectives, policies and strategies of the trade unions in fulfilling their mandate. Also, it would help in fashioning the training to match the membership needs and in response to the dynamics at workplaces and in communities. As Lenin once noted that any organization without principle ‘in practice converts the workers into a miserable appendage of the bourgeoisie in power’ as reiterated by Stephen Dlamini that ‘organizing trade unions means careful planning, checking up on decisions, following up every advantage gained and keeping our eyes open for opportunities and loopholes which the struggle presents’¹⁷. Therefore, apart from information sharing and research there is need for skilling the union management to enable it to undertake the painstaking work.

5.4 Skills upgrading for union management

To create an effective trade union movement that is dynamic as well as democratic requires an innovative and versatile union management. Usually, upskilling of union management is forgotten to the detriment of the vitality of the organization. As the education department focuses on worker education and ideological training it should also plan for the training of union management staff as well as trade union leadership. Union management must not only have a better grasp of membership needs but also of organizational dynamics and effective responses to keep the trade union a leading force for working class struggles.

6. Labour and Social Movements for Change

While there was a rich tapestry of groups pushing for social change ranging from students’ movement, youth organisations, women groups, professional associations, non-governmental organisations, churches, informal traders and other special interest groups, it was labour under the auspices of ZCTU that emerged as a leading force in the struggle for socio-economic justice and democratic governance. It is crucial, therefore, not only to interrogate the state of civil society in Zimbabwe and the level of progress or lack of it in the social transformation agenda.

¹⁷ Stephen Dlamini, President of SACTU, addressing gathering on 23rd Anniversary of SACTU in Dare Salam, 5th March 1978.

Undoubtedly, a decline in trade union influence impacts negatively on the social movements in general and in way demonstrating the centrality of organized labour. But what made labour such a crucial force is the organisational competence that it brings to civil society in general. That organisational capacity derives from and is backed by appropriate worker education and political consciousness.

Worker education enables organized labour to fulfil

“...its historically crucial role in helping unionists learn to provide better protection to working people”¹⁸

and by implication challenge oppressive and exploitative relations.

What it means is that as part of its organizational renewal, the ZCTU is obligated to take its leadership role in the social movements for change in Zimbabwe. Without compromising its core responsibilities to its membership, the labour centre has broader duty to the various strata of the working class including those in the informal sector, contract workers, the unorganized and the self-employed, among others. Hence worker education and ideological training should be alive to these realities of the conditions of the working class. Actually, the ZCTU should not be apologetic for being instrumental in the democratization agenda through the NCA and the opposition MDC. Mobilizing for state power, while primarily not the business of trade unions, has happened before and likely to be repeated in future, with different results depending on the balance of forces.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, I attempted, albeit cursorily, to mainstream worker education and worker control in institutional capacity building for effective organization and ideological depth and cohesion. Presumably, the issues raised are applicable in general and also have relevance to the particular ZCTU context and to Zimbabwe. The working class in Zimbabwe and in the Global South face a ferocious onslaught from capital that has worsened workers' vulnerability and precarity. The post-colonial state, like its colonial predecessor, would rather support capital than labour. Yet, there is incontrovertible historical evidence from previous centuries that capital has consistently failed humanity and therefore leaving only the working class with the mission to alter the course of history armed with revolutionary consciousness from practical struggle experience and worker education. Thus, worker education both as the process and outcome of workers engagement and self-education at the workplace, at community level and broadly national and internationally should be strengthened for institutional capacity building and raising workers' political awareness.

Under the prevailing neo-liberal capitalist conditions characterized by the informalization of the economy, casualization of work, joblessness and worsening poverty the trade unions need appropriate responses to ensure decent work and inclusive economies benefiting all citizens. Therefore, the institutional capacity building for both effective organization and ideological cohesion could best be attained through giving primacy to worker education and worker control as the agency of workers themselves is instrumental in creating a more humane and just society.

¹⁸ D. Cunniah (2007) Preface, *The role of trade unions in workers' education: The key to trade union capacity building*, International Workers Symposium, 8-12 October 2007, Geneva. International Labour Organization

OPEN LETTER TO ROBERT MUGABE

from
A.M. Babu
(1980)



Abdulrahman Mohamed Babu (1926-1994) was a Tanzanian Marxist. He played a prominent role in the Zanzibar Revolution of 1964 following which Zanzibar joined Tanganyika to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Babu became Minister of Economic Planning from 1964 until 1972, when, following his alleged involvement in the assassination of Zanzibar leader Sheikh Karume, he was imprisoned without trial until 1978. Babu had been increasingly critical of Julius Nyerere's ideas of African socialism through his 'Ujamaa' concept and while in prison wrote his major work "African Socialism or Socialist Africa". A.M. Babu died in exile.

Dear Comrade Mugabe,

Warm congratulations on your victory and comradely salutations from your admirers!

In the last five years or so since you took over the reins of ZANU you have shown magnificent qualities of leadership — resolute without being dogmatic, daring without being adventurist, and flexible without being lax.

But above all, you have revealed yourself during this period as an outstanding strategist and tactician both in political organisation and in war.

With all these rare qualities it would be presumptuous even to attempt to tell you and your gallant comrades-in-arms what is to be done in independent Zimbabwe.

Moreover, you know better than any outsider the concrete situation in the country.

This letter does not claim to tell you anything you don't know; it only seeks to re-emphasise some salient points which we may lose sight of in the euphoria of freedom.

The enemies of Africa are anxious to prove that every new African country is doomed to failure and, to ensure that this does indeed take place, they will want to entangle you deeply in their world system so as to destroy you.

Proof?

Look at what is happening in practically all sister countries: economic chaos, shortage of food and other basic necessities, corruption, and so on, is the order of the day.

You, as a revolutionary, will be a special target particularly because of Zimbabwe's proximity to South Africa.

You are, however, fortunate in that Zimbabwe is the last but one arrival into the world arena, as a proud, free country, and so you can learn from the mistakes of other countries that have preceded you.

This is the purpose of this open letter. If you have thought about the problem along the lines discussed below then this letter is redundant.

If you don't agree with it, then it is irrelevant. In either case, it will still be worth our while to repeat to ourselves all the points raised if only to keep them fresh in our minds.

The other reason for this exercise is that we owe it to Africa and to history to share our past and present experience in order to arm ourselves against possible pitfalls which are all too common in the challenging period of national reconstruction.

We have been struggling and continue to struggle against many odds, natural and man-made, and we need not be ashamed or scared of making mistakes.

We learn through mistakes. Our task is to minimise them when we can, and this we can do by reminding ourselves again and again of the obvious ones.

This is the spirit of the letter.

Unlike many developing countries, you are taking over a country with considerable potential.

Let me give some comparative statistics. Kenya, a fairly 'prosperous' country, has double the population of Zimbabwe (14m to your 7m) and yet its Gross Domestic Product is only \$2,900m compared to your \$3 560m (1976 World Bank figures), or a per capita income of \$220 to your \$550. (Incidentally when the bourgeoisie took over France in 1792 the country's per capita income was just about \$600.)

Zimbabwe has a fairly solid industrial base most of which was made possible thanks to the 'sanctions' which forced the country to look inward.

It was what you might call a blessing in disguise. (Looking back, one wishes that sanctions had been imposed against all African countries soon after independence. What a happy people we would have been! It was 'aid' that proved to be the kiss of death.) Your agricultural base, too, is fairly healthy.

From this level Zimbabwe has an excellent chance to move rapidly to a self-sustaining development. As a socialist you will no doubt want this development to be accompanied with social justice. And here is the crux of the matter.

How do we restructure an economy whose social basis was to exploit the majority for the benefit of the minority?

Seemingly the easiest way is to take over the "commanding heights" of the economy and transform it into a popular based one. But this is easier said than done, with enormous potential dangers. We often tend to be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task and consequently fail to raise the most essential, most basis question:

Where to begin?

While it is impossible for outsiders to know the concrete situation without a thorough investigation, there are, nevertheless, generally acceptable principles that may be applicable to any country at a given level of the development of its productive forces. If the latter are at a low level then it is imperative that their development be regarded as top priority, even over that of the relations of production.

In Maoist terms, development of the productive forces in this case becomes the principal aspect of the contradiction with production relations as a secondary one. This strategy has variously been called the New Economic Policy, or NEP, or the New Democracy, in which capitalist relations are allowed to co-exist with socialist ones. And this was done for very practical reasons: to allow maximum opportunity and facility for the productive forces to develop as rapidly as possible without in the meantime causing economic dislocations and subjecting the people to unjustified hardships.

It cannot be over-emphasised that people are our most precious capital and, therefore, they must eat well, be housed and clothed well.

This, then, is our starting point. The economy must be so structured as to provide adequate food, good housing and cheap but good clothing. In the course of providing these the economy will also develop a good agricultural foundation, together with engineering and extensive textile industries. All these will create vast employment opportunities for hundreds of thousands of people currently un- or under-employed, who in turn will help expand the home market- essential for further industrial and agricultural development.

For this to take place, one will of course need to generate investible resources or accumulation for investment. One of the most unfortunate experiences of developing countries is that they all sought these resources from external sources, either in the form of loans or aid, which has led to heavy and unbearable debt burdens (bankruptcy, you might say) which now threaten our very survival as sovereign states. To avoid this monumental pitfall, it is essential for a country to generate its investible resources internally, first and foremost.

How?

There are two ways: by taxing (but not over-taxing) the private sector; and by utilising for this purpose the surpluses that will come from future state enterprises. At this level of development it may be advisable to allow maximum (but disciplined) play of individual initiative in economic activity guided by the principle of “utilise, win over and control”.

You utilise the existing private skills and resources for rapid development of the productive forces; you win over through education and persuasion all good elements to serve social rather than individual ends; and you control private sector incomes through fixing the sale prices of their products (allowing, of course, for proper incentives); tax their profits, control its repatriation and encourage ploughing back. It could be made into a principle that at least 50% of the accumulation from this source should go into state productive investments annually and the rest can go into paying recurrent expenditure and the building up of economic and social infrastructures.

This principle will discipline the bureaucracy and prevent them from indulging in unnecessary low priority expenditure while, at the same time it will help to build step by step the state industrial sector that is non-existent at the moment, for example, iron and steel industries, machine tool industry, metallurgy, petrochemical industry and so on; in short, heavy industry or Department No.1.

It will not be worthwhile to pay serious attention to such pundits as René Dumont* and their like who urge us to concentrate on small-scale production on the argument that small is beautiful. No country in history has developed on that basis. But given our condition of uneven development in Africa, perhaps the best way will be to combine large-scale and intermediate production. Where, for instance, you already have large farms you either expand them where necessary or you maintain them at their present level and thereby enjoy the benefits of large-scale farming. Where production is still peasant based you may want to develop it to an intermediate level with producers' co-operatives as their basic units.

Experience elsewhere has taught us that the taking over of ongoing viable farms has invariably led to almost total collapse of agricultural production and has forced the countries concerned to incur heavy foreign debt to import food. As foreign borrowing without repayment cannot be sustained for a long time the countries are forced literally to beg for food on an international scale. This is undesirable from both the economic and political standpoints, to say nothing of national dignity.

It is a painful history fact that in Zimbabwe such large-scale farms are owned by white settlers, some of whom are liberal and others incorrigibly reactionary. To expropriate them will amount to economic disaster, at least in the short run. To allow them to continue as before will amount to perpetuating a national injustice. This is a serious dilemma. Probably you and your party have already made up your minds on how to tackle it.

To an outsider it will seem possible to avoid both of these undesirable consequences by:

- where possible, surrounding all these settler farms by producer agricultural co-operatives;
- making obligatory for the settler farms, as a condition for their existence to share their facilities (farm implements, expertise, marketing, dispensary service etc.) with the newly established co-operatives.

This will help; first, to develop viable co-operative farms at a minimum cost and make maximum use of the existing stock of agricultural implements in the country.

Secondly, it will help diminish the imbalance between settlers' and people's production and thereby correct the existing situation in which the settler farms are isolated like prosperous islands in the midst of mass poverty.

Thirdly, it will help distinguish between good elements among the settlers who are genuinely willing to work with the new government in improving the living conditions of the people, and the diehards. It will then be possible to win over the first group and isolate and eventually ease out the latter.

Fourthly, and this is most important it will help consolidate people's as opposed to individual production without any large-scale economic dislocation (and its attendant consequences) during the transition.

The rising rural incomes entailed in this strategy will expand the home market for industrial consumer products as well as broaden the tax base. It will then be possible to accumulate from the latter to pay for further development of the former, which means not only the development of nationally integrated, independent industrialisation but also the rapid rise of the proletariat.

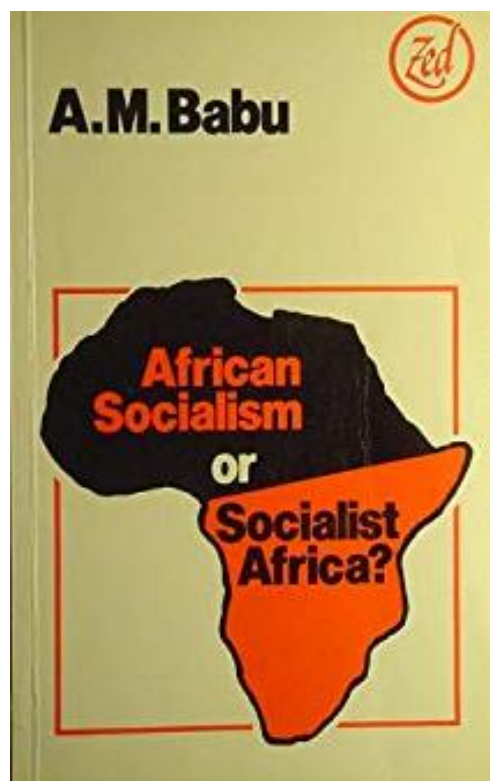
All this, of course, is based on the assumption of a planned and proportional development of the national economy.

Going by your public statements since you took over, it appears that this is broadly what you have in mind. If so, you are definitely on the right track; and all well-meaning people will back you in your obviously very difficult task.

We will all wish you the very best.

Note

* RENÉ DUMONT (1904-2001): French agronomist and environmentalist. He was an advocate of crop rotation and was opposed to agricultural chemicals. He was also an advocate of population control. He was opposed to large-scale agriculture and had failed to understand that organic methods could be used on a large scale. Dumont's most famous book is *L'Afrique noire est mal partie* [Black Africa is Badly Off] (1962).





MONETARY POLICY STATEMENT 2019

Report from ZimEye
21st FEBRUARY 2019



The full 68 page Statement can be found online:

<https://t3n9sm.c2.acecdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Full-Monetary-Policy-Statement.pdf>

The Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) has liberalised the US dollar exchange rate against Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) balances, bond notes and all currencies in the multi-currency basket as it seeks to formalise trade in foreign currency. The US dollars in the new market will be retained export earnings, with the remainder continued to be allocated by the Reserve Bank for essential goods and services.

Delivering the 2019 Monetary Policy Statement (MPS) yesterday, RBZ Governor Dr John Mangudya said the move would bring sanity in the foreign currency market, promote exports, boost Diaspora remittances and investments, eliminate multi-tier pricing, as well as preserve the value of local forms of money.

The RBZ had pegged RTGS balances at one-to-one with the US dollar, but shortages resulted in high premiums for US dollars outside RBZ control. Wild swings in parallel market exchange rates in the last quarter of last year spawned a spike in prices of goods and services, propelling monthly and annual inflation rates to record levels since dollarisation of the economy in February 2009. As such, the central bank will, with immediate effect, establish an interbank foreign exchange market to formalise trade in foreign and local currencies through banks and bureaux de change on a willing-buyer, willing-seller basis. This entails denominating the existing RTGS balances, Bond Notes and coins in circulation as RTGS dollars to establish an exchange between current monetary balances and foreign currency.

Dr Mangudya said to get the US dollar equivalent of current RTGS or electronic balances, the prevailing market determined exchange rate will apply.

“This will bring fairness and transparency in the distribution of foreign currency,” Dr Mangudya said, adding that the policy measures sought to formalise what was already happening on the parallel market, which the bank had no control over.

To anchor exchange rate stability, Dr Mangudya said the RBZ will aggressively intervene in the market to sterilise liquidity so as to help contain inflationary and exchange rate pressures.

Zimbabwe has \$1,8 billion usable RTGS balances out of a total of about \$10 billion.

The RTGS dollars will become part of the multi-currency system and a legal instrument which amends the Finance Act of 2009 which pegged the US dollar at par with bond notes and RTGS balances, has already been prepared and will be gazetted soon.

Dr Mangudya said the bank had arranged sufficient lines of credit to maintain adequate foreign currency to underpin the foreign exchange market. He said foreign currency from the interbank market shall be utilised for current bona fide foreign payment invoices, except education:

“All foreign liabilities or legacy debts due to suppliers such as International Air Transporters Association [and] declared dividends shall be treated separately after registering such transactions with the exchange control for the purposes of providing the bank sufficient information that will allow it to determine the roadmap for orderly expunging of the legacy debt,”

The RBZ will continue to provide foreign currency for the importation of critical commodities such as fuel, electricity, medicines and water chemicals through existing letters of credit facilities and the foreign exchange allocation committee.

Dr Mangudya said significant shifts in economic fundamentals during the last quarter of last year saw parallel market foreign currency premiums increasing from between 1.4 and 1.8 to the US dollar to current levels of 3 and 4. This increase in foreign currency premiums had negative pass through effects on annual inflation, which rose from 5.4 percent in September last year to 56.09% in January this year, Zimbabwe’s highest inflation rate in nearly a decade.

“In this respect, continuing to use the US dollar as a unit of account, when its value has drifted away from the value of the RTGS dominated money supply has brought forth a number of challenges,”

said Dr Mangudya.

“The challenges include multi-tier pricing by business, speculative pricing, loss of Government revenue, valuation and accounting difficulties, asset liability mismatches and negative investor confidence. The current monetary arrangements if maintained could pose the risk of costly re-dollarisation of the economy, which will move the economy into recession. This is evidenced by the fact that some businesses are already gradually reducing prices due to low demand in the economy. Moreover, some of those charging in foreign currency have also been experiencing reduced demand for their products and are thus reverting to pricing in RTGS and Bond Notes.”

Dr Mangudya said exporters on the other hand were fast becoming uncompetitive, as the export incentive scheme had been eroded by the forex premiums induced inflation.

Bureaux de Change will be allowed to purchase foreign currency without limits, but will be limited to sell hard currency for small transactions up to a maximum daily limit of US\$10,000 per institution. To allow exporters to benefit from the interbank foreign currency market and to promote uninterrupted supply of forex in the economy, the central bank increased foreign currency retention thresholds for some of the exporters. Retained export receipts shall be utilised within 30 days, after which the unutilised export earnings will be off-loaded into the market at the prevailing market exchange rate or critical imports and external payments.

Dr Mangudya said the measures were also aimed at increasing demand for domestic forms of payment and to preserve foreign currency for external payments that include essential imports.



Zimbabwe Communist Party
ON THE MONETARY POLICY
STATEMENT 2019
21st FEBRUARY 2019

The underlying position of the ZCP on any government policy declaration — including this one — is neither to automatically oppose nor to automatically endorse. Our task is to defend the interests of the workers, peasants and poor and as such to study each proposal and its implementation on its merits. In considering the proposals made by the RBZ Governor in his Monetary Policy Statement for 2019 we can make the following comments:

- 1) The RTGS dollar has correctly been characterised as an electronic extension of the Bond Note dollar and not separate from it. We welcome this clarification.
- 2) The separation RTGS/Bond Note dollar from the fictional 1:1 parity rating with the US dollar is also welcomed. The ZCP sees this as a minor victory for the working-class and for common sense.
- 3) The ZCP continues to press for the introduction of the South African rand as the currency of reference in the multi-currency basket. We believe that this can be done without first joining the Rand Union. It makes sense in that 80% of our trade is with South Africa and that the largest Zimbabwean diaspora population is in South Africa, many of whom remit money home and at present become the victims of money speculators.
- 4) This move will now reveal the true extent of the deterioration of workers' wages. Our trade unionists must study both the proposals and the implementation of these proposals when pushing forward their demands for a living wage. Wage demands now need to be related to earlier agreements stipulated in US dollars
- 5) As we have pointed out previously, there is very strong evidence to suggest that the currency black market is linked to officials at RBZ. Although the new regulations should restrict the black market, we need to monitor closely how it will continue to operate. We are concerned that no investigative or disciplinary action has been taken concerning individuals previously implicated in corruption.
- 6) In Section 2.1. vii p.11 of the Statement, it says"

"Foreign currency requirements for Government expenditure and other essential commodities that include, fuel, cooking oil, electricity, medicines and water chemicals shall continue to be made available through the existing letters of credit facilities and/or the Foreign Exchange Allocations Committee."

In other words, certain necessities will be given priority when using Forex and will not be subject to the same regulations. Under other conditions, this provision would be commendable, but in Zimbabwe we have state capture by the multi-national oil company, Trafigura, headed in Zimbabwe by Kudakwashe Tagwirei. Trafigura has a monopoly on the oil pipeline running from Beira, Mozambique and built with public funding. For Trafigura to have special access to Forex under the current conditions becomes problematic.

7) The ZCP was the first to call for a National Economic Dialogue and continues to do so. But we reject any notion of dialogue which does not include organised labour, at present led by the ZCTU. In this context we demand from government.

a) The dropping of all charges against trade unionists arrested in the recent disturbances over fuel price increases.

b) The inclusion of organised labour in the National Economic Dialogue.

The ZCP blames the world capitalist system, particularly capitalism in its neo-liberal form, for our crisis. We identify both the general deterioration of the living standards of all but the very rich across the globe and the destabilisation of society since the domination of neo-liberal political economy and ideology dating from the early 1980s. Had the pre-ESAP policies remained in place at the time of the imposition of sanctions by the US/UK led Axis powers, the effects of those sanctions would have been negligible.

The ZCP also blames most of the specific problems of Zimbabwe on the greed of our leaders who dropped the Marxist-Leninist ideology which had informed the actions which brought them to power in 1980 as soon as it became convenient. Instead of empowering and uplifting the masses through the socialisation of production, soon after the introduction of ESAP, they introduced the policy of “Indigenous Empowerment” which led to the formation of a parasitic bourgeoisie engaged in an orgy of looting and ultimately to economic collapse.

On behalf of the ZCP Secretariat

ECONOMIC DEBATE

The following contributions do not necessarily reflect the policy of the ZCP but are contributions by Comrades to this essential debate. All well thought-out contributions are welcome. Remember that we must look both at short-term remedies and long-term solutions.



Is the GNU the Answer to the Economic Crisis in Zimbabwe?

Discussion Notes: ZCP Braai at Yeoville: Johannesburg

Talk by Dr Samukele Hadebe

15th DECEMBER 2018

1. Introduction and Context

That there is an acute economic crisis in Zimbabwe is beyond question. That some quarters not only believe in a GNU (Government of National Unity) as a panacea but are advocating for it is equally a fact. To combine these two realities as if they were congruent and directly related would be too simplistic a proposition. However, it is important to interrogate the context as to why some would find this proposition attractive, particularly at this juncture of the worsening economic situation in Zimbabwe.

The GNU brought about by the Thabo Mbeki brokered Global Political Agreement gave a reprieve to the downtrodden Zimbabwean citizens as near normalcy returned with goods in shops and schools re-opening, etc. However, it would be foolhardy and an exaggeration to ascribe that temporary economic recovery to the process and nature of GNU — as if by their nature GNUs inherently revive economies. Dismissing that assumption does not mean we do not support national unity and cohesion as essential for national building, peace, stability and the potential for prosperity.

In a way the GNU of 2009-2013, did inspire business confidence to a certain extent. But most significantly was the overwhelming donor support for social services like Health, Water Sanitation and Education. Often strides in access to healthcare and availability of educational material have been erroneously accredited to certain individuals in the GNU ignoring the millions of dollars from donors including UNDP, UNAIDS, UNICEF, etc.

It is also important to interrogate the motives of those in the opposition that advocate for a GNU now. We cannot rule out the personal interests of concerned political players as political office has become a means to access state resources. From our experience from the last GNU, we know that opposition politicians benefitted personally more than advancing the democratic agenda, save for the constitutional reforms — that however resulted in a constitution that ZANU(PF) largely ignores.

2. Is the Post-2018 Election Period Conducive for a repeat GNU?

The 2009 GNU was not as a result of ZANU(PF) magnanimity or sympathy for the suffering masses but it was necessitated by pull and push factors both internally and externally.

President Robert Mugabe lost the first round of the presidential elections forcing a re-run. Without taking away the enormous support enjoyed by then opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai, part of Mugabe's problem was internal to his party, the so-called *bhora musango* phenomena. History recorded the brutality that characterized the re-run leading to Tsvangirai pulling out and Mugabe crowned victorious.

Politically, there could be some similarities in that ZANU(PF) gets two-thirds in Parliament and its leader President Mnangagwa survives by a whisker, in what turned out to be one of the highly disputed and controversial results ever.

However, the circumstances that led to a 2009 GNU were not internal to ZANU(PF) but external pressure not just from economic collapse but political pressure from SADC and AU.

3. What Are Zimbabwe's Economic Issues?

Fundamentally, the economic crisis in Zimbabwe is that of under-production which can be traced to the ESAP policies that brought about massive de-industrialization and job losses. We know how the structural economic adjustments led to massive de-industrialization in many Third World countries as trade liberalization opened the economies to external competition that countries were not equipped for. In the Zimbabwean context, we have a huge imbalance between the high import bill against a low export one. We have not found a solution yet to deal with that deficit which unfortunately is as a result of under-production. At surface level, the crisis manifestation is as follows:

I. Currency instability by falsely pegging the Bond currency at 1:1 with US dollar.

- Either allow the market to determine the rate or go for a Zimbabwe dollar perhaps backed by Gold Reserves at Fidelity.

II. Lack of investor confidence.

- How do we guarantee stability in a highly volatile currency fluctuations?
- Can we guarantee security of investments?
- Will forex accounts not be raided? What about farms? etc?

III. Unsustainable government expenditure

- especially costs incurred on perks and travels by senior officials

IV. Collapsed Infrastructure and Key Public Entities

- Poor infrastructure needs rehabilitation, e.g. too expensive to use road transport for bulk goods that would be cheaper by rail
- Urgency in reviving key Parastatals like NRZ, Hwange Colliery, ZISCO, etc.

Of course, in addition, the government is infamous for policy vacillations and the rampant corruption in almost every sector not to mention administrative inefficiency, bureaucratic red tape and a demoralized workforce. All these factors combine to make the country score very low in the Ease of Doing Business index.

Concluding Points

Zimbabwe's problem is fundamentally economic manifesting itself as a crisis of legitimacy in that electoral governance has been ineptly handled. Unfortunately, civic society and oppositional forces in Zimbabwe have taken too much into the Human Rights Discourse which unfortunately has neither ameliorated the human rights abuses nor addressed democratic deficits in the Zimbabwean system.

If Zimbabweans in their infinite wisdom would want a GNU, then be it, but nothing in a GNU itself addresses problems of under-production.

A GNU would simply be an elite pact just like the Inclusive Government of Mugabe-Tsvangirai-Mutambara or the previous one of ZANU(PF) and ZAPU. It tends to bloat the cabinet and hence an additional cost to the taxpayer.

I deliberately did not talk of ZIDERA and its devastating impact now and in the future. I do not see how in our lifetime Zimbabwe could comply to its requirements considering that a worsening economic situation tends to erode human rights and other citizens' rights as poverty is, in itself, violating human dignity. Surely, I do not see how a GNU in post 2018 elections could address the challenges posed by ZIDERA.

Finally, the Zimbabwe Communist Party as the vanguard of the working-class has an obligation to take the lead in broadening awareness and cultivating the revolutionary working-class consciousness. There are no ready-made answers or solutions for communists. But we are aware of the low levels of ideological training amongst Zimbabwean activists, especially organized labour. ZCP should strike to improve the ideological consciousness within ZCTU itself considering that it lost its way from an anti-ESAP thrust to supporting the neo-liberal economic policies of its baby, the MDC.

The two institutions that ZCP should focus on is organized labour and the military. Undoubtedly, these have been tilting the balance of forces in the Zimbabwean political landscape. In my view, it is important to strategize with these two institutions in mind rather than a GNU scenario whose chances of bringing genuine transformation are very remote.

Dr Samukele Hadebe is an historian and Chief Researcher for the Chris Hani Institute in South Africa. He is the Secretary for Policy Development in the ZCP.

Currency Problems of Zimbabwe: Possible Solutions

by Ben Mlalazi

A contribution to the debate on the Zimbabwe economy. This was received before the Monetary Policy Statement made by the RBZ Governor. Note that signed articles like this are a welcome contribution to the debate. We would like to see others write on these important issues.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The current problems of liquidity and the general meltdown of the economy need to be understood in its proper historic context.

1. ZANU(PF) inherited a relatively healthy economy in 1980. The economy was heavily regulated with subsidies on basic products.
2. Given the inequality and social problems that they inherited ZANU(PF) adopted an expansionist budget philosophy to fund the social programmes. Huge amounts of money were invested in education and health. For a while these contributed positively towards economic growth. To finance these activities government borrowed heavily both in the domestic and foreign markets. There was considerable increase in the number of civil servants that were employed by the government. The civil service became very large relative to the size of the economy.
3. As a result government has over the past three decades battled with an over bloated civil service that gobbles the bulk of government revenue. Over the past 35 years the civil service wage bill has been averaging 70% of revenue collected. As a result there has been limited funds available to the government for capital accumulation and infrastructure development. Very few dams and water storage facilities have been built, railways and transport infrastructure is poor, and the list goes on.
4. In 1991 the country embarked on a structural adjustment programme ESAP sponsored by the IMF. The aim was to turn the economy along free market lines which were then seen as the only viable model of economic development. This programme was heavily opposed by labour and other progressive forces such as students etc.
5. While ESAP had its short-comings, the decline of the Zimbabwean economy can be traced to 1997. Several issues occurred at that time. One of these was the payment of the War Veterans' pension. What prompted this was that after Independence, the government set up a fund called the War Victims Compensation Fund to pay compensation to ex-combatants who had been injured during the War of Independence. These included veterans from ZANLA, ZIPRA and the former Rhodesian Army, although the latter had been catered for in a formal pensions system.

6. The administration of this fund was located in the ministry of social welfare although it was manned by clerks seconded to it by the army. As there were no records of persons who were injured, what was needed to access this money was a one-page form that a claimant had to fill counter-signed by a doctor who determined the level of disability.
7. The amount initially budgeted for this compensation was ZW\$22.5 million. Corruption soon took root as most of these clerks became very rich by claiming this money for themselves friends and family. Word soon spread around to the War Vets that money was available. Thousands of War Vets then descended on this office to claim the money. Several ministers and senior ZANU(PF) officials also joined the looting and in fact looted over half of the money.
8. To claim the money the War Veterans had to travel to Harare and soon Harare became a meeting place of thousands of them. Some slept in the open fields waiting to be paid this money. As money ran out, the disgruntled ex-combatants formed themselves into an association and began to demonstrate against Mugabe. At one point these War Vets trashed ZANU(PF) Headquarters.. As many were members of the army and police Mugabe could not set the police and the army on them.
9. These demonstrations went on for some months until Mugabe agreed to meet the War Vets on the lawns of the State House. This was October 1997. At the State House lawns, on a Sunday afternoon, Mugabe, without consultation, agreed to pay the ex-combatants ZW\$50,000 each and a life-long pension of ZW\$2000 per month. To this date this pension is being paid.
10. The total amount paid to the War Vets was ZW\$4.2 billion. At the exchange rate prevailing at the time ZW\$11 = US\$1, this translated to about US\$380 million. Mugabe made this announcement without consultation with Treasury. On approaching Treasury on the next working-day, Cabinet told Mugabe that government could not afford this payment as it would collapse the economy over-night. Remember that this amount was about 40% of GDP. Cabinet then decided to impose an additional ad hoc 5% tax on the workers to raise this money.
11. At the time ZCTU was powerful, having been galvanized by its opposition to ESAP. ZCTU called a three-day strike and workers downed tools. With this opposition from the workers, government relented. It must be understood that Mugabe had promised to pay the War Vets this amount within 30 days and the workers were refusing to fund the payment. It became clear that Mugabe was caught between a rock and a hard place and thus he resorted to the only avenue that he had and that was to print money.
12. So in a period of one day over ZW\$4.2 was released into the market in cash, this being about 40% of GDP. The impact was dramatic and catastrophic to the economy. Inflation shot through the roof, the local currency collapsed in value and the economy went into a tailspin. This was the beginning of the decline of the economy.
13. The following year the government embarked on a costly war in the DRC. This also brought its pressure as government had to go into borrowing to fund the war further expanding the money supply and inflation. At the same time government revenue was declining.

14. The result, as we all know, saw Zimbabwean economy collapsing:

- a. The economy contracted by over 40%.
- b. A hyper-inflation rate of over 1 billion % made it impossible for the Reserve Bank to keep up with printing of notes.
- c. Industry collapsed
- d. Unemployment was recorded at 80%
- e. Arrears of external debt shot to US\$ 3.7 billion
- f. Foreign reserves were completely wiped out leaving the country with no import cover. Generally a healthy import cover is accepted as 3 months.

15. All the above can be attributable to two words: **FISCAL INDISCIPLINE**.

16. How does such fiscal indiscipline occur in a democratic country? To understand this one must look into the character of Zimbabwean political parties especially ZANU(PF). ZANU fought the War of Independence for many years. Unlike most civilian political parties it modelled itself on a military structure and tradition with no internal democratic traditions. The culture of ZANU is that of an army with a top down decision making ethos. The commander issues orders and the subordinates execute the orders without question.

17. To date in accordance with the party constitution only the First Secretary who serves as President of the country is elected. The Second Secretary who serves as Deputy President and the Politburo are appointed by the President without consultation. So the President is very powerful and is therefore prone to making mistakes without the benefit of advice.

18. When it comes to economic decisions, the President is the chief decision maker. So what is needed is strong institutions such as an independent Reserve Bank, Treasury etc. In South Africa the democratic state is anchored by such strong independent institutions. So must Zimbabwe, if the country is to escape economic turmoil

INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT/GPA

- 1. One of the best things to have happened to Zimbabwe was the conclusion of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) and the resultant creation of an inclusive government, or Government of National Unity (GNU).
- 2. The Zimbabwean economy is relatively resilient and well balanced. The biggest threat to the economy has always been **FISCAL INDISCIPLINE**. If this can be arrested the economy recovers quite quickly.
- 3. The inclusive government saw the inclusion of Tendai Biti from the MDC as Minister of Finance. Biti's approach was relatively simple and unsophisticated. His motto was, "We spend what we have," and he pursued a balanced budget.
- 4. The following data shows how the economy performed during the inclusive government.

GDP GROWTH RATE

YEAR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
% GROWTH	5.9	9.6	10.6	4.9	5.0

5. With the adoption of the multi-currency régime everyone was allowed to deposit US\$ and withdraw the cash at any time of their choice. Cash was available in the banks as per demand.
6. The following table shows the bank deposits that were in place during the inclusive government, the amount of bank deposits held by private individuals and corporation and the amount of domestic credit available to fuel the economy at the time.

DEPOSITS

YEAR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
AMOUNT US\$ (billions)	1.38	2.32	3.1	4.27	3.5
CREDIT US\$ (billions)	0.7	1.69	2.75	3.94	3.5

7. Inflation was recorded in the single digits and in fact in the first two years the country experienced deflation. The following is the inflation during the inclusive government.

INFLATION

YEAR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
% INFLATION	-7.1	-3	3.5	5	5

8. During the time of the inclusive government there was no shortage of cash and the economy was relatively stable.

2013 TO DATE

1. In 2013 the inclusive government ended and ZANU(PF) became the sole governing party. With this **FISCAL INDISCIPLINE** returned. Because this time the government could not print the US\$ it resorted to other means of borrowing. The government resorted to overdraft at the Reserve Bank

2. Further to the Reserve Bank overdraft the government resorted to issuing treasury bills and bonds. When these bonds reached their term and matured, the government did not have the money to pay the banks and financial institutions that held these bonds, instead it merely credited their accounts with balances that were not backed by cash.
3. At the end of the month the government did the same exercise with salaries of civil servants, crediting their bank accounts with figures that were not backed by cash. Government spending went into overdraft as the government had found that it is possible to print money without printing the physical notes.
4. As regards the foreign exchange held at banks on behalf of individuals, government mopped this all up by taking the dollars held at the banks and in nostro accounts¹ and replaced all this with worthless credit balances in bank accounts.
5. By 2016 there was a serious liquidity crunch as money had run out from the banks. People were in bank for days on end only to receive about \$50. While this was happening, government spent lavishly on imported luxuries.
6. To solve this problem of cash shortage, government introduced a surrogate currency, the Bond Note. The government obtained a guarantee from AFREXIM Bank² to issue 200 million dollars-worth of Bond Notes whose parity was guaranteed to the US\$. This was followed by another tranche of 300 million dollars in Bond Notes. How there were introduced is that government paid 5% incentive to all exporters in Bond Notes. Currently there is \$500 million in Bond Notes in circulation.
7. In addition to the Bond Notes, government has resorted to Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS)³. These are bank transactions and balances that are not backed by physical cash. To date the total amount of money in RTGS is US\$9.5 billion. This makes the total amount of currency in circulation to amount to US\$10 billion.
8. Any solution to the currency question has to involve the 10 billion dollars that is in circulation.
9. Zimbabwe finances and economic indicators are worrisome. Zimbabwe imports about US\$6 billion worth of goods and services but only exports about US\$4 billion, leaving a current account deficit of about US\$2 billion or about 50% of export earnings.
10. On the fiscal side things are not looking any better. Public debt is about US\$17.69 billion which is made up of US\$8.5 billion in external debt and US\$9.5 billion in domestic debt. This needs to be viewed against the background that when the inclusive government ended the country had about US\$ 200 million in domestic debt. As at November 2017, when the current military government took over, domestic debt was about US\$5 billion. It means in one year the current government almost doubled the domestic debt. This clearly means that the era of fiscal indiscipline has returned.
11. On the fiscal side, government expenditure is about US\$8 billion against a revenue collection of about US\$5.2 billion leaving a budget deficit of about US\$2.8 billion or about 11% of GDP. Of the money collected about 80% goes to salaries of civil servants. On aggregate salaries take about 45% of the total budget and in monetary terms government's wage bill is about US\$300 million a month.

12. Clearly this is not affordable and poses a serious risk to the economy as very little money becomes available for capital and infrastructure projects, capital accumulation and service delivery. It is imperative that this problem be addressed urgently.
13. The Bond Note has lost value in the open market. Currently the bond note is trading at 3 to 1 to the US\$. This means that salaries have lost value by over 66%.

POSSIBLE SCENARIOS

1. Adopt the Rand and join the monetary Rand Monetary Area. Those arguing for this course of action have argued that South Africa is Zimbabwe 's biggest trading partner with about 80% of Zimbabwe's trade being conducted with South Africa.
2. It is argued that if goods and services are priced in Rands it will make doing business between the two countries easier and will eliminate transaction costs.
3. However the conditions for joining the Rand area are onerous. Among the requirements is that the country seeking to join must have its own domestic currency and that it must hold reserves equivalent to the value of the domestic currency in circulation.
4. Zimbabwe does not have its own currency and does not have any foreign currency reserves.
5. Joining the Rand area will also not make the Rands immediately available in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe will have to sell goods and services in order to be paid in Rands. The South Africa Reserve Bank cannot simply print R140 billion in notes and ship them to Zimbabwe. This would threaten the inflation in South Africa and have a contagious effect. South Africa cannot afford to risk its economy in order to help a self-created problem. We submit that, as much as it is politically attractive to adopt the Rand, economic factors point otherwise.
6. The second option has been said that Zimbabwe must dollarize the economy again. Currently the dollar is the reference currency. But why don't we have dollars in the banks. The answer is that the government took the few dollars that the citizens had and replaced these with RTGS and Bond Notes. We have 9.5 billion US\$ in RTGS that are not backed by physical notes. To dollarize the government will need to find this money in dollars and clearly it is overly ambitious to imagine that someone somewhere will provide our government with this kind of money.
7. We submit that what it means is that any solution has to come from within and has to be funded by Zimbabweans. How can this be done?
8. The starting point is a recognition that any solution to the Zimbabwean problem is likely to be severe and painful to all and cannot be imposed on the citizenry. The recent fuel hike is a case in point. The citizens have no trust in the government's ability to deliver a solution. So what is immediately critical is that an open dialogue **MUST BE OPENED SO THAT ALL STAKEHOLDERS MUST HAVE A SAY IN HOW THE ECONOMY AND ITS CHALLENGES OUGHT TO BE ADDRESSED.**
9. At the moment ZANU(PF) is not willing to open dialogue as it considers itself the legitimate ruling party which has a mandate to govern on its own. With this attitude the likely scenario

is that all solutions coming from government are likely to face rejection from the people and will cause further strife.

- 10.** South Africa with its political and economic leverage can nudge ZANU(PF) into accepting the fact that without dialogue, Zimbabwe will sink into further strife, thereby threatening the whole region.
- 11.** Dialogue will also address the issue of accountability which has been the chief cause of our problems; a Zimbabwe that has fiscal discipline will thrive in no time. Accountability can be achieved without necessarily resorting to a unity government, for it is possible for Parliament to create mechanism to curb and limit government borrowing and the printing of money.
- 12.** In the light of the above we propose a hybrid system in which the US dollar and a local currency will exist side by side harmoniously. We propose therefore:
 - a.** That we immediately re-introduce a local currency for domestic purchases which shall serve as a legal tender. Foreign currency is scarce by its very nature and it is unrealistic that one can expect an economy to function efficiently where bread and tomatoes on the streets are purchased in foreign exchange. These domestic economic activities do not earn foreign exchange. How do we then expect them to be funded in foreign exchange? It is reasonable and imperative that a local currency be established as a legal tender as soon as possible.
 - b.** Given our experiences of local currency loosing value citizens should be allowed to retain foreign currency accounts as a store of value. They should be allowed to deposit and withdraw the foreign currency so retained in these accounts on demand. Bureaux de Changes must be allowed to exist to handle the sale and purchase of foreign exchange by citizens.
For example if I want to purchase something locally and I want to use my foreign currency, I must go to the bank withdraw the US\$ and exchange them into local currency which I can then use for local purchase.
 - c.** How do we propose to achieve this in practice? How are we going to deal with the US\$10 billion that is in circulation by way of RTGS and Bond Notes.
 - d.** We propose the following:
 - i)** That Bond Notes be demonetized by paying US\$ in parity for every Bond Note surrendered. We know that we have 500 million Bond Notes so that will cost us US\$500 million.
 - ii)** We are then left with US\$9.5 billion in RTGS, what we propose is to ring fence these RTGS balances in order to contain their growth and liquidate them gradually. As government is unlikely to have US\$9.5 billion in cash to liquidate these balances we propose that those people with balances of US\$1000 or less be paid the equivalent in US\$ into FCA account. The rest of the balances will be liquidated over a period of three years on 1:1 rate. This allows the poor who have been paid in RTGS not to lose their investments and savings. An amount of US\$1 billion can be set aside to pay for this conversion from bond to US\$ and we believe that this can be raised locally.

Lastly, it should be noted that any rescue package that is not linked to fundamental reforms may be used by the régime to fund repression. South Africa, for instance, cannot afford to sponsor repression and murder of innocent civilians.

Ben Mlalazi is ZCP Secretary for Legal Affairs. He is a former ZIPRA fighter and a former officer with the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA).

Notes

- 1. NOSTRO ACCOUNTS;** These are accounts held in a bank of another country through the services of a bank in the country in which the owner of the account is residing.
- 2. AFREXIM BANK:** African Export-Import Bank based in Cairo, Egypt. Around 50 African countries use its services.
- 3.** In Zimbabwe, unlike India, for example, the RTGS system is not only used for large sums of money; due to the lack of currency small transactions, even the buying of vegetables from street traders, are often carried out through EcoCash, a service provided by Econet Wireless a mobile network provider.

ZIMBABWE DOCTORS' STRIKE 2018



On 3rd December 2018, junior doctors, members of the Zimbabwe Hospital Doctors' Association (ZHDA) serving their time as interns after 5 years training, went on strike over pay and conditions, (they were earning US\$329 per month), citing not only their own pay but also the lack of drugs and other resources in Zimbabwe's public hospitals.

Telephone (263)(09) 252111-9
Fax: (263)(09) 237284
Website: www.ubh.org.zw
E-mail: info@ubh.org.zw
All Correspondence to be addressed to the:
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
UNITED BULAWAYO HOSPITAL
P.O. BOX 958
BULAWAYO
ZIMBABWE


ZIMBABWE

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
CHILD CARE
UNITED BULAWAYO HOSPITALS
CLINICAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
ST LUKES AVENUE
ASCOT
BULAWAYO
ZIMBABWE

03 December 2018

Att: All Heads of Departments
All Wards
Human Resources Department
Dr J. Dube

RE: INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY JRMOS AND SRMOS

Please be advised that there is another on-going industrial action by the JRMOS/SRMOs at all the Central Hospitals since 02 December 2018.

Management recommends:

- 1) Closure of the Out Patients Department till further notice.
- 2) Discharge all stable patients who are considered as safe on treatment as out-patients.
- 3) Casualty Officers to admit patients to respective disciplines in liaison with teams on call.
- 4) Continue with emergency operations only.

Management appreciates the burden on the middle level HMOs/ Senior Registrars and the Consultants as well as the need for continued care for the critically ill patients.

Your usual co-operation is anticipated.

Thank you.


DR. N. B. TDZVANGA
CONSULTANT PHYSICIAN
DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL SERVICES
UNITED BULAWAYO HOSPITALS


CLINICAL DIRECTOR
UNITED BULAWAYO HOSPITALS
- 3 DEC 2018
P.O. BOX 958, BULAWAYO
ZIMBABWE

On Monday 16th April 2018, around 16,000 nurses, members of the Zimbabwe Nurses Association (ZNA) went on strike. The monthly salary for most nurses was \$284 before allowances — but the allowances agreed with government in 2010 were never paid, further, the health authorities made it difficult for the majority of nurses to rise out of the lower grades making it harder for them to receive higher pay.

The following day, Tuesday 17th April 2018, Vice-President Retired General Constantino Chiwenga announced that all nurses had been fired. He said:

“...government has decided, in the interest of patients and of saving lives, to discharge all the striking nurses with immediate effect. Further, the government has now instructed the Health Services Board to speedily engage, as appropriate, all unemployed, but trained nurses in the country. It has also authorised the board to recall retired nursing staff into the service,”

Chiwenga applauded nurses who did not join the strike or had returned to work for their “deep regard for life as required by their professional oath.”

He also said the strike was “politically motivated, and, thus, going beyond concerns of conditions of service and worker welfare”.

The ZNA caved in. On Saturday 21st April 2019, it issued a statement saying:

“To pave way for re-opening of negotiations and protection of our workers we have decided to call off the industrial action.”

Nurses were urged to report for duty on Monday 23rd February 2019, but when they arrived at their workplaces they had to sign new contracts of employment, thus losing their previously accrued pension rights.

Doctors proved rather tougher and held out longer.

On the 13th December 2018, Acting Labour Minister Kazembe Kazembe issued a show cause order but Kazembe’s order was not given to the striking doctors or their representatives. The parties were immediately invited by Labour Court judge Justice Euna Makamure who ruled that the order was defective. The doctors’ legal team by Munyaradzi Gwisai challenged the order by the minister arguing that there was nothing before the court and that they had appeared out of courtesy. Gwisai maintained:

“Effectively what it then means is that the strike by the junior doctors continues and has not been dealt with by the court. There is nothing that can be used to adjudge the strike illegal. “Our understanding of the law is that the papers so filed from the very outset are that it is the application for the show cause order and the application for the disposal is legally invalid.

“They are incurably bad that they cannot be amended or regularised. The whole process followed was legally flawed. And the best solution is to address the grievances of the concerned junior doctors and not unnecessary legal battles that are clad with flaws and errors.”

But, government was not to be deterred. On 22nd December 2018, the doctors were hauled in front of the Labour Court where judges Betty Chidziva and Gladys Mhuri made the following ruling:

“The findings of the court, in terms of Section 107 of the Labour Act, are as follows: Having listened to both parties’ submissions, the court found that the collective job action embarked on by the respondents [Zimbabwe Hospital Doctors Association] and its members on the 1st December 2018 is unlawful.

“This finding is based on the fact that the respondents in the critical services category, as provided for by the provisions of SI [Statutory Instrument] 137 of 2003, are prohibited from engaging in the collective job action.

“Respondents even, through their witness Dr Muzorembe, failed to prove that they were exposed to any occupational hazard which they reasonably feared to pose an immediate threat to their health and safety.

“All members of the Zimbabwe Doctors’ Association, doctors and members of staff who participated in the unlawful job action should report for work within 12 hours of service of this order on the Zimbabwe Hospital Doctors Association at Parirenyatwa Doctors’ Lounge, Harare.

“The Health Service Board is entitled to take disciplinary action against members of the Zimbabwe Hospital Association, doctors and members who participated in the unlawful job action and also that the respondents are to bear application costs on the ordinary scale.”

Following the ruling, Dr Mthabisi Bhebhe, Secretary-General of ZHDA, said that doctors would defy the Labour Court Judge ruling, noting that the Judge Betty Chidziva gave the government’s employment agency, the Health Service Board (HSB), permission to dismiss striking doctors and to stop paying them with immediate effect.

“Following the ruling by the Labour Court we have obviously consulted our members regarding the ruling. Obviously we are doctors and we are law abiding citizens and our position right now, most of our grievances that were presented to our ministry have not been adequately addressed and that alone has made some of our members and the majority, in fact, to decide not to return to work because there is nothing at work that can be used to help patients in delivering quality healthcare services.

“... Most of our members have shown their intention not to return to work until such a time that they receive satisfactory solutions in regard to their grievances that they raised three weeks ago.

“Our position has always been clear that going to work or not going to work as long as our grievances are not addressed our situation and stance remains the same. We are waiting for solutions, we are waiting for those in authority to intervene, to provide the necessary equipment and medicines to assist patients in institutions and for your information most of our doctors, members have not received their December salaries... And the grievances that we sent to the Honourable Vice-President Chiwenga have not been addressed.”

In court, the doctors’ attorney, Munyaradzi Gwisai, argued that the matter should be taken to the Constitutional Court, but Chidziva dismissed the plea saying:

“This is a matter of national interest which needed to be dealt with urgently.”

Following the decision, Gwisai had this to say:

“I have instructions to file an application for leave to appeal at the Supreme Court because there are serious human rights issues which were raised.

“We have received the court order and when we receive the judgment detailing the reasons for ruling, we will approach to the Supreme Court.”

Gwisai also said that the doctors were not given a fair opportunity to be heard before the Labour Court delivered its ruling:

“The Labour Act calls for just resolutions and Section 69 of the Constitution calls for the right to a fair hearing. Our client did not get that. On Friday [21st December 2018] around 12 noon, we received communication that the matter has been set for hearing on Monday [24th December 2018]. Around 3pm on the same day, we received a Show Cause Order instructing our clients to appear in court on Saturday [22nd December 2018] at 10am as earlier communicated.

“We closed offices and I left for home. At 16:47, one of our junior lawyers received a new notice from the assistant Sheriff instructing us to appear at the Labour Court at 5:15 pm. We had less than 30 minutes to prepare for the hearing despite receiving formal communication earlier in the day.

“What kind of justice is that? I did not even have time to take instructions from my client. What is it that made the court decide to change dates? The court did not explain the sudden change in dates.

“... Is it not true that members of the executives and ministers seek medical attention outside the country? If the hospitals are good, why are they not treated here? Is it not in the public domain that government is running around seeking medicines for the hospitals?”

On the 27th December 2018, Vice-President Chiwenga, then Acting President while Mnangagwa was out of the country, made an extraordinary television appearance for which he had clearly not prepared properly. Jerking about before and during the interview as if he had been drinking too much strong coffee, he appeared incoherent, inarticulate and uninformed.



During the course of his rambling delivery, Chiwenga claimed that junior doctors serving their internship were not yet qualified, were not yet doctors! Yet before being allowed to treat patients as an intern, the long established procedure, not only in Zimbabwe, but in most countries, is that doctors must first have undergone 5 years training and received their degrees. Chiwenga did not seem to know this and there was obvious embarrassment among those officials surrounding him.

Those who have not seen the performance of Constantino Chiwenga, the man believed to be the next in line as President of the Republic of Zimbabwe should check the following link on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/nC0oHFuKZ0>

Following this intervention, an attempt was made to recruit those still studying and not yet qualified to act as scab labour — as well as those who had been studying but had failed their exams! More than 500 junior doctors were suspended.

On 2nd January 2019, senior doctors joined the strike. They issued a statement saying:

“Following the continued industrial action by the junior doctors and their subsequent suspension, we, the senior registrars, have become overwhelmed by the workload and are no longer confident we can discharge our duties properly without compromising both our and patient’s safety” the memorandum read in part.

“Our work involves working as a team and so if the other crucial part is missing, then we are all rendered useless.

“We share the same grievances as our juniors, that of the need for a cost of living adjustments, need for uninterrupted availability of essential drugs and sundries and the need to address the vehicle status of all doctors.

“We have resolved, therefore, as a group to protect our patients and ourselves to withdraw our services until an agreement is reached.”



However, government eventually managed to persuade some senior consultants to break the growing unity in the health sector. The consultants threatened to fail the doctors on their internship, thus ending their medical careers. The ZHDA issued a statement ending the strike:



ZHDA PRESS STATEMENT ON THE INDUSTRIAL ACTION

10 JANUARY 2019

THE INDUSTRIAL ACTION BY DOCTORS NATIONWIDE HAS ENDED.

ZHDA is delighted to inform the membership, members of the press and public that the industrial action by doctors in Government hospitals has come to an end.

It has been 40 straight days since doctors embarked on an industrial action citing various grievances that were and are crippling health service delivery in public institutions. The industrial action was meant to remind and send a clear message to the relevant authorities that the healthcare sector in the country was deteriorating and hence the need for urgent interventions. It is therefore important to appreciate that, the MOHCC has made commitments with its employees to address these crippling factors and we can only hope that these commitments would be implemented in all honesty at the correct time frame and as agreed, for the benefit of our patients and the country as a whole. We further state that it should not take 40 days with doctors on industrial action for the Ministry Of Health and Child Care (MOHCC) to act and restore normal service delivery in government health institutions. Therefore, there is a need of consistent and continuous engagements between doctors and the MOHCC to avoid unnecessary interruption of service delivery.

The MOHCC has committed in writing that it will consistently improve supply of medicines, medical and surgical sundries in public health facilities. It was further agreed that there is going to be unfreezing of critical posts for doctors across Central, Provincial and District Hospitals. We hope these promises will be fulfilled with urgency, as it has been the culture of the Health Service Board to go back on agreements before. We also continue to negotiate on outstanding issues like remuneration and working hours, and we hope we find common ground soon.

We believe that, if these crucial commitments are implemented, it will go a long way in alleviating the challenges our members encounter when discharging lifesaving services in Govt hospitals. Industrial action by doctors should not be the only language that brings about improvement in drug supply and conditions of service. Good dialogue, transparency, honesty and accountability should be incorporated to provide a platform that improves service delivery.



Postscript

Vice-President Constantino Chiwenga was taken ill on Saturday 2nd February 2019 and airlifted to South Africa, unconfirmed reports suggest that he has a serious problem with acidity in his digestive system. He was reported to be in Groot Schuur Hospital in the Western Cape where angry Zimbabweans gathered to protest at his presence — which the hospital authorities denied. By the following Tuesday, (5th February 2019) he was back in Zimbabwe attending a Cabinet meeting. Despite claims to the contrary, Chiwenga was obviously sick. Since then it has been confirmed



SICK CHIWENGA
5th FEBRUARY 2019



that he has now been flown to India for further medical treatment.

It should be noted that President Mnangagwa and Vice-President Mohadi have also been treated in South Africa since the coup, and it is common knowledge that former President Mugabe has long been going to Singapore for medical treatment.

Scarce state resources have been used to pamper an élite which clearly has little interest in the provision of decent medical treatment for the majority. It is also clear that they do not feel safe in the hands of medical personnel to whom they have been so abusive.

While Chiwenga has been hospitalised in India, President Mnangagwa has taken the opportunity to remove four senior military leaders close to him and give them diplomatic posts overseas. A leaked government document says:

“The officers who are set to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade pending finalisation of diplomatic consultations are:

- “1. Major General Martin Chedondo
- “2. Major General Douglas Nyikaramba
- “3. Major General Anselem N Sanyatwe
- “4. Air Vice Marshal Sheba Shumbayawonda

The name of Anselem Sanyatwe, former commander of the Presidential Guard, has been linked to the shooting of civilians in the streets of Harare in August 2018.



**ANSELEM SANYATWE SPEAKING AT
MOTLANTHE COMMISSION**

SECURITY GUARDS HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS



On Friday 28th December 2018, security guards from different companies in Zimbabwe staged street demonstrations in Harare and Gweru. Security guards are paid amounts as little as \$214 per month yet they are outside in all weathers and are often subjected to attacks by criminals.

On that day, the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Security Guards Union (ZISEGU), Comrade Philemon Nhema had this to say:

“Today we demonstrated over the failure by our employers to award us a 10% salary increment which we have been fighting to get since 2014. Considering the current economic hardships, we approached our employers and asked them to award us \$100 hardship allowances across the board. However, the employers have told us that if they give us the allowance, we must agree to work five days a week and get two off days as opposed to the current arrangement where we work four days a week and get three off days.”

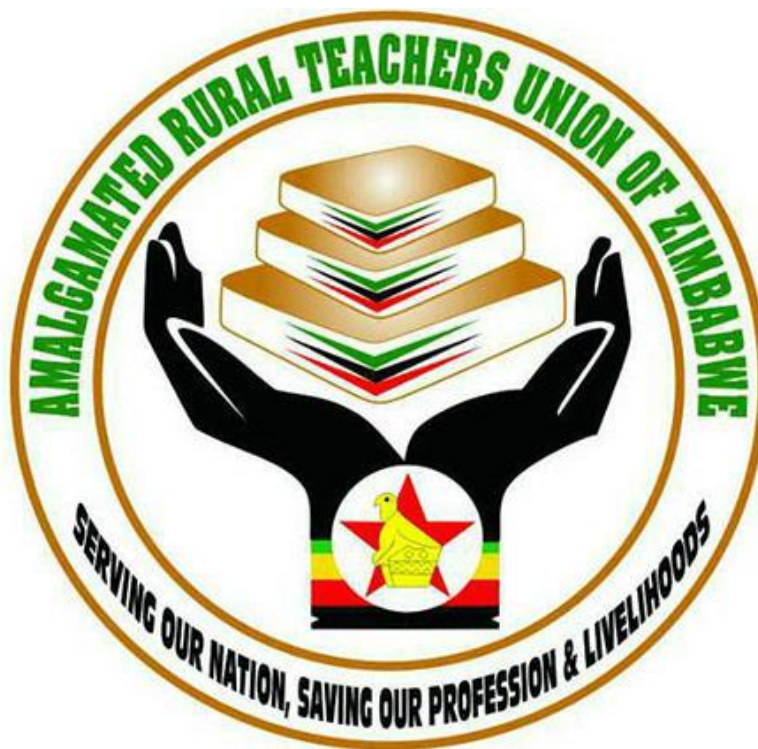
“So the demo is just the beginning as we have given the sector's employers to meet our demands before mid-January 2019 and failure to do so will leave us with no choice except to instruct all security guards across the country to down tools and abandon their duties nationwide.”

Comrade Nhema went on to say that their employers did not care much about their welfare when it was apparent that the firms they were working for made a fortune through their sweat.

The de-industrialisation of Zimbabwe means that in the private sector, the security industry is one of the biggest employers in the private sector. The strike threat security guards came at the same time as job actions by government employees including doctors and teachers. Zimbabwean workers in all sectors argued that their RTGS wages were eroded by price increases which had seen the price of goods and services rising to three times their September prices.



AMALGAMATED RURAL TEACHERS' UNION OF ZIMBABWE



Last year ARTUZ had its Conference followed by its Salary Caravan from Mutare to Harare. In January this year this was followed by its Salary Camp in Africa Unity Square, Harare. Since then ARTUZ President, Comrade Obert Masaraure and ARTUZ Secretary-General Comrade Robson Chere were arrested, are on bail and are awaiting trial on trumped-up charges.

We are therefore awarding the union its own section in *Vanguard* Vol.2 Issue 7.

ARTUZ Conference

Speech by Comrade N.N. Mabhena

General Secretary of the ZCP

8th DECEMBER 2018

Comrades!

Revolutionary greetings from the Zimbabwe Communist Party to all the workers of Zimbabwe and in particular to the militant teachers of ARTUZ who have shown the rest of Zimbabwe how a truly class-oriented trade union should operate and how it should link to other working-class and anti-imperialist struggles in Zimbabwe and the world as a whole; I specifically should like to praise ARTUZ for its work in supporting those evicted at Arcturus Mine, for giving solidarity to teachers in Swaziland, a country where government oppression is even worse than in Zimbabwe and for joining in the solidarity demonstration held in Harare on behalf of the suffering people of Palestine.

A luta continua!!

Comrades! In 1957, workers in Bulawayo led by Joseph Msika and J.Z. Moyo joined with workers in Salisbury led by James Chikerema and George Nyandoro to take over the nearly defunct Southern Rhodesian African National Congress and turn it into a militant, fighting, nationalist organisation. They called the General Secretary of the biggest trade union, the Railway African Workers Union which united workers across the whole of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland to be their President. That man was Joshua Nkomo.

Comrades the national liberation movement was started by the working-class through the trade unions.

But what happened?

ZANU(PF) declared Marxism-Leninism to be its ideology but as soon as the government adopted the destructive ESAP programme in 1991, they dropped Marxism-Leninism without any consultation of their party membership.

By the way, the main architect of ESAP in Zimbabwe, was Bernard Chidzero, a highly qualified specialist trained in western style bourgeois economics. Is Mthuli Ncube not a re-incarnation of Bernard Chidzero?

By 1995, ESAP had led to a serious decline in real wages and the workers, led by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) started discussing the formation of a Workers' Party to oppose this neo-liberal programme adopted by ZANU(PF).

When the MDC was formed in 1999, although its main support came from the working-class, it lumped together ALL opposition forces including not only the trade unionists but also white farmers and the former Rhodesian Front.



It was hi-jacked by other class forces (notably white farmers) with their own class interests. It was financed by funds coming from Britain and the USA. Early on in its existence Eddie Cross became the economic adviser to the MDC pushing an even more rigorous neo-liberal programme than that being pursued by the ZANU(PF) government. Eddie Cross is now an adviser to Mthuli Ncube!

You see Comrades, the lack of a Leninist vanguard party schooled in Marxist scientific analysis has meant that the politics of Zimbabwe have gone astray not only through capitalist greed but also because of the lack of understanding and direction of the organised working-class. Here I would like to quote from the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in 1848:

“The Communists are distinguished from the other working-class parties by this only:

“1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of the different countries, they point out and bring to the front then common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality.

“2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.

“The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.”

Now we are faced with two major parties competing for the same space as the agents of neo-colonialism and neo-liberalism. Both want Zimbabwe to rejoin the British Commonwealth, a badge of subservience, and together with the French Community, a barrier to the development of a united and prosperous Africa.

As Communists we are calling for a conference of working-class organisations in April 2019 to define an agenda for the working-class in Zimbabwe. As we build a new labour movement, and that process is already in motion in Zimbabwe, let us not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Comrades, we are happy, more than happy about the development of militant, class-oriented trade unions in Zimbabwe. But revolutionary change cannot come through even the best trade unions, for, as Comrade Lenin said:

“...the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory.”

Unlike a Communist Party, a trade union has to be open to all workers. In the words of Comrade Lenin written in his major work *What is to be Done?* in 1902.

“Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement,”

I thank you.





Invitation

4th DECEMBER 2018

You are kindly invited to join ARTUZ Salary Caravan. Teachers are going to march from Mutare to Harare demanding salaries in United States dollars and bonus in full. The march begins on 09-12-2018. The Caravan will storm Harare on 19-12-2018. The Caravan will camp at Finance Ministry until our grievances are met. We have Just informed the relevant Ministries about our Salary Caravan.

Salary Caravan Good to Go

5th DECEMBER 2018

Teachers from across the country will be marching from Mutare to Harare, from 09-12-2018 to 19-12-2018. The teachers will be demanding salaries in United States dollars and 2018 bonus in full. The march dubbed salary caravan will end at Finance Ministry offices where the teachers will hand over a petition and camp until their grievances are resolved.

A total of 525 teachers have so far registered to participate in the salary caravan. Civil servants' salaries were negotiated in United States dollars in 2012. The government unilaterally reversed the agreement in October 2018. The employer is now paying in Real Time Gross Settlement, RTGS terms. The move has eroded teacher salaries by over 300% and the average teacher now earns around US\$120. This comes at a time when prices of basic commodities are sky rocketing. Teachers can no longer afford medication, education, shelter, sanitation, food and any other basic needs.

To add salt to injury the Minister of Finance, Professor Mthuli Ncube slashed the popular annual bonus by over 50%. Teachers who received US\$505 in 2017 received a paltry US\$289 for 2018 bonus. This is a clear case of administrative injustice. Teachers held legitimate expectations for the whole year only to be disappointed after the announcement of 2019 budget. The move was illegal and in clear contempt of right to administration justice as clearly captured in Zimbabwe's National Constitution.

ARTUZ has petitioned the employer countless times on these two burning issues. The employer has however turned a deaf ear to our petitions.

It should be noted that the call for salaries in United States dollars is a temporary measure to cushion teachers from the obtaining economic crisis. Our members will gladly accept salaries in local currency when fundamental structural issues are addressed. The government itself is now receipting some imports such as cars in foreign currency. Teachers like other citizens have intentions to buy cars in a country with a poor public transport system.

The Union has invited all Unions in the Federation of Zimbabwe Educators' Unions, FOZEU to join the Caravan.

The Union notes that the call for brutal austerity measures is insincere. The call is aimed at pushing the majority of the citizens from feeding table to preserve national cake for ruling élite. The ruling élite is still spending big including hiring private planes from Switzerland for President Emerson Mnangagwa. Austerity failed us during the ESAP era and is set to fail again. Ordinary citizens are sinking on the poverty index whilst the ruling elite and their Capitalist friends are primitively accumulating.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Day 1 of Teachers' Salary Caravan a Monumental Success

9th DECEMBER 2018

Today at 10.15hrs, 102 rural teachers gathered at the foot of the scenic Christmas pass in Manicaland to embark on a historic 275km March from Mutare to Harare. The March is in protest against the slashing of civil servants' annual bonus and the unilateral withdrawal of United States dollar salaries by the government.

The teachers marched for around 24km and rested at a place popularly known as Romeo at around 13.45hrs. The revolutionary Civil servants rested up to 15.30hrs. The Caravan resumed the long March to emancipation and latter parked at Odzi turn off for the night.

Teachers' salaries have been eroded by a raft of both monetary and fiscal measures introduced by authorities under the evil austerity crusade.

Teachers who used to earn around US\$500 now earn around US\$120 which is further taxed reducing to around US\$ 100. The amount cannot cover the minimum of basic needs of a human.

Teachers participating in the Salary Caravan have vowed to camp at the Finance Ministry's office at the conclusion of March. The Teachers will not report to duty in January if government chooses to dig in.

The protesting Teachers were joined by villagers who were commiserating with the suffering teachers. ARTUZ Board Chair, Clever Bere, Citizen Manifesto Convenor, Briggs Bomba and Citizen Manifesto Co-ordinator, Tatenda Mombeyarara also marched in solidarity with the teachers.

Amalgamated Rural Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe, ARTUZ heartily congratulates the brave teachers who came out to defend their welfare which is under attack from Mthuli Ncube.

The Salary Caravan is set to reach Harare by 19-12-2018.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Élites Pamper Each Other as Workers Wallow in Poverty Salary Caravan Continues!

10th DECEMBER 2018

Teachers participating in the Salary Caravan learnt with shock that Treasury has secured top-of-the-range Discoveries worth millions of dollars for Zimbabwe's bloated Cabinet. The same Treasury has slashed the salaries of civil servants under the guise of cutting expenditure.

It is now crystal clear that the austerity measures are aimed at pushing away the ordinary citizens from the feeding table and preserve the national cake for executive luxuries. They are robbing us to fund their excesses.

Those in power now have a sickening sense of entitlement. They feel like they are entitled to live pretty while the rest of us suffer. If this is not addressed something terribly bad is going to happen.

Day 2 of the Salary Caravan begins at 07.30hrs today. The march will begin from Odzi turn off and head towards Nyazura. The revolutionary teachers will engage community members enlightening them to defend their bread from the crooks in government.

The Salary Caravan is preparing to roll.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Forward ever! I am humbled by the level of determination being shown by cdes. We marched for 20 km and cdes are now resting. The anger is building, when we get to Harare heads will roll. The level of participation from female cdes is awesome. The fighting bar has been raised to another level. Tonight we will sleep at Nyazura.

Note on ARTUZ Facebook Page

Salary Caravan Update

11th DECEMBER 2018

The Salary Caravan yesterday landed at Nyazura township. The Comrades were visibly tired, some with minor injuries but still they are all raring to go.

The heavy rains pounding in Manicaland province are always eluding the Caravan. That's a good sign which must send a signal to Mthuli Ncube, reform or face the wrath of the poor. Nature is strongly behind us.

The Salary Caravan has upset the natural order of expected conduct. The working-class in Zimbabwe is ordinarily viewed as disorganised and docile, that has changed and changed forever. Workers from across the country are pouring in solidarity messages and preparing to join the Caravan. The 19th of December is going to be a D-day for both Mthuli and government. Citizens are vowing to join the Caravan at Finance Ministry offices. The purse holder has up to 19th December to make the right decisions before citizens heavily descend on Harare.

Meanwhile the Caravan will depart from Nyazura at 09.00hrs marching towards Rusape. Some Comrades are still nursing injuries but a total of 40 are fit to march while others are recovering. More teachers will join along the way.

The teachers are marching from Mutare to Harare demanding Salaries in United States dollars and bonus on gross income.

The Amalgamated Rural Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe, ARTUZ salutes all comrades who have conveyed solidarity messages to the Union. We further salute our members and friends of the Union who continue to provide material support to the Caravan.

The Revolution is underway, Fidel Castro said:

“A revolution is a struggle to deaths between the past and the future.”

The past is going to be defeated on 19th December 2018.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Salary Caravan in Rusape

12th DECEMBER 2018

Rusape: the Salary Caravan is here. The Caravan participants want to engage with the Rusape Community. We invite teachers and citizens in Rusape to a solidarity engagement at Chicken Inn Rusape at 09.00hrs today. Let's come in our numbers and share ideas.

Salaries in US\$ now !!

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Salary Caravan Unites the Nation

12th DECEMBER 2018

The Teacher Salary Caravan is now in Rusape after three days of resolute walking from Mutare. The past three days have been inspiring, we met academics, parliamentarians, peasants, vendors, students and traditional leaders. Our resolve has been emboldened by the tremendous support we have received. As was expected of a march of this magnitude our numbers would never be consistently impressive but the clarity of our demands and resolve to win would carry the day. The nerves of the State have been rattled and just yesterday riot police armed to the tooth in the company of vicious dogs trailed our Caravan.

Out of the 40 who marched yesterday we have begged one lady who had a slight ankle strain to rest. 10 comrades just joined us to continue with the march and morale is at an all-time high. We demand our salaries in United States Dollars Now!

Oliver Tambo once said:

“The State just like us knows that whoever wins the people to their side is assured of victory...”

We have won the critical battle of the people. No amount of propaganda can sway the opinion of the suffering masses. No amount of fear mongering can turn the people against us. As we march we are not marching for our selfish interests but for the collective good of all citizens. After our imminent victory, all citizens will benefit. Soldiers, police officers and all civil servants will earn in real currency terms. The disposable income of our civil servants will improve and this will trickle down to vendors, peasants and other sections of our economy. In short we are shouldering the burden of reversing the imminent economic collapse triggered by Mthuli's misguided austerity measures.

As we march we have been accused of faking the march. We have deliberately ignored such dross. The march is more significant to us than to anyone. It will serve to define our character both as citizens and collectively as a Union. We are asking ourselves the difficult question:

How much can sacrifice to defend the interests of the poor majority?

In as much as we are sending a clear message to the blundering government we are also reconciling our thought processes and submitting ourselves to the supremacy of our clean conscience. Our conscience demands it from us, to fight injustice with all our might. We will do exactly that against all odds.

Some armchair critics have queried why we chose such a long distance. The distance is critical as it translates to more days of sending our clear message. The nature of our cause does not deserve a one hour show in town. No: it deserves a protracted battle, knocking at the hearts of both employer and citizens. We want both of these groups on our side and that cannot be achieved in a day. This long distance will give the employer enough time to find solutions to our pressing challenges and also help build anger amongst us to fight harder if our concerns are not addressed. Last but not least the nation is united as citizens are seized with the topical issue of salaries in United States dollars.

Some are wondering why we want salaries in United States dollars instead of a salary increment. An increment will fuel inflation and the value of new salary will be eroded the day it is going to be announced. The US dollar salary is a stop gap measure while the nation addresses fundamentals of economics. The starting point might be a National Economic Dialogue bringing together government, business and trade unions.

The Salary Caravan departs from Rusape around 09.00hrs. We are not sure of where we will sleep.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Salary Caravan Parks at Ziswa Shopping Centre

13th DECEMBER 2018

The teachers' Salary Caravan yesterday parked at Ziswa Shopping Centre, about 12km from Headlands. The teachers are going to rest for the better part of today, refreshing after four days of continuous walking. The Caravan will only cover the estimated 12km from Ziswa to Headlands.

Those who want to join tomorrow can link with us at Headlands Shopping Centre. Tomorrow we will head towards Macheke as we resolutely march towards our salaries in United States dollars and annual bonus in full. Red salute to the comrades and friends who continue to provide solidarity towards our noble cause.

We note the arrogance of our employer who has flatly refused to pay doctors in United States dollars. We strongly warn the government to climb down the arrogance tower and play ball, if their attitude doesn't change something terribly bad will soon befall them.

Victory is certain !!

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Headlands to Macheke on Day 6

14th DECEMBER 2018

The Salary Caravan will depart from Headlands at 09.00hrs heading towards Macheke. Distance is between 25-30km. At least 63 Cdes are fit to be part of the march.

We demand salaries in United States dollars and bonus in full.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Citizens Now Writing Letters to Mthuli Ncube

15th DECEMBER 2018

The Caravan has engaged thousands of citizens who have insisted that they want to send personal messages to hangman Mthuli Ncube. Some of these citizens cannot join the revolutionary Caravan for one reason or the other. Today as we say good-bye Manicaland and entering Mashonaland East, Macheke Township we will be receiving letters to Mthuli from the citizens. The Salary Caravan will carry citizens' voices on board.

The Caravan received reports of past and present acts of political violence in Headlands. One lady who spoke on condition of anonymity narrated how Headlands residents were intimidated by ZANU(PF) activists on the eve of our departure from Headlands. The citizens were threatened with unspecified actions if they joined the march. The lady gave marchers a bunch of bananas in solidarity. We would like to assure citizens that our march is above board and no harm will come our way and the way of those who participate.

This morning we were visited by Assistant Inspector Murombo and Sgt. Tasiwa from Macheke police. The state agents were verifying our notification and intended to vet the participants in the Caravan. We flatly refused to co-operate on the second request but we gladly showed our stamped copies of notification. The Caravan will be heading towards Marondera which is 33km from Macheke.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

State Moves in to Block Salary Caravan

15th DECEMBER 2018

The Dispol for Marondera district, Chief Superintendent Nenguwo has instructed one Assistant Inspector Murombo to block our March for US\$ salaries and bonus in full. The Caravan was passing through a service station after Macheke towards Harare.

The Dispol claims that we were not cleared under the draconian Public Order and Security Act, (POSA). His claims are baseless since trade unions just like churches and funerals are exempted from POSA.

Further to that Section 59 of the Constitution of the Republic of Zimbabwe guarantees the right to protest.

ARTUZ had notified all state departments of the march in the vain hope that the state would provide security for our members. The Head of Police for Mashonaland East Province stamped our notification in acknowledgement.

The Union has engaged Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights, ZLHR.

The march will however continue while the lawyers attend to the legal rudiments.

The State is in panic mode.

Victory is Certain !!

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Salary Caravan Participants to be Tried Today

17th DECEMBER 2018

Nine members of Amalgamated Rural Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) who were arrested and charged with Criminal Nuisance and Convening an Illegal Gathering will appear in Marondera Magistrate Courts today. The nine are represented by Tinomuda Shoko of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights.

The Salary Caravan is set to resume the arduous journey towards Harare as soon as the court proceedings are concluded. ARTUZ calls upon the poor and the working class to join the march as we demand a fair share of the national cake.

Todakudyawo/Sifuna Ukudla !!

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

ARTUZ Leaders Released but Police Still Blocking March

17th DECEMBER 2018

The National Prosecuting Authority has dismissed the frivolous charges that were manufactured by police, law and order section of Marondera. Nine participants of the Salary Caravan had been accused and charged with Criminal Nuisance and Failing to Notify the Police of their march.

The Salary Caravan is now proceeding towards Harare but again Superintendent Nenguwo has ordered the police to attack the marchers. Three Ford Ranger trucks were dispatched to attack the marchers. An insider alerted us that the police officers were ordered to throw tear gas at the marchers.

The Salary Caravan has parked next to Comoil waiting for our lawyers to engage the Police. The march will however continue against all odds.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Arrival in Harare

18th DECEMBER 2018

The Amalgamated Rural Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe, ARTUZ caravan march continues unabated despite numerous problems and barriers thrown our way by forces of evil. From illegal arrests, threats of violence and even death by confirmed and suspected state agents.

Our commitment to march for 275 kilometres from the mountainous Eastern Highlands capital of Mutare, to Harare the capital where those who authored the salary crisis are stationed is inspired by the pain we endure of being paid our salaries in bond notes when we negotiated and government agreed in 2012 that our salaries will be in US Dollars.

The unilateral move by government to breach the signed contract by paying us in bond notes has left the teacher incapable of living a decent life and manage to cater for the very basics of our welfare. Government's insistence on bond note/USD parity further worsened our plight.

We greatly appreciate Zimbabweans for the various forms of solidarity along the way. Your support is really motivational and indispensable. We met various Zimbabweans from diverse social and economic backgrounds who converged with the cause of the #CaravanMarch. We met those from rural areas, peri-urban areas, urban areas and the consensus around workers getting paid their salaries in US Dollars is overwhelming.

The #ARTUZCaravanMarch continues today as we embark on the final lap. We will be arriving in Harare tomorrow the 19th of December 2018. If Mthuli Ncube fails to give us our full bonuses and salaries in US Dollars then the caravan will park at his offices for good till we get what we want.

We also welcome all Zimbabweans on this day to come at Mthuli Ncube's offices for a #ShutDown till we get US Dollars.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Arrest in Ruwa

18th DECEMBER 2018 at 18:30hrs

Police have for the second time arrested the Salary Caravan this evening at Ruwa.

The 14 members arrested include ARTUZ President, Obert Masaraure, Vice President Gaudencia Mandiopera, Secretary-General Robson Chere, Godfrey Chanda, Gerald Tawengwa, Christine Jubane, Brenda Musavengana, Talkmore Mhlanga, Memory Phiri, Munyaradzi Masiwa, Sokuluhle Ndlovhu, Regis Muzambi, Regai Chinhuto and Taurai Boora.

They have been taken to Harare Central Police Station and we wait to hear the charges that the state will lay against them.

The struggle continues unabated

Long live ARTUZ !!

From: Rural Teachers Union in Zimbabwe, Facebook Page

ARTUZ Salary Caravan Acquitted and Set to Cruise Again

9th DECEMBER 2018

Fourteen leaders and members of the Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ) have been set free after a Zimbabwean court threw out disorderly conduct charges brought against the labour unionists and ruled that they did not commit an offence by staging a demonstration against poor salaries and working conditions.

ARTUZ leaders and members had been hauled before the courts after they were arrested on 18th December 2018 and charged with disorderly conduct in contravention of Section 41(a) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act for allegedly blocking a road in Ruwa while holding and waving placards during a protest against poor remuneration dubbed "Salary Caravan".

But Harare Magistrate Victoria Mashamba set free the ARTUZ leaders and members after ruling that the unionists had not committed an offence in staging a protest against the country's worsening economic crisis as they were simply exercising their constitutional rights as enshrined in Section 59 of the Constitution.

They were being represented by defence lawyers from ZLHR. The unionists' lawyers Tinotenda Shoko and Kossam Ncube of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights had challenged the placement on remand of their clients arguing that they had not committed any offence by waving placards and singing songs when they were arrested while protesting because they are a registered trade union which is exempted from notifying the regulatory authority (ZRP) as provided under the punitive provisions of the Public Order and Security Act. The defence submitted complains of bad treatment and sexual harassment by members of the ZRP. The presiding magistrate ordered the state to investigate the matter.

Meanwhile, the struggle continues. The Caravan will cruise again tomorrow 20th December 2018 starting at 9am from Engen Msasa and will hand over a petition to Finance Minister, Mthuli Ncube at his office.

Long live ARTUZ !!

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Salary Caravan in Msasa

20th DECEMBER 2018 at 06:50

Morning Cdes. The Salary Caravan will begin in Msasa today at 1000hrs. We will be at Mthuli's office by 1400hrs. We will deliver a petition and picket at Finance Ministry. A press conference will be held at 1500hrs at Finance Ministry.

From: Rural Teachers Union in Zimbabwe, Facebook Page





OBERT MASARAURE

MTHULI, WE ARE HERE !! Hand-over of Petition

20th DECEMBER 2018



MTHULI NCUBE

Professor Mthuli we are here to deliver a warning from the millions of Zimbabweans we met and reached out to from the 9th December to date. The citizens are angry with you and if nothing changes soon something terribly bad will happen.

Your decision to withdraw US\$ salaries for Civil servants has angered even the strongest pillars of state power. The teachers, soldiers, police, nurses, doctors, judiciary officials and other civil service departments not listed are baying for your blood. These hard-working civil servants negotiated their salaries in US dollar terms in 2012 and they legitimately expect that agreement to stand and stand until a new deal is agreed on. Your decision to unilaterally renège on this agreement is a clear case of unfair labour practice. Mthuli you have thrown civil servants under the bus while yourself and your colleagues in the executive feast on the national cake. If you choose to remain adamant something terribly bad will happen.

We learnt with disgust that you arrogantly told the world that the government cannot afford to pay United States dollars. We were in the bush then and you revitalised our zeal to march along the arduous 275 km journey.

Your arrogance stinks to high heavens!

Where did treasury get the money to buy all the sleek vehicles for the executive? Where do you get the money to charter planes for President Mnangagwa? What happened to the United States dollars that were in circulation since 2009? Why are you charging import duty in United States dollars if you don't want to pay us in the same?

The list of questions is endless. Your austerity for the prosperity of a few is criminal. If you don't change your ways soon something terribly bad will happen.

Mthuli you slashed our bonus by over 50%, a teacher who earned \$500 in annual bonus in 2017 earned \$200 under your leadership. This is coming at a time when the prices of basic goods and services have sky-rocketed. This move is highly insensitive and we won't allow you to get away with this. Our bonus is now a right since we have consistently received it at a fixed agreed amount. We hold legitimate expectations to receive annual bonus which is 100% of gross earnings. Anything to the contrary is a clear case of administration injustice. If you don't deposit the remainder of our bonus, something terribly wrong will happen.

In 2016 we were all encouraged to use plastic money by your Reserve Bank Governor. It has been a tough journey but we have been forced to adapt. We don't have an appetite to electronically transact, we do it because there is no other option in our cashless economy. We are irked that you have chosen to extort from us 2% of our earnings per every transaction. If you don't reverse this madness something terribly wrong is set to happen.

Our elders from all walks of life narrated the ordeals they went through during the ESAP era. We have followed what happened to Greece as it pursued austerity measures and we are following the Crisis in France born out of the austerity measures. We will not allow you to drag our country down the same route. If you don't change your ways, something terribly wrong will happen in this country.

We come from an arduous and torturous journey that was characterised by intimidation, harassment, incarceration and death threats. These shame acts of banditry were perpetrated by both known and suspected state agents.

All this is nothing compared to the horrors we endure on a daily basis. The horror of failing to feed our families, the horror of failing to pay school fees for our kids at schools where we teach, the horror of failing to buy medication for our loved ones. Such horrors scare us more than the threats of violence and incarceration from the State. If we fight we die and if we don't fight we will die. We have chosen to die fighting. We warn you that if you don't deal with the horrors confronting our livelihoods, something terribly bad will happen.

This is the beginning of a protracted struggle against austerity, which has been correctly named ESAP 2 by labour. The salary caravan has landed, please take heed of the demands of the people. If you choose arrogance over common sense something terribly bad is going to happen in this country.

Amandla !!

**Presented by ARTUZ President, Obert Masaraure at the Ministry of Finance
on behalf of the Salary Caravan on 20th December 2018**

ARTUZ IN SOLIDARITY WITH STRIKING DOCTORS

29th DECEMBER 2018

Amalgamated Rural Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe, ARTUZ stands shoulder to shoulder with the striking doctors. The doctors are demanding a living wage, better working conditions and more medication in our hospitals.

ARTUZ notes the criminality on the part of the employer, (government). The government has chosen to suspend the doctors instead of addressing the legitimate concerns being raised by the doctors.

We are aware that the government is planning to fire the teachers who choose to take heed of the impending teachers' job action in same fashion they fired our doctors.

The employer has declared war against the employees. We have reached the breaking point. We cannot allow the employer to reduce us to slaves under our watch.

ARTUZ calls upon all civil servants and the broader working-class to stand with our doctors. We encourage the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, ZCTU, to set dates for national action.

We invite all workers to Mthuli's office on 07 January 2019 at 0900hrs to protest against austerity.

An injury to one is an injury to all !!

Solidarity forever !!

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

Battling to Avert a Looming Catastrophe

30th DECEMBER 2018

Letter to my compatriots from Obert Masaraure

The 17th November 2017 coup ushered what has been popularly touted a new dispensation by both the local mass media and a good section of the international media. The objective of labelling the current political order 'new' was obviously to mass manipulate the consciousness of the majority. It is now crystal clear that we did not break away from the vices of the past but we are now trapped under the leadership of a cartel which seeks to appropriate the labour of the proletariat towards profiteering of the ruling élite. The proletariat is on the verge of completely losing on two fronts; losing both political rights and the little socio-economic rights which kept us surviving over the years.

The question is how do we step up and avert the looming catastrophe?

The new Finance Minister has drastically slashed civil servants' salaries, slashed annual bonuses. Introduced a 2% tax and is working on modalities of mass retrenchments. These measures have induced unprecedented suffering among the working-class and this has set the stage for antagonism between the working class and the ruling élite.

The working class has been quick to act, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, ZCTU, calling for a day of national protest, the doctors calling for a crippling job action and the teachers embarking on a historic Salary Caravan. All these actions were aimed at reversing the austerity crusade which has pushed the proletariat down the poverty index.

The State as was expected was quick to summon its institutions of violence and mass communication. The ZCTU planned protest was banned and the leadership was incarcerated, the state media was in overdrive condemning the ZCTU for pushing a regime change agenda. In the case of the doctors they have been suspended and are set to face more punitive measures. The State media has also gone ballistic on doctors' case to the extent of issuing contradictory messages as the State desperately seek to set the people against the striking doctors. The marching teachers were arrested twice in a space of two days facing the same charges. The State media has not spared the teachers, the teachers have been portrayed as hired protestors who had no clear agenda.

It is clear that the State has a solid and efficient machinery in place to counter the efforts of the working-class. They might fail to provide us with health care, education and other social services but they are more than ready to generously fund repression. Preserving their hegemony in pursuit of more profits.

How do we respond as a people?

We are on the verge of losing both our limited political freedoms and our scarce socio-economic rights.

It is refreshing to note that we are not alone in this struggle, workers are rising across the world, the yellow vests in France and anti-government protests in Sudan. There are a lot of lessons from these contemporary struggles and even more lessons to learn from our mistakes of the past.

The first big lesson is the power of Unity across all sectors. The proletariat cannot afford to fight from silos when we really know the might of the state. The State will work around the clock to keep the working class divided. Sections of the working-class are made to feel more superior compared to others through preferential treatment and material rewards. The state media also consistently churn out highly divisive propaganda messages.

At this point citizens should unite across sectors by any means necessary. The peasants should spend more time in planning meetings with the workers. The unemployed should also come in fully appreciating that the coming revolution will guarantee employment opportunities for the unemployed and protect them from exploitation at the work-place.

This is a time for new heroes. Heroes who can unite the people into a solid unit to fight and defeat austerity.

The second lesson is the imperative of engaging in nonviolent action. The State commands institutions of brutal force, it will be naïve to engage in stone throwing in a bid to avert the looming catastrophe. We should never give them a reason to shoot at our defenceless citizens. The morality of our struggle will be judged by how much we can resist provocation and remain loyal the principal cardinal of non-violent action.

Thirdly, we should make use of social media to counter the propaganda of the State. We can only win the battle of the hearts of the people if we keep the people fully informed of the true nature of our struggle and our broader goal. The young women and men of our generation should take the lead on social media countering state propaganda and conveying the truths to our people.

Lastly, we should all assume the role of mobilisers.” Mobilise or die!” We have to traverse the length and breadth of this country and engage the populace to bring them on board the revolutionary train. Let’s meet at the workplaces, in the villages, in commuter omnibuses and collectively strategize on how we can avert the impending catastrophe.

Our immediate task is to get rid of the worst enemy of the people Professor Mthuli Ncube. Mthuli is the face of austerity in Zimbabwe. To that end we invite all citizens to Professor Mthuli’s office on 07 January 2019 at 0900hrs. We will spend the whole day demanding either an end to austerity or Mthuli’s resignation. Out of courtesy we will notify the police.

Compatriots let’s get down to work to avert the looming catastrophe of completely losing both political and socio-economic rights.

Comrade Obert Masaraure is a teacher and President of Amalgamated Rural Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe, ARTUZ. He can be contacted on: obertmasaraure@gmail.co



AMALGAMATED RURAL TEACHERS UNION OF ZIMBABWE

HEAD OFFICE
69 S. MACHIKO, 10TH FLOOR, BUILDING
PO BOX 10000, HARARE



CONTACT

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE
WE-TA 2
SERVING THE RURAL
31 DEC 2018
PO BOX CY 7707, CAUSEWAY
TEL: 242-760871-8/703466

STRIKE ACTION CIRCULAR 1 OF 2019

TO: ALL ARTUZ MEMBERS
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL
CC: MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELFARE

DATE: 31 DECEMBER 2018

REF: STRIKE ACTION BY ARTUZ MEMBERS

This serves to notify you that ARTUZ will be on an indefinite job action until the following grievances are addressed;

- Demand adequate learning materials for the new curriculum
- Salaries to be paid in United States dollars as last negotiated in 2012
- 2018 Annual bonus on gross income.
- Scrapping of 2% tax on electronic transactions

All ARTUZ members shall withdraw their labour beginning on 07 January 2019 as part of the industrial action. Regular updates shall be circulated to inform ALL members and stakeholders on any developments regarding the strike action

Robson Chere *[Signature]*

ARTUZ SECRETARY GENERAL: (+263 775 643 192)

RURAL TEACHERS UNION OF ZIMBABWE
69 S. MACHIKO, 10TH FLOOR, BUILDING
CELL: +263 775 643 192
0775 643 192
Email: ura@artuz.org.zw
31/12/18

2019, ARTUZ Still Fighting to Restore Teachers' Dignity Through Dynamic Unionism

2nd JANUARY 2019

The desire to restore the dignity of teachers will once again guide us in 2019. We have done the ground work in 2018, the foundation has been laid, the movement is now intact, and it is now time to reclaim our dignity from the employer.

Our noble profession has become a source of ridicule in our society, in 2019 we will boldly restore the dignity of teaching to the levels last realized under the leadership of Rev Abel Muzorewa. Teaching will once again become beautiful and indeed our education system will be restored to its former glory.

Our optimism is inspired by the revolutionary mood which has engulfed the teacher community and the working-class in general. The working-class is now ready to fight for better working and living conditions and as Amalgamated Rural Teachers' Union of Zimbabwe, ARTUZ we have short listed the following as areas demanding our immediate attention:

- A living wage to be paid in United States Dollars until the country has its own real currency
- Immediate disbursement of the outstanding 2018 annual bonus.
- Adequate learning and teaching material for the implementation of the new curriculum
- Scrapping of the punitive 2% tax on electronic transactions.

ARTUZ is alive to a plethora of other grievances blighting our sector but we have resolved to tackle the above as they are urgent and threatening our capacity to go back to work when schools open.

We have notified the employer of our intention to withdraw labour beginning on the 7th of January 2019 if the above issues are not addressed. The teachers and members of the working-class will camp at Finance Ministry on 7th January 2019 demanding either an end to austerity or Mthuli's resignation from the position of Finance Minister.

Our Union is open to dialogue before schools open to avoid unnecessary loss of learning time. We have done everything possible over the holiday to table our issues before the employer. The intransigence of the employer is threatening our education sector. The teachers regret that they will be forced to withdraw their Labour and fail to attend to their noble duty of educating our nation.

It should also be noted that the learning calendar is already under threat of failing to take off due to the biting economic crisis. Parents and guardians are failing to secure school uniforms, learning material and school fees for the new learning season. Phone calls from irate Parents are inundating our Head offices as they encourage us to withdraw our labour so that we get United States dollar salaries. The parents are aware that salaries in United States dollars for teachers will benefit the whole spectrum of our society. All civil servants will receive US\$ salaries, private companies will take a leaf from government policy and pay salaries in US\$ and the business community will also trade in US\$.

It is therefore imperative for the government to resolve the currency crisis by paying for all goods and services in United States dollars. The Bond Notes and Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) charade should be halted with immediate effect.

ARTUZ implores government to climb down from the tower of arrogance and engage in an all-inclusive National Economic Dialogue with citizens. It is both naïve and futile to attempt to surprise citizens with economic growth and development — growth is a product of patriotic popular citizen

participation. The citizens can only participate when there is a shared economic blue print. No technocrat has the ability/capacity to manufacture growth for the majority, growth is a product of popular citizen participation. Let's put our heads together as a people and reconstruct our country.

The austerity for the prosperity of the ruling elites should be stopped forthwith. The austerity agenda is crowding the citizens away from the feeding table and preserving the national cake for the ruling elite.

Todakudyawo!

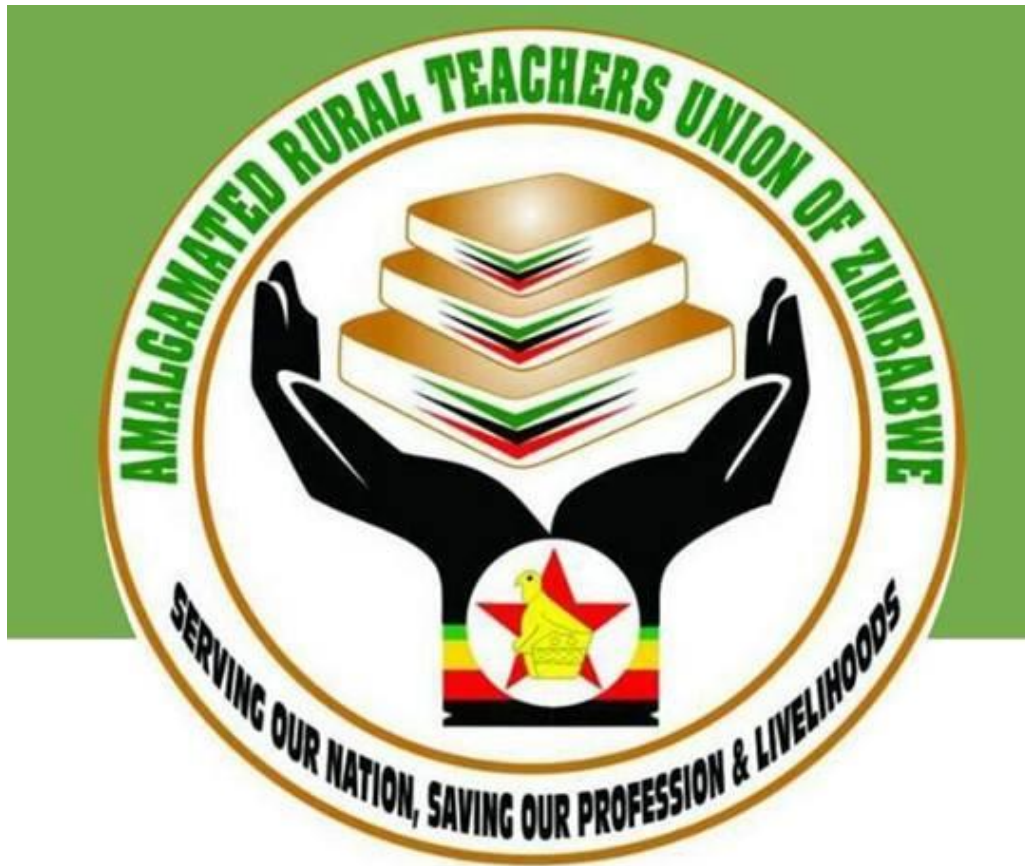
If indeed the government is for the people by the people, (Lincoln's definition of democracy), they will urgently address the people's concerns before our country slides into a catastrophe.

We call upon the working-class, peasants, students, vendors and the broad citizenry to come together and boldly declare that enough is enough. On 7th January 2019 let's converge the Finance Ministry offices and send a clear message to the face of austerity, Professor Mthuli Ncube.

We wish Zimbabwe a revolutionary 2019

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT

SALARY CAMP



Join the ARTUZ #SalaryCamp

ARTUZ calls all citizens to meet at Africa Unity Square at 9am on Monday Jan 7th. We will march to the Ministry of Finance to demand a living wage for our country's teachers, adequate learning materials, and an end to the 2% tax

Our economy is broken and we've had enough! We'll march with our pockets out because we are broke.

#HomwePanze

Find out more: +263776129336/775643192

FB Rural Teachers Union in Zimbabwe / Ruralteachers.co.zw

ARTUZ Leaders Arrested

7th JANUARY 2019

Nine participants in the Salary Camp have been arrested and are detailed at Harare Central. No charges have been preferred. The arrested Comrades are, Obert Masaraure, Robson Chere, Fortune Jamela, Regai Chinhuto, Gerald Tavengwa, Lawrence Mapengo, Andrew Munguri, Munyaradzi Ndawana and Christine Jubane.

Our Vice President and our negotiator Descent Bajila are locked in negotiations with employer.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT



ARTUZ SALARY CAMP, AFRICA UNITY SQUARE HARARE

Message from Comrade Robson Chere

7th JANUARY 2019

We have been released after spending 3 hours in Police Custody. However the Salary Camp will resume at 2 pm. Thanks to ZLHR [Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights], Comrade Doug Coltart and all for the Solidarity.

When junior police were sent to arrest ARTUZ members at the Salary Camp in Africa Unity Square, they refused for nearly an hour. There was no law being broken as according to Zimbabwean law, a registered trade union has the right to protest. In addition, some police were sympathetic to the teachers as they were encountering the same problems with their salaries. Lawyer Doug Coltart made it clear to the police that if the ARTUZ Comrades were not released, he would make an urgent application against the Zimbabwe Republic Police for Unlawful Arrest. They were then released.

In a speech made outside the Ministry of Finance, Comrade Robson Chere, Secretary-General of ARTUZ made it clear that their action was not for teachers alone but also for the interests of other government employees including the police, the army and the CIO.

YouTube links: <https://youtu.be/-ZdybbPpkOI> :

State Barricades ARTUZ Office

11th JANUARY 2019

The State has barricaded our national offices with a chain and a lock. We are still battling to gain access. Our banners, placards and other materials for protest are locked inside.

ARTUZ INFORMATION DEPARTMENT



GOVERNMENT THROWS OUT 1,000 RESETTLED FAMILIES FROM MASVINGO FARM. GIVES THEM 7 DAYS' NOTICE

10th JANUARY 2019

Report by Tatenda Chitagu of NewsDay



About 1,000 families from Sikato resettlement in Masvingo West constituency are facing an uncertain future after being served with seven-day eviction notices to vacate the land which they occupied at the height of the land reform programme in 2000.

The families, from seven villages; Muza, Chikutuva, Manunure, Makasva, Banga, Sithole and Marikutira, have been living at Mzaro Farm, which used to belong to a white former commercial farmer before it was parcelled out to the villagers.

Yesterday, armed police with officials from the Ministry of Local Government were serving the villagers with eviction notices.

But some of the villagers refused to sign them, resulting in village head Henry Makusha and a headman, Ratison Haruzivishe, being arrested for allegedly mobilising the villagers to resist. Masvingo provincial police spokesperson Inspector Charity Mazula said she had not yet been informed of the arrests.

Some of the dejected villagers said they regularised their stay with the Lands Ministry and were paying taxes to council, but were surprised to be told to leave the area.

No alternative place for resettlement or compensation has been offered by government.

The eviction order, dated 8th January 2019, but stamped on 13th November 2018 and signed by Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement Secretary Ringisai Chitsiko, read:

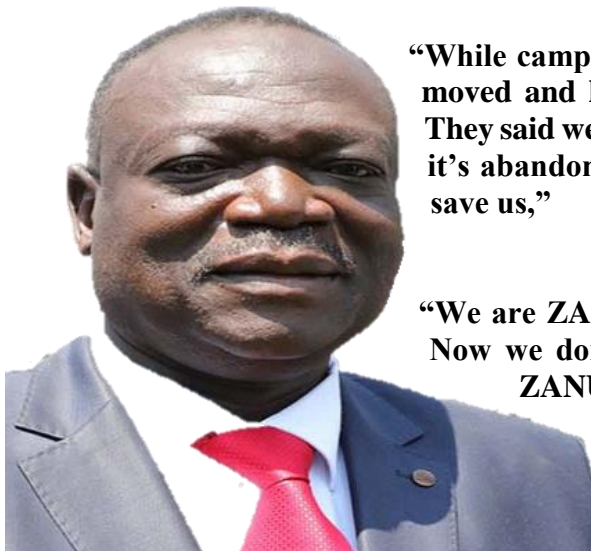
“You are hereby given seven days to vacate Mzaro Farm, Masvingo province. You are violating section 3 of the Gazetted Lands (Consequential Provisions) Act Chapter 20:28; Gazetted Land Act in that you are occupying the said property without lawful authority.”

“You are hereby given an eviction notice and notice to vacate the property on or before January 15, 2019. Failure to vacate on or before this date will result in your arrest and prosecution.”

Some of the affected villagers said their future at the farm had been used as a campaign tool by ZANU(PF), which promised them that they would not be moved if they voted for the ruling party. The constituency falls under Ezra Chadzamira, who is also Masvingo Provincial Affairs Minister.

“We have been here since 2000 and we built permanent structures. Now, from the blue, we are being told to leave. Where will we go? Where do we get the money to build again? This is unfair. We are not going anywhere because we don’t have anywhere to go. They can arrest us,”

a villager, Saviours Makusha, fumed. Another villager, Renson Dengu, said ZANU(PF) was now turning against them after they voted for it.



PERENCE SHIRI

“While campaigning, Chadzamira told us that we would not be moved and he gave us trees to plant as a reforestation drive. They said we should vote for ZANU(PF). Now the party won and it’s abandoning us. I think the President should intervene and save us,”

“We are ZANU(PF) people. Someone is fighting the President. Now we don’t know the difference between government and ZANU(PF). Those pushing for our eviction are enemies of the President, they want us to rise against the party,” Kundai Haruzivishe, a 60-year-old widow, said.

Continuous efforts to get hold of Chadzamira were in vain as his mobile phone was switched off. Minister of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement, Perence Shiri has, however, been flighting notices warning people on state land without paperwork to vacate.

MNANGAGWA ANNOUNCES MASSIVE FUEL PRICE HIKE

12th JANUARY 2019



President Mnangagwa announced that from midnight Sunday 13th January 2019 petrol prices would rise to \$3.31 from \$1.24 a litre and diesel prices to \$3.11 from \$1.36 a litre:

“Following the persistent shortfall in the fuel market attributable to increased fuel usage in the economy, and compounded by rampant illegal currency and fuel trading activities, government has today decided on the following corrective measures,”

Minister of Finance, Mthuli Ncube, had earlier in the week stated that prices in Zimbabwe were lower than other countries in the region and that some foreigners were taking advantage, buying fuel in bulk in Zimbabwe for resale in neighbouring countries.

The announcement came after fuel shortages which began in October 2018 worsened in recent weeks with motorists sometimes spending nights in queues at fuel pumps stretching for kilometres. Mnangagwa said foreign diplomats and tourists would get fuel at cheaper prices at certain designated points. The government also introduced measures to curb a parallel market where fuel was being sold at five times the official price.

Mnangagwa also stated that “certain elements bent on taking advantage of the current fuel shortages to cause and sponsor unrest and instability.”





Zimbabwe Communist Party
STATEMENT
FUEL PRICE INCREASE

13th JANUARY 2019

When Mnangagwa was inaugurated, there was some hope that there would be some opening-up of the economy — even if on a highly exploitative, neo-liberal basis.

We DID expect factories and other workplaces to open even if they were to pay starvation wages.

BUT the ZCP warned that the habits of the past within ZANU(PF) might not allow this to happen.

In the current circumstances and **under the constraints imposed by this administration**, Mnangagwa had little choice other than to raise fuel prices.

BUT — Why are these constraints still there?

Why do we still have the Bond Note?

Why is Trafigura allowed to maintain a monopoly over Zimbabwe's fuel importation?

In the last issue of the ZCP theoretical journal Vanguard published in November 2018 we examined both the options on the Bond Note and the fuel monopoly exerted by Trafigura, one of the world's most ruthless monopolies.

We concluded that highly placed officials in the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe and probably elsewhere in government had a vested interest in preserving the black market which is a natural consequence of officially maintaining the 1:1 parity of the Bond Note and the US Dollar.

We also concluded that through its Zimbabwean representative Kudakwashe Tagwirei, Trafigura has captured the state machinery of Zimbabwe. There also seems to be a link between Trafigura and the Reserve Bank.

Charges of “Régime Change Agenda” levelled at impoverished health practitioners and educators fighting for salaries sufficient to maintain themselves and their families are utterly ridiculous within this scenario.

Régime Change has already been implemented through Trafigura and its allies.

The Zimbabwe Communist Party demands:

Abolish the Bond Note !!

End the Trafigura Fuel Monopoly !!

The ZCP continues to call for National Economic Dialogue.

Issued by the ZCP Politburo



STATEMENT ON STAYAWAY BY THE ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS

13th JANUARY 2019

After wide consultations, the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) General Council resolved to call for a nation-wide STAYAWAY with effect from midnight today following the insensitive and provocative increase of fuel price by the President of Zimbabwe.

Workers have been facing serious hardships as a result of the general astronomical price increases since last year against stagnant salaries. The fuel increase added more misery to the suffering working class of Zimbabwe both in formal and informal sectors.

The action will be embarked on an incremental basis & include other forms of actions that will be advised in due. There is nothing else pushing the workers besides the starvation & hardships afflicting every working class household. Think about your family & do the right thing.

ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ZCTU)

ZCP MESSAGE

13th JANUARY 2019



The Zimbabwe Communist Party urges people to join the nation-wide protests tomorrow. But we should win over police and soldiers. They are our sons and daughters. They are fellow workers, not the enemy. Shops and vendors are not there to be looted. If you drink alcohol, do not drink when attending serious demonstrations. A better Zimbabwe starts with us.

THE SHUTDOWN OF ZIMBABWE

JANUARY 2019

The call for a three-day shutdown over inflationary price increases was not very different from earlier stayaways in Zimbabwe. But there were new factors which now came into play.

FIRSTLY: Zimbabwe now had a government brought into power through military intervention. It was very clear that there was tension between the civilian faction of government led by President Emmerson Mnangagwa and the military faction led by Vice-President Constantino Chiwenga.

SECONDLY: The MDC opposition challenged the electoral victory of Emmerson Mnangagwa (as the ZCP had earlier forecast) even proclaiming Nelson Chamisa to be the “true President”. The MDC had been founded by the ZCTU, but many MDC members had come to see the ZCTU as an appendage. The main interest of the MDC with its clearly right-wing neo-liberal policies, was not the plight of the workers but rather state power for the MDC under the leadership of Nelson Chamisa.

Organised looting began on the morning of Monday 14th January. Later reports confirmed that looting and violence was led both by MDC and ZANU(PF) youth in different parts of the country. Others looted simply because the opportunity was there and they had no food at home. This was met by unprecedented violence from the army and police which engaged in random beatings, a number of killings and rape. In some places, police and soldiers also engaged in looting. Within the first two days, government shut down the Internet and all social media, at first claiming “technical problems.”

Instead of a disciplined, organised protest which would have put pressure on government, there was leaderless rebellion without direction. The violence gave an excuse to the ruling-class to raid trade union offices and arrest leading trade unionists. The workers struggle became submerged in state run violence.

President Mnangagwa was out of the country from 14th-22nd January, flying in an expensive chartered jet from country to country searching for foreign investment. The immediate question is,

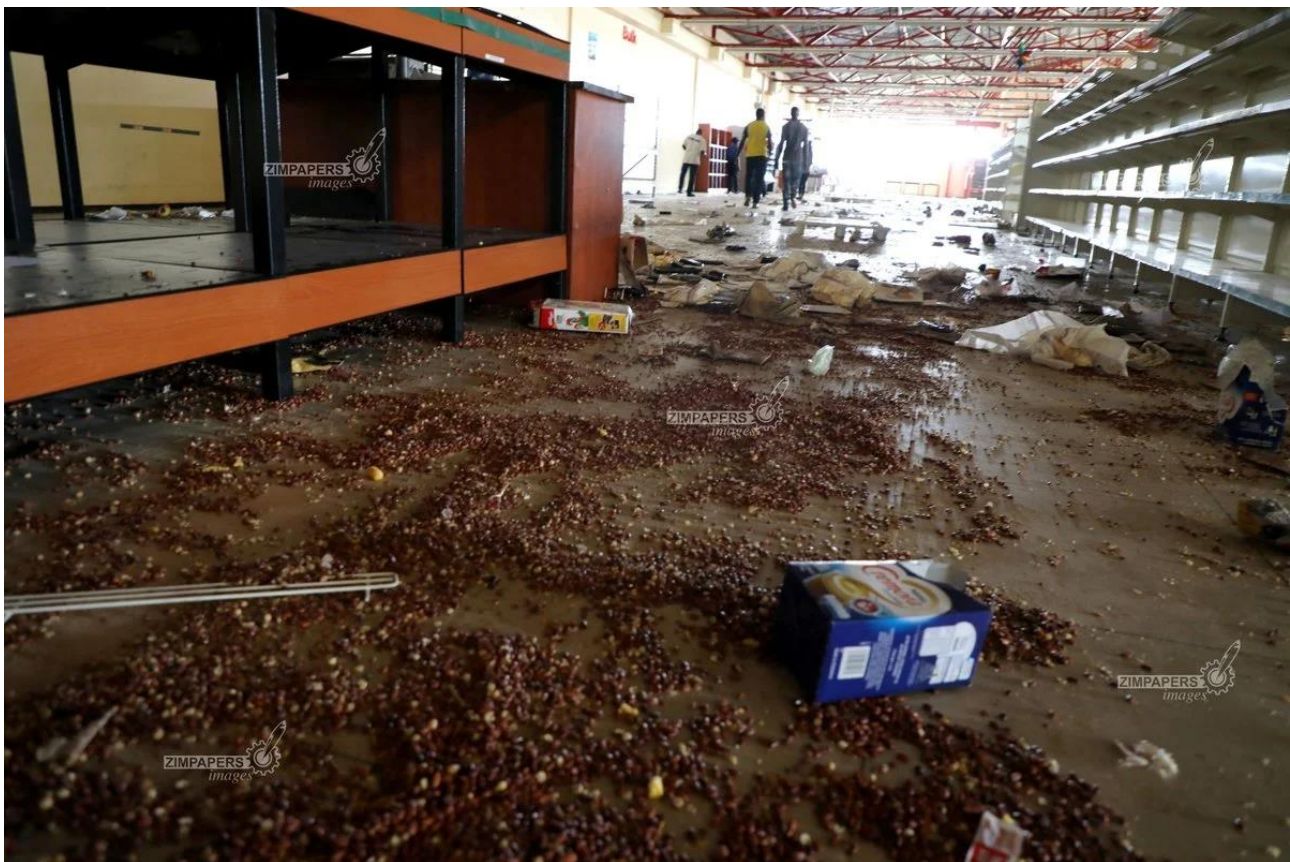
“How can you be looking for foreign investment when your country is in turmoil?”

Although it has been denied, there have been very strong reports of an attempt to obtain a two-thirds majority in Parliament to impeach President Mnangagwa during his absence through an agreement between the Chiwenga faction of ZANU(PF) and the MDC. That there may be substance in these assertions seems to be vindicated by the removal of four generals close to Chiwenga and their redeployment out of the country as diplomats.

The Zimbabwe Communist Party was the first to call for National Economic Dialogue, but this Dialogue MUST include the legitimate representatives of the working-class. At present, there are still ongoing court cases against Peter Mutasa, President of the ZCTU; Japhet Moyo, Secretary General of the ZCTU; Obert Masaraure, President of ARTUZ; Robson Chere, Secretary General of ARTUZ. There can be no Dialogue until these charges are dropped.



THE AFTERMATH OF LOOTING IN ZIMBABWE
ABOVE; SHOPS IN ENTUMBANE, BULAWAYO
BELOW: CHOPPIES, CHITUNGWIZA TOWN CENTRE



REPORT FROM: *MY ZIMBABWE*

by Muza Mpofu 4th FEBRUARY 2019

Chaos as armed soldiers descend on clinic treating army violence victims, doctors run for dear life:



Rights doctors were forced to abandon wounded victims of an army crackdown on civilians in the middle of treatment to run for dear life as armed soldiers stormed a private Harare medical facility to assault and drag patients accused of taking part in recent anti-government protests.

This is contained in a National Transitional Justice Working Group (NTJWG) report with shocking details of state brutality on those accused of taking part in the January skirmishes that rocked parts of the country following a government hike on fuel prices.

“Human rights doctors who have been treating the wounded are now in hiding as the state is hunting them down for treating victims of military and police brutality which has resulted in several deaths and injuries to civilians,” says the report. “Victims are not safe when receiving medical care. On 21st January 2019, the soldiers stormed a private medical facility where 28 victims of military brutality were receiving treatment and further assaulted and arrested them.”

NTJWG further said that leaders of civil society organisations were being hunted down and attacked in their homes while family members were being held as ransom to force the activists to surrender. “The situation warrants immediate intervention by the international community to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable,” said the group.

At least 12 civilians died through injuries related to shootings by security forces in January, according to NGOs, while dozens more were left hospitalised for bullet wounds. Rape incidents linked to the military have also been alleged.

Government has defended the deployment of the military to block what it claims was an overthrow attempt on the ZANU(PF) led administration by forces allegedly hiding behind genuine citizen demonstrations but has condemned army abuses.

THE ARREST OF TRADE UNIONISTS IN ZIMBABWE BROUGHT INTERNATIONAL REACTION FROM THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT



WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

Class oriented - uniting - democratic - modern – independent – internationalist!

Athens, 24th January 2019

Zimbabwe: WFTU strongly denounces the violence and arrests against protesters and trade unionists

The World Federation of Trade Unions, which is the militant voice of 95 million workers in 130 countries all over the world, extends its internationalist support and solidarity with the working class and the ordinary people of Zimbabwe, who are protesting over the last weeks against the price hikes in fuel and basic commodities.


We strongly condemn the violent repression against the protesters, the killings of several people by the police and the imprisonment of more than 200 protesters.

We denounce the arrest of Japhet Moyo, leader of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) and we demand his immediate release.

We urge the competent authorities of Zimbabwe to immediate release the arrested trade unionist Japhet Moyo, and all the detained protesters, to stop the repression and to respect the trade union liberties.

The Secretariat

**40, ZAN MOREAS STREET, ATHENS 11745 GREECE TEL. (+30) 2109214417, (+30) 2109236700, FAX (+30) 210 9214517
www.wftucentral.org E-MAILS : info@wftucentral.org, international@wftucentral.org M.B.**



COSATU

DEMONSTRATION
IN SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE
OF ZIMBABWE



"STOP THE ABDUCTION, DETENTION AND HARASSMENT OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS"

DATE: 06 FEBRUARY 2019
VENUE: BEIT BRIDGE BORDER GATE, MUSINA
TIME: 09H00 - 15H00

FOR MORE DETAILS KINDLY CONTACT
COSATU PROVINCIAL OFFICE @0152912981






Zimbabwe Solidarity Forum

And its partners

 stand in solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe and demand 

1. An end to all state sponsored violence
2. The release of all prisoners who have been denied bail
3. Stop internet shutdown
4. Have an inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders for a better Zimbabwe

The recent crackdown of innocent protestants and ordinary citizens in their houses by the military .Zimbabwe should be a cause of concern to the South African government as we fear this of military perpetuated violence by the state to its citizens might spill across to South Africa leading to Xenophobic actions.



NIGERIAN TRADE UNIONISTS STORM ZIMBABWE EMBASSY

Report from Pindula News



Nigerian workers belonging to the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) stormed the Zimbabwean Embassy in Abuja on Friday 1ST February 2019.

Reports from Nigeria indicate that the workers were demanding the immediate unconditional release of workers and labour leaders arrested during the ShutDownZim campaign.

President of the NLC, Ayuba Wabba warned that if the Zimbabwean authorities failed to release the ZCTU leaders, his organisation will mobilise workers across the world to shut down Zimbabwean embassies worldwide.

Wabba also asked the United Nations to invoke relevant international conventions to protect the right of workers in Zimbabwe. Said Wabba:

“...the protest is against what many Zimbabweans perceive as insensitive policy choices by the government of Zimbabwe. The Nigerian working class family is sad that what should have passed as a civil action in democratic climes was met with disproportionate use of force by the Zimbabwean military and security forces.

“The brazen show of force culminated into widespread suppression and violation of the fundamental human rights of ordinary Zimbabweans, who were exposed to an orgy of violence, bloodshed and acts of state cruelty.

“The NLC is particularly concerned about allegations of home raids, killings, rapes, robbery and physical assaults against workers, women, children and civilians generally, during the so-called crackdown of protests by the Zimbabwean security forces.”



BOTSWANA WORKERS WRITE TO MNANGAGWA CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF DETAINED ZCTU LEADERS

The Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU) on Monday revealed that it had written to President Emmerson Mnangagwa calling for the release of incarcerated Zimbabwe Congress of Unions leaders.

BFTU Secretary General Thusang Butale said they wrote to the government of Zimbabwe protesting against the arrest of workers exercising their rights. A copy of the letter was forwarded to the Zimbabwe Embassy in Botswana and the Geneva Human Rights office. Said Butale:

We urge the Zimbabwe government to restore a social climate that is free of violence and fear, to guarantee the safety of all protesters and to immediately and unconditionally release those arrested, including Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) General Secretary Japhet Moyo and President Peter Mutasa.

We call on the Botswana Government and SADC leaders to exert pressure on the Government of Zimbabwe.

Botswana is a direct neighbour of Zimbabwe and in keeping with our ideals and ethics, we cannot turn our backs against a neighbour in need.

ZCP REPLY TO OBERT MPOFU

Obert Mpfu appeared on ZTV attacking the “Communist Party of Zimbabwe” as a “terrorist organisation” and made a number of other comments which were either uninformed or deliberately untruthful.

30th JANUARY 2019



OBERT MPOFU

The Zimbabwe Communist Party (ZCP) thanks Comrade Obert Mpfu, ZANU(PF) Secretary for Administration for letting know those Zimbabweans who are unaware that we have a small but principled and resolute communist party in Zimbabwe.

But we need to correct a number of issues, for either the renowned Central Intelligence Organisation has failed in its job of supplying accurate information to the government and ruling party or Comrade Obert Mpfu is deliberately inventing and enunciating false information about us:

- 1) Our correct name is Zimbabwe Communist Party (ZCP), not Communist Party of Zimbabwe.
- 2) We are registered with the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, although we think that there are more important issues than elections.
- 3) The ZCP is interested primarily in advancing the class interests of the workers, the peasants and the poor.
- 4) The ZCP therefore follows the ideology which freed Zimbabwe from colonial rule, the ideology of Scientific Socialism commonly referred to as Marxism-Leninism. This ideology was abandoned in practice in 1980 and in principle in 1991 when government adopted the neo-liberal and neo-colonial Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP).
- 5) The ZCP is totally opposed to the sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe by the United States and its allies. Nevertheless we do not believe that sanctions are the only cause or even the main cause for the economic problems of Zimbabwe.
- 6) The ZCP is totally opposed to Zimbabwe re-joining the (British) Commonwealth. We believe in African Unity but are aware that this can never happen while African countries belong either to the Commonwealth or the French Community.
- 7) The ZCP is opposed to all US-inspired régime change agendas and is in solidarity with the people of Venezuela and the PSUV government led by Comrade Nicolas Maduro.
- 8) The ZCP is also in solidarity with the people of Palestine against Zionism and in line with the Palestinian Communist Party support the creation of a single, secular Palestinian state with religious freedom. We are therefore in favour of severance of all diplomatic and trade relations between the Republic of Zimbabwe and the State of Israel.
- 9) The ZCP will never support any imperialist régime change agenda.
- 10) The ZCP is in favour of all peaceful actions including the withdrawal of labour by our workers fighting for a living wage.
- 11) Prior to the coup, the ZCP called for a National Economic Dialogue involving all stakeholders. It is not clear whether or not the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe supports this idea or not. We have always been open to dialogue with all Zimbabwean political formations.

12) The ZCP while supporting peaceful protest is totally against both looting and any violent response by the state security forces. In this context the ZCP salutes the professionalism and fair-minded approach of the recent Motlanthe Commission. The ZCP is very far from being a terrorist organisation as Comrade Obert Mpofu states.

13) Finally, from the beginning the ZCP has consistently stated that there is a Dual Struggle in Zimbabwe. The national struggle against foreign domination on the one hand and the internal class struggle against the looting by the ruling élite, the parasitic black bourgeoisie, on the other. We believe that looting, personal wealth accumulation and incompetency has not only brought Zimbabwe to its knees but has opened the door for those with an imperialist régime-change agenda.

From the ZANU(PF) paranoia sheet *The Patriot* ***We publish this (without permission) for the amusement of our readers***

Unmasking a pseudo communist organisation **by Patience Murava** **January 31, 2019**

ON January 10 2019, *The Patriot* published a story titled ‘ARTUZ: Union or regime change outfit?’, questioning the activities and agenda of Amalgamated Rural Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ).

The story brought to the fore the dodgy characters behind the union and its links to Western regime change organisations.

Naturally, the story hit the wrong chords in the regime change circles.

So disturbed were the quislings that they responded in a three-paged letter full of vitriol. Surprisingly, it was not ARTUZ that responded, but a shadowy political party called Zimbabwe Communist Party (ZCP).

ZCP came out in full force in defence of ARTUZ in a 1 442 worded letter titled *In defence of the Amalgamated Rural Teachers’ Union of Zimbabwe*.

But after scrutinising ZCP, it became clear to this writer why ZCP responded in the manner it did, instead of ARTUZ.

Everything about the political ‘party’ is dubious; from its formation to its agenda.

Moreover, the Communist Party purports to be a Zimbabwean political party but is headquartered in Gauteng, SA.

Its leadership is composed of political misfits resurrected from the dustbins of other political parties.

ZCP is the brainchild of former ZAPU activist Ian Beddowes.

Upon realising that their prospects at their former political parties were not bright, Beddowes and Ngqabutho Mabhena joined shadowy organisations, Zimbabwe Communist League and Zimbabwe Communist Group and passed it as a political party.

ZCP was formed at an illegal meeting held at a secret location outside Bulawayo on April 28 2017.

The police had refused to grant permission for the founding conference to be held, citing it was not a registered grouping as stipulated by the country’s laws.

As a result, two of its founders, Beddowes and South African national Alex Mashilo, national spokesperson of the South African Communist Party, failed to attend the meeting.

The Communist Party is Zimbabwean only in name as most party meetings, if not all, are held in SA.

Its core-founders, Beddowes and Mabhena, are based in the neighbouring country south of the Limpopo.

The Communist Party will have its first party congress in December this year, likely to be held in South Africa.

Mabhena has used his position as chairperson of Zimbabwe Community Party in SA to garner membership from Zimbabwean immigrants in SA.

But the party has not received any meaningful membership.

The political leadership of the ZCP, the National Steering Committee, is comprised of general-secretary Ngqabutho Nicholas Mabhena, national chairperson Abednicco Sikhuni, treasurer Fabian Nkomo and national organising-secretary Trust Mazwi Mkwanzani.

Other committee members include deputy general-secretary Gift Mtisi, deputy national chairperson Loreen Ncube, secretary for Legal Affairs Benedict Mlalazi, secretary for Policy and Strategy Dr Samkele Hadebe, secretary for International Relations Benny Moyo and national commissar Ian Beddowes.

Dr Hadebe, a spent force, seems to be out of the party now as he was appointed the deputy secretary-general of the MDC-T led by Thokozani Khupe last year before elections.

But Beddowes and Mabhena make interesting reading.

Mabhena, based in SA, defected from the Welshman Ncube-led MDC where he was secretary for International Relations and External Structures while Beddowes is a former ZAPU activist.

He was ZAPU's SA secretary for the Council of Elders.

ZCP revel in the support of the British Communist Party, South African Communist Party, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and also belong to African Left Networking Forum.

Beddowes is the editor of the Zimbabwe Communist Publishers (ZIMCOM), a subsidiary of ZCP responsible for churning out propaganda.

Originally from Britain, Beddowes was recruited as an intelligence officer by the military wing of South Africa's ANC military wing uMkhonto weSizwe.

He first worked for ZAPU in London in 1985 before being deployed to Swaziland.

He later moved to Zimbabwe where he lived for the next 31 years

In 2015, an organisation called Oceanic Omnipresence Organisation (OOO) released report that Beddowes was recruiting youths from Matabeleland and sending them for training in SA.

"A recent OOO report has also intimated that the Mthwakazi group is busy training in South Africa and has so far graduated 10 youths from Matabeleland who were trained in communism, intelligence, guerrilla tactics and sabotage," reads the report in part.

This came against the background of five school-going children aged between 10 and 18 years from Emganwini and Nkulumane suburbs who mysteriously disappeared without a trace since February 2015.

The report claimed Beddowes was a field commander scouting for youths who were being trained in a conference room at a building close to a Nandos outlet in Braamfontein for a two-week course per cluster.

[Our emphasis, Editor. See my personal reply to this section at the end of the article.]

Beddowes has used his position at ZIMCOM publishers to write books such as *Philosophy and Class Struggle* and *Principles of Communist Organisation* and influences other writers to attack the Zimbabwean Government.

In addition, this party, which seems to have its main roots in SA, has superfluous issues.

With no party structures, ZCP lacks coherent strategies and ideology.

Despite having fly-by-night politicians like Dr Hadebe, it has a cocktail of political ideas, with most of its members being failed politicians.

In the July 30 2018 elections, Mabhena backed Dr Joice Mujuru for the presidency. “In the absence of Dr Tsvangirai, the opposition must unite under the leadership of Dr Mujuru,” he said then.

Ironically, Beddowes said his organisation had no intention of contesting in the elections, describing them as “...a contestation of individuals with no ideology and no vision.”

For Beddowes, the Communist Party was to work in alliance with ZAPU, in exactly the same way that the South African Communist Party (SACP) is aligned to the African National Congress (ANC).

“It is high time that Zimbabwe has a communist party and soon after the ZAPU congress, we will launch our political education groups, aimed at building the Zimbabwe Communist Party,” said Beddows.

But for Mabhena, the Communist Party was to be the vanguard of a united MDC.

He is on record saying he has always wanted to participate in the formation of the Zimbabwe Communist Party which would be aligned to a united MDC.

“Unfortunately our movement split in 2005 when some of our leaders were hijacked by white commercial farmers,” said Mabhena.

And that is precisely ZCP’s problem: The glamour of power, justified by a murky end goal in mind, has triumphed over sticking to their so-called ideology.

However, the Communist Party has been consistent in that it wants a Government of National Unity (GNU).

Since its inception, ZCP has been trying to force a second Government of National Unity with opposition political parties or to set up a transitional authority in what it terms ‘National Economic Dialogue’.

They hope to gain power by riding onto the coattails of trade unions and NGOs.

“The Zimbabwe Communist Party, maintains its call for the National Economic Dialogue. Our view as Communists is that if we are to resolve our immediate economic challenges, we must dialogue amongst ourselves. We cannot outsource the rebuilding of our economy to anyone other than us Zimbabweans. There are those calling for a Government of National Unity, if the National Economic Dialogue will produce such, we are likely to support it. Currently there is no single party that can claim to hold keys to persuade the international community to come to our aide as was the case in 2009 [and how did that work out?,” writes ZCP.

“...This National Economic Dialogue must be attended by the ruling party, the opposition parties, liberation movements from the SADC region, trade unions, informal sector organisations, progressive civil society organisations, faith based organisations, rural based formations, youth and women formations...”

This is not surprising at all.

They have aligned themselves to a teachers’ union, ARTUZ, even getting arrested with them.

This week they gave a statement that national dialogue can only begin when the Government releases, without charge, the leaders of the trade unions who led the recent violent demonstrations that rocked the country.

Lastly, unlike ZANU(PF) — or MDC for that matter, the ZCP has a very strong ideology which I would be very willing to teach to

“The ZCP has long been ready and willing for engagement on the rebuilding of the economy. In fact, we were the first to call for a national economic dialogue.

“...Free Obert Masaraure. Free Robson Chere. Free all trade union leaders. Free all political prisoners. No dialogue without the workers,” said Mabhena.

They believe that by getting onto the trade unions and workers’ forum, the party would have a better shot at power.

Sadly, organisations such as South African Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU have been hoodwinked and don’t see ZCP for what it is, a party full of pseudo communists.

And ZCP should understand that as long as they and their partners ARTUZ continue to push for the removal of a democratically elected Government at the behest of their Western handlers, they will be identified for who they are — Western puppets serving the regime change agenda.

And people like Beddowes and Mabhena are no heroes but latest recruits joining a long list of quislings eager to sell their souls for a few pieces of silver.

Reply to the allegations of the Oceanic Omnipresence Organisation (OOO)

by Ian Beddowes

Oceanic Omnipresence Organisation? — Really Patience Murava! Which second rate spy novel did you find this name in!

I remember this report coming out in 2015 from some mentally disturbed ZANU(PF) businessman — one of the ‘indigenous’ I am sure. That stratum which has done so much to improve our economy!

Yes, together with Andrew Nyathi I conducted political education for ZAPU members. We discussed history, political economy, philosophy and the practical running of a political organisation. There was certainly no one under 20 years old and the majority were over 30 at least. And how could we conduct weapons training in an office block in the centre of Johannesburg!

As to disappearing schoolchildren, the first I heard of it was in this article by Patience Murava!

And here I must ditch my amusement for a little more serious comment. I have never been a supporter of separatism for Matabeleland or any other part of Zimbabwe. Those who know me know that I am utterly opposed to the Mthwakazi idea or to any other ideas of ethnic superiority or inferiority — let alone teach the arts of war to such people.

If you do not agree with my ideas, tell me what you do not like. Do not make up things from the top of your head then attack me for something I have never supported!

Lastly, our ideology is very clear and highly developed. It is the ideology of Marxism-Leninism adapted to the conditions of the African continent in general and of Zimbabwe in particular. I am inviting you, Patience Murava, to know more about the ideology which guided the liberation of Zimbabwe.

REPLY TO PATIENCE MURAVA IN *THE PATRIOT* by Samukele Hadebe



The Patriot, 31st January 2019, carried an article titled “Unmasking a pseudo-communist organisation,” although obviously there was no unmasking to do, instead it degenerated to slanderous personal attacks to comrades Ngqabutho Mabhena (General Secretary), Ian Beddowes (National Commissar) and myself.

Apparently, its author, Patience Murava, was peeved by the Zimbabwe Communist Party’s expression of a deserved fraternal solidarity with the Amalgamated Rural Teachers’ Union of Zimbabwe (ARTUZ). I need not belabour on the credentials of ZCP as the article itself failed dismally to paint the Party as anything other than what its members purport it to be. Indeed, it is disheartening to observe that the writer, herself a worker, could be so hostile to her fellow workers that include members of ARTUZ. However, she should understand better the agony of class betrayal, not to mention the abuse by depraved bosses to earn a job.

Ironically, Patience Murava describes ZCP as “a shadowy organization” with “dodgy characters” and in the very same article cites her source as Oceanic Omnipresence Organization! If indeed her target audience are Zimbabweans then she must have overlooked the high risk of exposing her paymasters who perfectly fit those descriptions. One wonders whether the ruling party’s premier propaganda mouthpiece has run out of ideas, just like the party itself.

In the absence of ideas there is this resort to bastardized ethnic chauvinism disguised as nationalism. But even from that vantage of exhausted nationalism the centre cannot hold anymore. One really wonders whether it was the dutiful defence of ARTUZ that provoked the rancorous counter-attack or the sin by communists was to refute ZANU(PF)’s tired chorus of labelling as “western stooges” whoever it wants to harass, arrest and torture even for asking for a salary increase.

It is a pity that régime intellectuals have to defend even the indefensible!

For the record, on 11th January 2019, ZCP merely repeated the known links between the imperialist Capricorn Africa Society, led by the mercenary David Stirling and the founding luminaries of ZANU. In 1963, at the behest of the enemy they split and weakened the national liberation movement. Actually, it is not ZCP, but the American envoy, Andrew Young, who linked ZANU(PF)’s 1980 victory to a Western victory against communist Russia. Notably, ZANU(PF) has neither disputed these alleged traitorous links with imperialist forces nor has it denied its self-serving relations with the Apartheid security apparatus.

Well, its embrace of ex-Rhodesian CIO murderers is known by all and the Zimbabwean government’s continued use of those criminals to maim and torture ex-freedom fighters in a free Zimbabwe remains a fact of history.

Surely, it is the politically naïve who still buy into ZANU(PF)’s ultra-leftist pretensions with its racist overtones cloaked as Pan-Africanism. Patience Murava and her handlers know this very well. If indeed, the intention on attacking the persona of Comrade Beddowes as “the brains” behind ZCP, then why link him only to ZAPU and conveniently omit that he was a bona fide member of ZANU PF?

Is it selective amnesia or just an instinctive hatred of ZAPU for its association with communists?

Instead, the writer resorts to the usual racial and ethnic innuendos and deviously associate Comrade Beddowes with Mthwakazi activists; in a reckless attempt to fan tribal animosity.

Peace-loving Zimbabweans, having witnessed the senseless bloodbath stocked by this same misguided ethnic chauvinism, can easily see through this unpatriotic fascist attempt at divide and conqueror tactics. Our very independence, earned through the blood and sweat of the workers and peasants, has become hollow to the majority who not only eke out an existence under extreme poverty but also under intense fear of their own government. It is a pity that the Zimbabwean state has reduced itself to a complicit partner with capital in its exploitative relations with the poorly paid workers and the suffering majority.

Those among us who profess Marxism-Leninism have never claimed to know it all, hence our incessant calls for a National Economic Dialogue by stakeholders to map a way out of this economic quagmire. We are trapped in this cesspit of poverty, courtesy to the insatiable greed, debauchery and avarice by of our parasitic capitalist rulers masquerading as Patriots! It is nauseatingly repulsive to play the exhausted “régime change” card after siphoning dry the country’s wealth and stashing it in havens controlled by the same western imperialists you pretend are against you.

What a shame for soiling the dignity and image of Africans!

In future, Patience Murava should be advised to do a better job than this claptrap which neither serves the interests of her handlers nor inform readers. For one to go personal when facts are against them is puerile. The workers know very well who has impoverished them. This misguided anti-worker posture by the ruling cabal can only worsen Zimbabwe's economic paralysis; while inadvertently digging their own political grave.



Zimbabwe Communist Party

**PRESIDENT MNANGAGWA'S
CALL FOR DIALOGUE**

6th FEBRUARY 2019

The ZCP notes with interest the call by President E.D. Mnangagwa for a dialogue for all 23 presidential candidates who stood at the 2018 election together with their advisers.

As an increasing number of people are beginning to realise, the ZCP was the first political organisation in Zimbabwe to call for a National Economic Dialogue. But a meeting of mostly nebulous political formations all of which think that the only way forward is through “Foreign Direct Investment” is no dialogue at all.

So what is missing?

What is missing is the input of organised labour whose best representatives are on bail awaiting trial.

The ZCP has stated repeatedly that when dialogue is only about discussions between the various representatives of capital, in real terms, there is no dialogue at all.

It is the workers, working on the products of nature who produces wealth, but in Zimbabwe it is the working-class which has been made to suffer as a result of ostentatious wealth accumulation by the élite. In fact, most of the skilled workforce has been effectively deported from our country through the refusal of the parasitic bourgeoisie to pay a living wage.

Let us be clear. The ZCP is not demanding to be part of the dialogue, although we are always open for discussion with all Zimbabwean organisations or individuals.

No. What we are demanding is:

Firstly, the dropping of charges against all trade unionists arrested in the recent onslaught against the working-class and the poor.

Secondly, the inclusion of the leadership of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and of the most strategic individual unions in that dialogue.

If that happens, then the National Economic Dialogue can begin.

From the: **Secretariat of the Zimbabwe Communist Party**

BATTLEFIELDS MINE DISASTER

Dozens of artisanal miners feared dead in Zimbabwe after flooding

Report from News24 14th FEBRUARY 2019

Thirty-eight artisanal miners are feared dead following flooding of shafts at two mines in Battlefields near Kadoma.

The flooding, caused by heavy rains, led to the collapse of a dam wall at around 23:00 on Tuesday, leaving 34 miners trapped underground at Silver Moon Mine and another four at the Cricket Mine,

Police spokesperson Inspector Clemence Mabweazara said that civil protection teams have been tasked with draining water from the mines with heavy duty pumps, adding that the water levels in the two mines are still on the rise, further perpetuating fears of underground drownings.

According to an earlier report, the underground shafts near Kadoma are said to be 30 metres deep and rich in gold.

Mashonaland West Provincial Administrator Cecilia Chitiyo confirmed the incident and emphasised the need for pumps in order for search and rescue operations to take place.

“We urgently need to mobilise more pumps. As many as we can because the water levels are continuously rising from beneath and we are not sure if the miners had reached an aquifer below,”

Mhondoro-Ngezi District Administrator Fortunate Muzulu stated that the names of 23 trapped miners are known — 19 of them are reportedly trapped at the RioZim-owned mine while another four are at the other mine.

Illegal mining has become rampant in Zimbabwe, and groups of men, women and children using picks, shovels and hoes are a common sight in the country’s mineral-rich fields. There are no safety standards and regulations for these artisanal miners.

Later reports indicated that of the 34 missing, only eight were rescued.



Zimbabwe Communist Party

STATEMENT ON

BATTLEFIELDS MINE DISASTER

15th FEBRUARY 2019

Firstly, the ZCP offers its condolences to all those who have lost loved ones at the Battlefields Mine Disaster and speedy recovery to those injured.

We salute the memories of those who died in the process of supporting themselves and their families through productive work.

We are intensely angry at the capitalist greed which ignores proper dam maintenance. And as much as we are shocked about this dam disaster, we are even more concerned at the potential collapse of the Kariba Dam which can create far more deaths, and destruction too of our biggest hydro-electric facility and a further degeneration of our economy.

With regard to 'illegal' mining. There is a pattern both in Zimbabwe and South Africa whereby mine-owners close mines because they do not want to pay proper wages or adhere to mine safety regulations. They therefore close mines but buy gold and other minerals from miners who, through the need for personal economic survival, still work those mines under very dangerous conditions.

Down with Capitalist Greed !!

Forward to Decent Work !!

Forward to Socialism !!

GOLD CAPITALISM AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN ZIMBABWE

On Friday 22nd February, Comrade Lenin Chisaira of People and Earth Solidarity Law Network (PES Lawyers), presented a paper in Harare on the Battlefields Mining Disaster under the title “Gold Capitalism and Disaster Preparedness in Zimbabwe: a Provisional Critical Report on the Battlefields Mine Disaster.”

Chisaira maintained:

“The role of large scale gold miners should be investigated for they are the ones who continue to retain these gold claims where many people have been killed, for instance RioZim owns over 200 claims in Mashonaland West which they cannot mine, at the end when they abandon these claims without applying for certificates of abandonment as required by the Mines and Minerals Act, artisanal miners and small scale minors make unauthorised entry,”

Comrade Chisaira called on the Government to provide adequate legal and environmental support systems to deal with the disasters and exploitation of artisanal miners and small scale miners by large scale mining entities and called on Government to look into the nature of property rights in the gold mining sector and ensure that disaster response systems are evaluated and adequately funded. He informed those present that the report had been forwarded to Government and relevant institutions and stakeholders in the gold mining sector and called for an inclusive, free and open inquiry into the Battlefields disaster.

Applauding the contribution of artisanal miners and small scale miners to the national gold output.

“Artisanal miners and small scale miners’ contribution to the national gold out should not be taken for granted, statistics show that three quarters of gold delivered to Fidelity is coming from them,”

Communists in Zimbabwe have long maintained that small-scale miners, instead of operating on the fringes of the law, should be both recognised and controlled. On the one hand, they should be assisted through the provision of access to better equipment, but on the other should be regulated in terms of land degradation and other problems associated with this form of mining.

In other cases, as we have said before, those who own these mines, instead of employing miners in a proper manner and providing proper employment benefits and providing safe working conditions, find it more profitable to close down the mines but buy gold from miners working in unsafe conditions without any formal employment.

There is a clear case for the nationalisation and socialisation of these abandoned gold mines under experienced and efficient management working in conjunction with the miners.

Lenin Tinashe Chisaira is the Founder and Director of People and Earth Solidarity Law Network (PES Lawyers). He holds an LLM (International Human Rights Law and Public Policy) with the University College Cork, Ireland; LLM (Economic Regulation) and PGCert in Environmental and Natural Resources Law (University of London); LLB Hons (University of Zimbabwe). He is also Deputy National Political Commissar of the Zimbabwe Communist Party

See Video: <https://youtu.be/8cdVMWFDtLs>



Venezuela, named the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela since 1999, is located on the northern coast of South America. The country comprises a continental mainland and numerous islands in the Caribbean Sea. It borders Guyana to the east, Brazil to the south, and Colombia to the west. Its Caribbean neighbours off the northern coast are Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the Leeward Antilles. Falling within the tropics, Venezuela is in the Northern Hemisphere close to the Equator,



Venezuela has an area of 912,000 km² [Zimbabwe 391,000 km²]
Venezuela has a population of 32 million [Zimbabwe 13 million]

BRIEF HISTORY OF VENEZUELA AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Venezuela was first colonised by Spain in 1522, it became part of the Viceroyalty of New Grenada. African slaves were introduced by the Spanish and the people are a mixture of indigenous Native Americans, Europeans (mainly Spanish) and Africans. President Hugo Chávez was proudly a mixture of all three. Generally, the oligarchs, the élite which control the economy and are opposed to the revolutionary nationalist government which has been in power since 1999 are of almost pure European ancestry.

Venezuela first gained its independence from Spain in 1811 under the leadership of Francisco de Miranda, but was unable to maintain it under pressure from Spanish troops. Finally, not only Venezuela but a number of other countries won their freedom under the leadership of Simón Bolívar known as “The Liberator” — hence the name Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Bolivar formed the federal republic of Gran Colombia which included modern-day Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Panama he also played a role in the liberation of Peru and Bolivia, a country named after him. Venezuela broke away in 1830 under José Antonio Páez who became its first president.

Venezuela has had a succession of dictatorships since its formation with occasional episodes of relative democracy.

During the First World War (1914-1918) oil was discovered in the region of Lake Maracaibo in the west of Venezuela. Currently, **Venezuela has the largest known oil deposits in the world**, the only problem is that it is heavy crude which is more difficult to process than light crude.

In 1998 Hugo Chávez as President of Venezuela. He assumed office at the beginning of 1999 upon which he instituted a huge programme of reforms designed to benefit the poor using the country's vast oil revenue. Under his leadership poverty was reduced by half, there was a massive literacy campaign and for the first time there was universal health care. These reforms were vigorously opposed by the oligarchs and by the US government. The following article by John Pilger describes the extent of the reforms and the extent of economic sabotage and the campaign of lies by the western media.

The United Socialist Party of Venezuela, PSUV, however failed to reform the economic base or to control the media which was and is under the control of the oligarchs. The Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) although in alliance with the PSUV has always been critical of its partner as is explained in the article by Pedro Eusse.

In 2002, Chávez was removed by a US backed coup, but a massive pouring on to the streets by the poor from the *barrios*, the hillside slums forced his return within 48 hours. The process was filmed by an Irish film crew which happened to be in Venezuela at the time and was made into a powerful documentary, “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised”. This can be viewed on YouTube.

<https://youtu.be/Id--ZFtjR5c>

Chávez died of cancer in 2013. There is overwhelming evidence that his death was due to poisoning with a cancer-inducing substance as happened with Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat.

Hugo Chávez was succeeded by Nicolás Maduro. By this time economic sabotage by the United States had begun to bite. In the 2018 election, Maduro was returned to power with 67.8% of the vote in an election closely monitored by foreign election monitors and declared “Free and fair”. This did not prevent the USA and its allies from not only challenging the election results but in trying to impose their own “Interim President”, the almost unknown Juan Guaidó. At the time of writing Guaidó is believed to be in neighbouring Colombia.

Huge anti-government protests in Venezuela have been met by even bigger demonstrations by government supporters..

We are waiting to see if the USA will stage an invasion to steal Venezuela's oil as it did with Iraq and Libya.

THE WAR ON VENEZUELA IS BUILT ON LIES

by John Pilger

John Pilger is an Australian based in Britain, he has won numerous awards and is one of the world's most prestigious journalists.

Travelling with Hugo Chávez, I soon understood the threat of Venezuela. At a farming co-operative in Lara state, people waited patiently and with good humour in the heat. Jugs of water and melon juice were passed around. A guitar was played; a woman, Katarina, stood and sang with a husky contralto.



HUGO CHAVEZ WITH JOHN PILGER

“What did her words say?” I asked.

“That we are proud,” was the reply.

The applause for her merged with the arrival of Chávez. Under one arm he carried a satchel bursting with books. He wore his big red shirt and greeted people by name, stopping to listen. What struck me was his capacity to listen.

But now he read. For almost two hours he read into the microphone from the stack of books beside him: Orwell, Dickens, Tolstoy, Zola, Hemingway, Chomsky, Neruda: a page here, a line or two there. People clapped and whistled as he moved from author to author.

Then farmers took the microphone and told him what they knew, and what they needed; one ancient face, carved it seemed from a nearby banyan, made a long, critical speech on the subject of irrigation; Chavez took notes.

Wine is grown here, a dark Syrah type grape. “John, John, come up here,” said *El Presidente*, having watched me fall asleep in the heat and the depths of *Oliver Twist*.

“He likes red wine,” Chávez told the cheering, whistling audience, and presented me with a bottle of “vino de la gente”. My few words in bad Spanish brought whistles and laughter.

Watching Chavez with *la gente* made sense of a man who promised, on coming to power, that his every move would be subject to the will of the people. In eight years, Chavez won eight elections and referendums: a world record. He was electorally the most popular head of state in the Western Hemisphere, probably in the world.

Every major *chavista* reform was voted on, notably a new constitution of which 71 per cent of the people approved each of the 396 articles that enshrined unheard of freedoms, such as Article 123, which for the first time recognised the human rights of mixed-race and black people, of whom Chavez was one.

One of his tutorials on the road quoted a feminist writer: “Love and solidarity are the same.” His audiences understood this well and expressed themselves with dignity, seldom with deference. Ordinary people regarded Chávez and his government as their first champions: as *theirs*.

This was especially true of the indigenous, mestizos and Afro-Venezuelans, who had been held in historic contempt by Chávez’s immediate predecessors and by those who today live far from the barrios, in the mansions and penthouses of East Caracas, who commute to Miami where their banks are and who regard themselves as “white”. They are the powerful core of what the media calls “the opposition”.

When I met this class, in suburbs called Country Club, in homes appointed with low chandeliers and bad portraits, I recognised them. They could be white South Africans, the *petite bourgeoisie* of Constantia and Sandton, pillars of the cruelties of *apartheid*.

Cartoonists in the Venezuelan press, most of which are owned by an oligarchy and oppose the government, portrayed Chávez as an ape. A radio host referred to “the monkey”. In the private universities, the verbal currency of the children of the well-off is often racist abuse of those whose shacks are just visible through the pollution.

Although identity politics are all the rage in the pages of liberal newspapers in the West, race and class are two words almost never uttered in the mendacious ‘coverage’ of Washington’s latest, most naked attempt to grab the world’s greatest source of oil and reclaim its ‘backyard’.

For all the chavistas’ faults — such as allowing the Venezuelan economy to become hostage to the fortunes of oil and never seriously challenging big capital and corruption — they brought social justice and pride to millions of people and they did it with unprecedented democracy.

“Of the 92 elections that we’ve monitored,” said former President Jimmy Carter, whose Carter Centre is a respected monitor of elections around the world, “I would say the election process in Venezuela is the best in the world. By way of contrast,” said Carter, “the US election system,” with its emphasis on campaign money, “is one of the worst”.

In extending the franchise to a parallel people’s state of communal authority, based in the poorest barrios, Chávez described Venezuelan democracy as “our version of Rousseau’s idea of popular sovereignty”.

In Barrio La Linea, seated in her tiny kitchen, Beatrice Balazo told me her children were the first generation of the poor to attend a full day’s school and be given a hot meal and to learn music, art and dance. “I have seen their confidence blossom like flowers,” she said.

In Barrio La Vega, I listened to a nurse, Mariella Machado, a black woman of 45 with a wicked laugh, address an urban land council on subjects ranging from homelessness to illegal war. That day, they were launching *Mision Madres de Barrio*, a programme aimed at poverty among single mothers. Under the constitution, women have the right to be paid as carers, and can borrow from a special women’s bank. Now the poorest housewives get the equivalent of \$200 a month.

In a room lit by a single fluorescent tube, I met Ana Lucia Fernandez, aged 86, and Mavis Mendez, aged 95. A mere 33-year-old, Sonia Alvarez, had come with her two children. Once, none of them could read and write; now they were studying mathematics. For the first time in its history, Venezuela has almost 100 per cent literacy.

This is the work of *Mision Robinson*, which was designed for adults and teenagers previously denied an education because of poverty. *Mision Ribas* gives everyone the opportunity of a secondary education, called a *bachillerato*. (The names Robinson and Ribas refer to Venezuelan independence leaders from the 19th century).

In her 95 years, Mavis Mendez had seen a parade of governments, mostly vassals of Washington, preside over the theft of billions of dollars in oil spoils, much of it flown to Miami. “We didn’t matter in a human sense,” she told me. “We lived and died without real education and running water, and food we couldn’t afford. When we fell ill, the weakest died. Now I can read and write my name and so much more; and whatever the rich and the media say, we have planted the seeds of true democracy and I have the joy of seeing it happen.”

In 2002, during a Washington-backed coup, Mavis’s sons and daughters and grandchildren and great-grandchildren joined hundreds of thousands who swept down from the barrios on the hillsides and demanded the army remained loyal to Chávez.

“The people rescued me,” Chávez told me. “They did it with the media against me, preventing even the basic facts of what happened. For popular democracy in heroic action, I suggest you look no further.”

Since Chávez's death in 2013, his successor Nicolas Maduro has shed his derisory label in the Western press as a "former bus driver" and become Saddam Hussein incarnate. His media abuse is ridiculous. On his watch, the slide in the price of oil has caused hyper-inflation and played havoc with prices in a society that imports almost all its food; yet, as the journalist and film-maker Pablo Navarrete reported this week, Venezuela is not the catastrophe it has been painted.

"There is food everywhere," he wrote. "I have filmed lots of videos of food in markets [all over Caracas]... it's Friday night and the restaurants are full."

In 2018, Maduro was re-elected President. A section of the opposition boycotted the election, a tactic tried against Chávez. The boycott failed: 9,389,056 people voted; sixteen parties participated and six candidates stood for the presidency. Maduro won 6,248,864 votes, or 67.84 per cent.

On election day, I spoke to one of the 150 foreign election observers.

"It was entirely fair," he said. "There was no fraud; none of the lurid media claims stood up. Zero. Amazing really."

Like a page from Alice's tea party, the Trump administration has presented Juan Guaido, a pop-up creation of the CIA-front National Endowment for Democracy, as the "legitimate President of Venezuela". Unheard of by 81 per cent of the Venezuelan people, according to *The Nation*, Guaido has been elected by no one.

Maduro is 'illegitimate', says Trump (who won the US presidency with three million fewer votes than his opponent), a 'dictator', says demonstrably unhinged Vice-President Mike Pence and an oil trophy-in-waiting, says "national security" adviser John Bolton (who when I interviewed him in 2003 said, "Hey, are you a communist, maybe even Labour?").

As his "special envoy to Venezuela" (coup master), Trump has appointed a convicted felon, Elliot Abrams, whose intrigues in the service of Presidents Reagan and George W. Bush helped produce the Iran-Contra scandal in the 1980s and plunge central America into years of blood-soaked misery.

Putting Lewis Carroll aside, these 'crazies' belong in newsreels from the 1930s. And yet their lies about Venezuela have been taken up with enthusiasm by those paid to keep the record straight.

On Channel 4 News, Jon Snow bellowed at the Labour MP Chris Williamson,

"Look, you and Mr. Corbyn are in a very nasty corner [on Venezuela]!"

When Williamson tried to explain why threatening a sovereign country was wrong, Snow cut him off. "You've had a good go!"

In 2006, Channel 4 News effectively accused Chávez of plotting to make nuclear weapons with Iran: a fantasy. The then Washington correspondent, Jonathan Rugman, allowed a war criminal, Donald Rumsfeld, to liken Chávez to Hitler, unchallenged.

Researchers at the University of the West of England studied the BBC's reporting of Venezuela over a ten-year period. They looked at 304 reports and found that only three of these referred to any of the positive policies of the government. For the BBC, Venezuela's democratic record, human rights legislation, food programmes, healthcare initiatives and poverty reduction did not happen. The greatest literacy programme in human history did not happen, just as the millions who march in support of Maduro and in memory of Chávez, do not exist.

When asked why she filmed only an opposition march, the BBC reporter Orla Guerin tweeted that it was "too difficult" to be on two marches in one day.

A war has been declared on Venezuela, of which the truth is "too difficult" to report.

It is too difficult to report the collapse of oil prices since 2014 as largely the result of criminal machinations by Wall Street. It is too difficult to report the blocking of Venezuela's access to the US-dominated international financial system as sabotage. It is too difficult to report Washington's 'sanctions' against Venezuela, which have caused the loss of at least \$6 billion in Venezuela's revenue since 2017, including \$2 billion worth of imported medicines, as illegal, or the Bank of England's refusal to return Venezuela's gold reserves as an act of piracy.

The former United Nations Rapporteur, Alfred de Zayas, has likened this to a "medieval siege" designed "to bring countries to their knees".

It is a criminal assault, he says. It is similar to that faced by Salvador Allende in 1970 when President Richard Nixon and his equivalent of John Bolton, Henry Kissinger, set out to "make the economy [of Chile] scream". The long dark night of Pinochet followed.

The *Guardian* correspondent, Tom Phillips, has tweeted a picture of a cap on which the words in Spanish mean in local slang: "Make Venezuela fucking cool again." The reporter as clown may be the final stage of much of mainstream journalist's degeneration.

Should the CIA stooge Guaidó and his white supremacists grab power, it will be the 68th overthrow of a sovereign government by the United States, most of them democracies. A fire sale of Venezuela's utilities and mineral wealth will surely follow, along with the theft of the country's oil, as outlined by John Bolton.

Under the last Washington-controlled government in Caracas, poverty reached historic proportions. There was no healthcare for those could not pay. There was no universal education; Mavis Mendez, and millions like her, could not read or write.

How cool is that, Tom?



JUAN GUIADO, "PRESIDENT" OF VENEZUELA

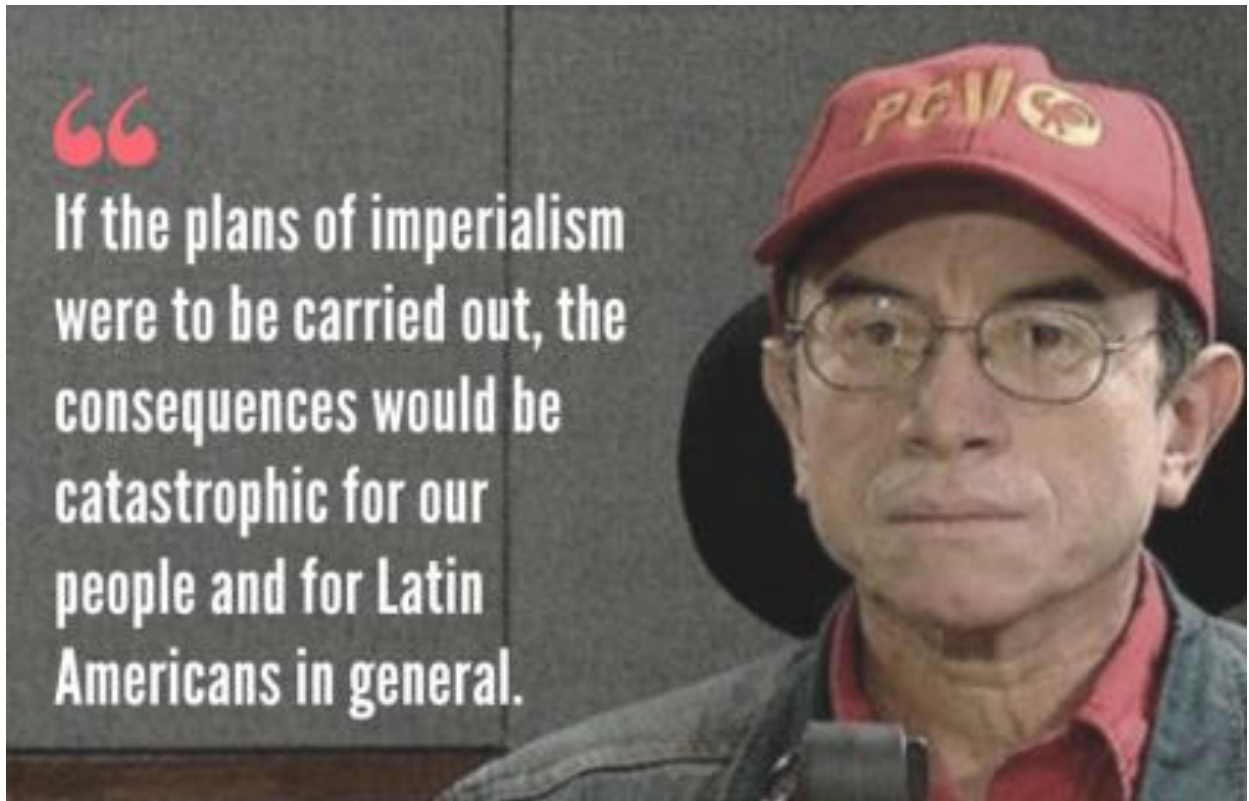
ELECTED BY DONALD TRUMP



NICOLAS MADURO, PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA

ELECTED BY THE VENEZUELAN PEOPLE

THE ROLE OF THE WORKING-CLASS IN VENEZUELA'S CRISIS: AN INTERVIEW WITH PEDRO EUSSE



by Pedro Eusse and Cira Pascual Marquina — *Venezuelanalysis* 10th SEPTEMBER 2018

Pedro Eusse joined the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) in 1979 at the age of 17, when he was working in a chicken factory. Currently, he is a member of the political bureau of the party, where he coordinates worker and trade union issues. Eusse is also the General Co-ordinator of the “Cruz Villegas” Class-conscious Current of Workers and of the trade union confederation the National Front of Struggle of the Working Class (FNLCT).

In this interview with Venezuelanalysis, we asked him about the situation of the working class in Venezuela, how it might contribute to overcoming the current crisis, and the PCV’s expectations concerning the economic measures recently announced by President Maduro.

In Venezuela today — with the economic crisis and its many dimensions, including inflation and emigration — what is the importance of the workers’ struggle? Beyond the standard discourse about producing more, what solutions can the working class offer? How can workers help us with a situation in which the socialist project seems to be falling out of view?

For the PCV, the working-class’s most important task now is to defend the country against the heightening aggression of the international Right led by US imperialism, with its economic, political, communicational and diplomatic blockade, and the threat of a military attack against our people. If the plans of imperialism and its lackeys against our country were to be carried out, the consequences would be catastrophic for our people and for Latin Americans in general.

The interests of US monopolies would be imposed, with great loss of life. National sovereignty, territorial integrity, peace, the achievements of the Venezuelan people — although precarious at present — would all be at risk, even the very existence of Venezuela as a nation state is at stake. Workers' struggles that are focused on particular economic and social demands would basically make no sense, if the US and its puppet governments were to wage war against Venezuela and impose a neoliberal, pro-imperialist government.

From our perspective, the most important contribution the working-class can make is to accumulate forces — and do so with independence and class autonomy — with the aim of leading a broad patriotic and anti-imperialist front. We cannot talk about “the socialist horizon falling out of view,” because up until now there has not yet been a “socialist horizon” in Venezuela. It's one thing if the reformist petty bourgeoisie talks about socialism and another thing altogether if the conditions are there to build it.

For us, the first step towards socialism is achieving a favourable correlation of forces so that the working-class and working people can come to power in Venezuela, and that does not yet exist. We must create such a correlation of forces, but first we have to defeat the pretensions of imperialism and its extreme-right lackeys. Of course, we should recognise that it's not because Venezuela has a socialist revolution that the US and its satellite governments attack us. No, a socialist revolution isn't in process here. What we have is dependent rentier capitalism. The real reason they attack us is because the US needs to regain full control of the strategic resources of this country and consolidate its dominance in Latin America, in the context of a dispute over world hegemony that is taking place between US and European imperialism and the bloc of emerging powers, led by China and Russia.

What do you think will be the short-term and long-term impact of the new economic measures (including the monetary reconversion, the anchoring of the Sovereign Bolivar to the Petro, and the new minimum wage) on purchasing power of the Venezuelans?

As far as the Venezuelan government's recent economic measures are concerned, we are not deluding ourselves: they are fiscal, monetary and currency exchange measures that do not impact the structural causes of the crisis. In other words, they are reformist measures. Of course, some of these reforms, such as the minimum wage hike, are positive but very insufficient. The PCV and the National Front of Struggle of the Working-Class (FNLCT)[1] have said the following: “Adopting the new minimum wage and transforming workers' income into salary[2] — permanent demands of the PCV and the class conscious trade unions — are positive but insufficient steps in the face of the high cost of living due to inflation.

Moreover, the prices set by agreement between the government and bourgeois groups (even monopolistic ones) without the participation of the workforce or the people, turn out to be very high for Venezuelans.

For this reason, we continue to propose a policy of raising the force of labour's value and establishing, on the basis of the new minimum wage, a sliding scale of salaries that would reference the consumer price index of goods and services that constitute Venezuela's basic goods basket[3], in compliance with the Constitution's Article 91. This, in turn, would oblige Venezuela's Central Bank to fulfill its constitutional mandate to regularly publish the consumer price indexes. At the same time, we need to establish an institutional and social system for controlling costs, prices and profits, in which workers, organised communities, and the people in general would participate in a binding way.

A new form of social protest has emerged in recent months. Instead of the violent protests against the government (like the 2014 and 2017 guarimbas[4]) now there are often popular mobilisations that aim at pushing the government toward positions that would favour workers and campesinos over employers and landlords.

Most notable are the electrical worker's strike, the nurses' strike, the pensioners' protest, and the Admirable Campesino March. Interestingly, however, it seems to be the struggles of peasant and rural communities that are most successful in going beyond mere grievances to present a political vision and form spaces of resistance. How do you explain this? Why does the epicentre of the revolution now seem to be in the rural areas?

The first thing is that the violent actions of the Right in 2014 and 2017, which were identified as 'guarimbas', should not be confused or compared with the legitimate struggles and mobilisations of the workers, peasants and the popular movement. Additionally, it is very important that the working people mobilise in defence of their rights and that they also transcend immediate economic objectives. Of course, there are sectors of the peasantry and some rural communes that are carrying out interesting struggles against landlords (old and new members of that class) and against the bureaucrats who are in league with them.

The campesino struggle, which is on the rise, is defending the progressive achievements made by what is known as the Bolivarian Revolution, particularly those made during the administration of President Chavez. It has also raised some even bigger goals in terms of overcoming agribusiness and obtaining sovereignty in the face of the transnationals that control agricultural inputs. That is what was proposed by the "Nicomedes Abreu" Class Conscious Peasant Current (under PCV leadership), which, together with the Peasants Struggle Platform, organised the Admirable March.

But this kind of struggle that develops and takes shape on a path of national and social liberation needs to unite with the struggles of the working-class, where there are forces that fight not only for immediate economic and social objectives. We are really enthusiastic about the campesino struggle's advances, because in a country where agricultural production has fallen, exacerbating our dependence on imports (and now with a lack of foreign currency and also blockaded by imperialism), what genuine rural producers can achieve is of strategic importance.

The PCV signed a document with President Maduro as a preliminary to supporting his candidacy in the May 20 elections. Briefly, what is the nature of that document and, more importantly, what is the current status of the agreement?

The Unitary Framework Agreement signed between the national leaderships of the United Socialist Party (PSUV) and the PCV, at the suggestion of our party [PCV], expresses programmatic aspects of an alliance between the communists and those who are socialists. It took shape in the context of a need to confront the crisis of capitalism and (locally) the collapse of our dependent and rentier system. Unfortunately, the dominant tendencies in the government and in the leadership of the PSUV have opted for a reformism that is conciliatory with capital and are moving away from revolutionary and progressive positions.

Thus, we need to recognise that the government has not adhered to the Unitary Framework Agreement's content. For example, it has not reinstated workers illegally dismissed from the public and private sector, which was a commitment publicly taken on by President Maduro himself. Likewise, the government has allowed many state companies to deteriorate, and everything points to this being a strategy to privatise many of those companies. All this goes against what was set up in the document: recovering state enterprises with a new management model that would incorporate workers.

It is no secret that the government has attempted to co-opt workers' struggles by creating organizations such as the Bolivarian Socialist Workers Confederation (CBST), which doesn't have autonomy or vocation for struggle. Simultaneously, we have seen some cases of the state's apparatus repressing workers and peasants. However, despite these contradictions, the revolutionary working-class and peasants continue to consider themselves Chavistas and, in electoral conjunctures, wholeheartedly support the government.

In a process of change like Venezuela's, how should one strike a balance between the necessary autonomy of the workers' movement on the one hand, and a commitment to a process of national emancipation on the other?

From our point of view (the PCV and the FNLCT), the workers' struggle has not been co-opted by the government. Rather the government seeks to overcome or domesticate it through the CBST. This trade union confederation and, more specifically, its leadership, is an instrument of official and bureaucratic trade union reformism. The CBST exists so that there is a hegemonic trade unionism that is subordinated to the government and led by the reformist petty bourgeoisie.

If in the Puntofijista period the governments of Accion Democratica and Copei — at the service of US imperialism — had the CTV, now, whatever the differences, the current government has the CBST to legitimate and rubber-stamp all its decisions.

All this is very problematic, because it does not help to develop class consciousness among the workers and does not help create a working class capable of confronting the owners, the bourgeois state and the capitalist system — thereby pushing for the revolutionary transformation of society.

Thus, the “Cruz Villegas” Class Conscious Current of Workers and the FNLCT propose to strengthen the labour movement and class conscious trade union movement, and do so with independence and autonomy in the face of capital, state, and the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties. However, we are conscious that, when facing the serious imperialist threat that looms now over all of Venezuela, unity of action is needed, as is the participation of all the diverse workers' sectors in a broad patriotic anti-imperialist alliance.

NOTES

[1] The Cruz Villegas Class Conscious Current of Workers is the organisation of trade unionists and workers leaders within the Communist Party of Venezuela. The National Front of Struggle of the Working-Class is an independent trade union confederation that takes a position close to that of the Communist Party of Venezuela.

[2] Recent policies of the government have increasingly converted an important part of the salary into bonuses, thereby reducing the nominal salary and, consequently, the size of pensions. This has been an ongoing tendency in Venezuela — opposed by the Communist Party — which the recent economic measures have addressed.

[3] Venezuela's Bolivarian Constitution of 1999 indicates that a minimum salary should be equal or higher than the basic market basket, which represents the sum of the prices of the basic goods needed by a family of four.

[4] Guarimbas are a form of violent street protest employed by the Venezuelan opposition. They frequently involve burning tires and the use of barricades to block roads.

STATEMENT BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF VENEZUELA



In an extraordinary press conference, held this Friday 25th January 2019, Oscar Figuera, Secretary General of the Central Committee of the PCV, reiterates that a coup d'état initiated by US imperialism, the lackey governments of Latin America and the servile right is underway ignoring the condition of Nicolás Maduro Moros as Constitutional President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, they are trying to install a puppet government in our country and create conditions for political violence that opens the way to a civil war with which the reaction international would justify direct intervention.

Faced with this reality, the PCV agreed:

Activate all the capacities of the PCV, JCV (Young Communists of Venezuela) and political mass fronts to promote the widest patriotic, democratic and popular-revolutionary alliance against the imperialist coup.

Continue promoting the international solidarity of the Communist and Workers Parties, and the world progressive movement, which is being developed through the Department of International Politics of the PCV, JCV, COSI and the mass political fronts; expressed in dozens of actions and messages of Solidarity, from different organisations such as: the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Women's International Democratic Federation, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, World Communist Parties and other organisations.

To promote the broadest patriotic, democratic and popular-revolutionary alliance, which should have expression in the integration of the leadership of the Venezuelan process, which allows us to defeat the imperialist aggression and solve the serious problems of our people.

Promote a Government of broad patriotic, democratic popular-revolutionary alliance, which hit the allied sectors of US imperialism, mainly the monopolies, especially the speculative financial sector, which daily plunder our people.

Develop a broad national and international mobilisation plan that incorporates the worker-peasant, communal and popular movement, civil and military, believers and non-believers united in defence of the homeland.

We demand that the national, regional and municipal governments exercise their authority to neutralise the mafias of speculation and corruption that act with impunity, actions necessary to recover the purchasing power of wages and access to basic goods and services.

Support the request for an immediate meeting of the GPPSB with President Nicolás Maduro Moros, and, at the same time, insist on a bilateral with the head of state where the proposals of the PCV were raised, which allows the revolutionary exit to the capitalist crisis.

In the face of imperialist aggression, the PCV, the JCV and the mass political fronts will promote the broadest patriotic, democratic, popular-revolutionary unity to defeat the coup d'état in development.

We express our solidarity with the Venezuelans who worldwide suffer from acts of xenophobia promoted by the right-wing governments, particularly in Ecuador. We condemn this policy in the service of US imperialism that seeks to achieve its objectives of domination, dividing, disintegrating and confronting our peoples.

The PCV supports the government's decision to break diplomatic and consular relations with the US government.

AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST COUP !!

UNITED IN DEFENCE OF THE HOMELAND !!



THE GLOBAL 'LEFT' AND THE DANGER OF A DIRTY WAR IN VENEZUELA

by Lucas Koerner
25th FEBRUARY 2019



Lucas Koerner warns that the Global North 'left' critique of 'authoritarianism' in Venezuela serves as ideological cover for the current coup and impending dirty war pushed by Washington.

In Zimbabwe we have a pseudo-left, mostly gathered around the MDC, which habitually takes pro-imperialist positions. This is generally due to the belief that they must oppose the anti-imperialist posturing of ZANU(PF). Thus they align themselves with the forces of capitalist domination and impoverishment of the majority of the world's people.

In a recent piece for *Jacobin*, Gabriel Hetland mapped out what he believes should be the 'left' position vis-à-vis the ongoing US-led coup effort in Venezuela.

Hetland correctly observes that there is "absolutely no justification for US sanctions or military intervention" in Venezuela, which must be opposed by leftists and progressives the world over.

However, he goes on to argue that President Nicolás Maduro "was not democratically elected," and as such, the left has a duty to "back the call for free and fair elections" in the Caribbean nation.

But is Maduro any less legitimate than his Global North counterparts and should the US left be calling for new elections in Venezuela? Moreover, are "free and fair elections" even feasible under current conditions?

Democratic double standards

Hetland elaborates a laundry list of alleged 'authoritarian' abuses by the Maduro government that he claims invalidate the Venezuelan government's democratic credentials.

In a previous article, we argued that the political science concept of 'authoritarianism' is fundamentally colonial in nature, serving to juxtapose Global North capitalist democracies with Global South 'régimes' that challenge the Washington consensus of "free markets" plus liberal representative democracy as the "end of history."

In discarding this ontological binary, we affirm that the Maduro government must be judged not according to some abstract ideal of "democratic legitimacy", but by the same standards we apply to the Trump administration and other Global North régimes.

Hetland claims, "Maduro banned Venezuela's leading opposition parties and candidates — most prominently, Henrique Capriles Radonski — from running."

He, of course, omits the critical fact that the three largest opposition parties, Democratic Action (AD), First Justice (PJ), and Popular Will (VP), had boycotted the 10th December 2017 municipal elections, obliging them to re-validate their party status by collecting signatures from 0.5% of the electorate — a requirement not uncommon in many states of the US. AD successfully renewed its status, PJ failed to collect the necessary signatures, while VP boycotted the procedure outright.

Capriles was indeed disqualified from running over Odebrecht corruption allegations that were likely politically motivated. Nevertheless, in any other country he would probably still be in jail, or legally barred from holding office, given his high-profile role in the 2002 coup, in which he led the siege of the Cuban Embassy and participated in the kidnapping of Interior Minister Ramón Rodríguez Chacín together with former Chacao Mayor Leopoldo López. Capriles and López, along

with other prominent opposition leaders, including Julio Borges, Antonio Ledezma, and María Corina Machado, would go on to spearhead five more brazenly unconstitutional attempts to oust the Chavista government: the 2002/3 oil lockout, the 2013 post-election opposition violence, the 2014 and 2017 *guarimbas*, as well as the current Trump-led coup.

While Hetland is correct to call into question the manner in which the Maduro government has engaged in top-down power manoeuvres from the Supreme Court, National Executive, and later National Constituent Assembly in a clear departure from Chavez's strategy of bottom-up mobilization to build a socialist hegemony, he fails to acknowledge that such measures came in response to a parliamentary coup effort. Recall that the opposition-held National Assembly effectively blocked the government from re-negotiating the country's sovereign debt, approved abjectly unconstitutional laws such as a constitutional amendment retroactively shortening the presidential term, and declared that Maduro had "abandoned his post," just as has been claimed to justify Juan Guaidó's self-swearing in as "interim president".

Likewise, as *Venezuelanalysis* has amply documented, the ruling United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) has certainly repressed challengers to its left in several cases, but such practices pale in comparison to those regularly employed by the US Democratic Party which has yet to face any legal repercussions for its rigging of the 2016 presidential primary in favour of Hillary Clinton.

The fact of the matter is that Nicolás Maduro was re-elected in an internationally monitored election with 6.2 million votes, equivalent to 31% of the voting eligible population. In comparison, Barack Obama received 31% in 2008 and 28% in 2012, while Trump was elected with just 26% in 2016, failing to win the popular vote. As such, in procedural democratic terms, Maduro is no less legitimate than Donald Trump, Spain's un-elected Pedro Sánchez, political crisis-mired Theresa May, or countless other Western leaders, none of whom would be expected to tolerate a violent foreign-backed opposition.

Hetland is again right to note that had the opposition united behind opposition presidential candidate Henri Falcon, the ex-governor would have stood a very good chance of beating Maduro. But he neglects to mention that the main opposition parties instead abandoned talks with the government and followed Washington's lead in actively sabotaging Falcon with the aim of delegitimising the election and setting the stage for the present coup attempt.

Cold War redux?

In 1990, the Sandinistas were defeated in a presidential election, which only in an Orwellian parallel universe could be construed as "free and fair."

A decade of US economic strangulation and paramilitary terrorism had decimated the Central American country, leaving Nicaraguans to vote "with a pistol pointed at their heads," as Daniel Ortega famously put it.

At the time, even the so-called 'doves' within the US policy establishment, as Chomsky meticulously documents, enthusiastically backed the Reagan administration's criminal siege, with liberal press icon Hendrik Hertzberg voicing support for a "continuation of the embargo against Nicaragua if the Sandinistas won the election and the observer reports were less than favorable."

Meanwhile, the US left was too debilitated to adequately oppose Washington's terrorist war.

Any objective assessment of the situation would have concluded that Ortega was one hundred percent in his right to suspend the 1990 elections until the US ended support for the contras, lifted the economic blockade, and paid US\$17 billion in World Court-ordered reparations owed to the country. Yet, due to the weakness of US domestic opposition, Ortega was forced to accept the Reagan administration's bait-and-switch peace deal, in which Washington reneged on its promise to end the war in exchange for elections.

Venezuela is not Nicaragua, but the present situation isn't all-together dissimilar.

Like in Nicaragua, Venezuela's 20th May 2018 election was hardly "free and fair," but not for the reasons Hetland expounds.

Washington's interference in the election was extreme, putting to shame the current Russiagate allegations.

A US financial blockade, imposed first by President Barack Obama in 2015 and made de jure by Trump in 2017, has decimated Venezuela's economy, exacerbating the damage done by key Maduro policy failures which Hetland is correct to mention.

As a result, Venezuela was robbed of at least US\$6 billion in lost oil export revenues in the twelve months after August 2017, equivalent to around 6% of GDP. Healthcare spending in Latin America, in comparison, averages seven percent of GDP.

On top of these illegal measures, Washington promoted an opposition boycott, going as far as to threaten to sanction opposition presidential contender Falcon.

If last year's presidential elections were in no way "free and fair" for the above reasons, what then makes Hetland think calling new elections will be any different?

The US further ratcheted up its sanctions in late January, imposing a de facto oil embargo which is estimated to cost Venezuelan coffers \$11 billion in 2019. According to Torino Capital Chief Economist Francisco Rodriguez, the new measures will, on top of existing sanctions, cause Venezuela's GDP to contract by 26% in 2019, destroying what is left of the country's economy and killing many, many Venezuelans.

Moreover, in the unlikely event that Maduro or some other Chavista candidate manages to win a new election, there is little chance Washington and the right-wing opposition parties — whose unpopularity at 75% is on par with the ruling PSUV according to opposition-aligned pollster Datanalisis — will recognise the outcome. The opposition has cried fraud in virtually every major election over the past fifteen years, with the curious exception of the two that they won. For its part, the Obama administration was the only government in the world that refused to recognise Maduro's 14th April 2013 election victory.

The reality the left must take deadly seriously is that the US, along with its ultra-right VP and PJ allies, are hell-bent on waging a dirty war to exterminate Chavismo as a mass political force. Sceptics need look no further than the appointment of Elliott Abrams, widely considered the godfather of US-backed death squad régimes in 1980s Central America, as special envoy to Venezuela. Similarly, the Venezuelan opposition's enthusiastic support for US-led economic sanctions and refusal to rule out foreign military intervention are glaring proof of its willingness to sacrifice countless Venezuelan lives in order to bring down Maduro and Chavismo. Lest we forget that this is the opposition that thought nothing of lynching black men in the streets for the crime of "looking Chavista" during its violent anti-government protests.

We seem to be witnessing the same playbook as the 11th April 2002 coup when the Venezuelan opposition, with a green light from Abrams, temporarily ousted democratically elected President Hugo Chávez and installed a dictatorship that dissolved the constitution and killed between fifty and sixty people in a 47-hour reign of terror.

Under the present conditions of US-led siege, the notion that "free and fair elections" could be convened and Chavismo could peacefully relinquish power without risking liquidation is, at best, delusional.

As such, the first and foremost duty of leftists in Global North countries is to oppose their own governments' imperial interventionism in Venezuela.

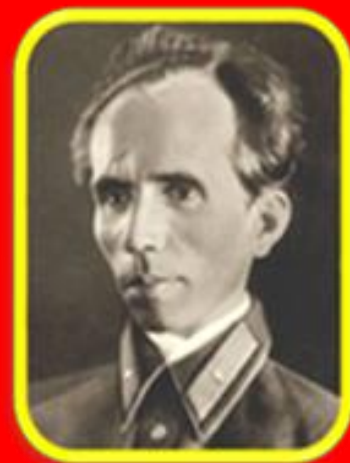
Any leftist discourse excoriating the Maduro government for 'authoritarianism' and demanding elections as a point of abstract principle only provides ideological cover for the ongoing coup, especially since the US left is still too anaemic to oppose it in any effective manner.

As Chávez used to say, "*sólo el pueblo salva al pueblo*" (only the people can save the people). Venezuelans can and will determine their own destiny, but it's up to leftists, progressives, and all self-identifying democrats in the "belly of the beast" to help them defeat the new "coalition of the willing" being assembled to topple yet another independent Global South government.

From:

HOW THE STEEL WAS TEMPERED

1932-1934



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)