SOCIAL CHANGE and development

FOCUS ON: the State

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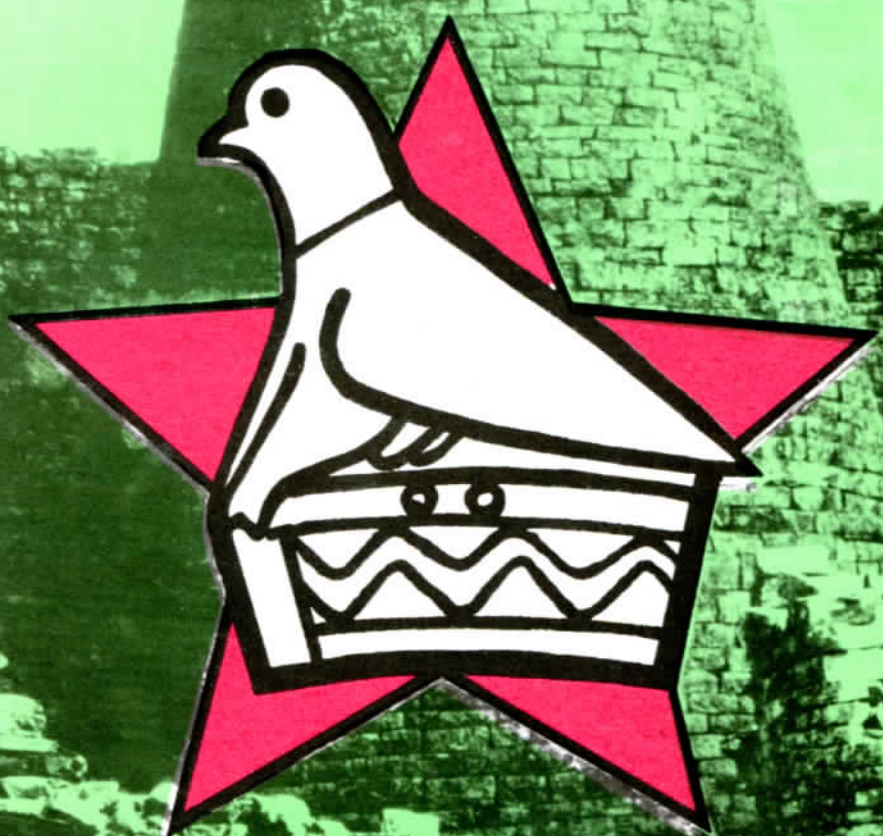

- Popular Organisation
- Armed Struggle in S.A.
- the Media

The Journal on Social Change and Development is a non-profit collective publication, which aims to promote discussion on the issues of change and development within Zimbabwe. We welcome comments and contributions.

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NO. 8 **1984**

No. 413
Shepperton House
94 Cameron St.
Harare
phone: 790124

Printed by Memorial Co-operative Society
Harare

Editorial

THE STATE IN TRANSITION

This issue of The Journal on Social Change and Development focuses on the State and its transformation to socialism. Zimbabwe's political leaders are aware of some of the problems that Zimbabwe faces in the radical transformation of society. In his interview with this journal (issue 6), Prime Minister Cde. Robert Mugabe clearly stated his understanding of the difficulties of transforming Zimbabwe's capitalist socio-economic system into a socialist order.

Zimbabwe has inherited a civil service and other aspects of the state machinery which must be changed if it is to pursue its socialist goals. During what the Prime Minister has described as "the national democratic phase" of the revolution, many of the discriminatory structures of the colonial society have been removed, black faces have appeared where only white ones were before. But this is not enough, a state that serves the interests of imperialism and the petit bourgeoisie must be changed. This requires more than a few reforms and legal changes, it requires an overhaul of the system. The question is how can this transformation be accomplished. This issue of the journal examines some of the problems of transforming the State.

Recent allegations of corruption and fraud amongst civil servants has shown that something is rotten in the State. Corruption is like a cancer that eats away at the trust between the people and their leaders. It must be removed before it destroys the whole bureaucracy and further entrenches capitalism. Corruption appears where political and economic power are closely allied and money buys influence and power attracts money. Furthermore, corruption undermines the ability of the State to carry out fundamental changes in the post-colonial transformation of society

From a general perspective Yash Tandon examines the post-colonial state. He notes that the fundamental problem confronting newly independent states is that political independence is not accompanied by economic independence. The leadership and the state are subject to the power of imperialism, while at the same time the goal for many post-colonial states is stated as socialism. He considers the contradictions and dilemmas facing the leadership; to ignore the demands of the masses will inevitably lead to repressive regimes.

While it is possible to sympathize with the dilemmas confronting the leaders of the post-colonial state in Zimbabwe in this national democratic phase of the revolution, at the same time the leadership must be clear about the socialist goals. Government policy and its implementation must reflect these socialist goals. While the national democratic phase may be a prerequisite to the socialist transformation of Zimbabwe, it is certainly not sufficient and renewed commitments to socialism must be made; the leaders should provide the vanguard of the socialist revolution. Arnold Sibanda considers the nature of the state and is concerned with the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat in accomplishing a socialist state in Zimbabwe; the bourgeois state must be dismantled.

There is a need for mass participation in order to break the bonds of capitalism. The workers must mobilise for the attainment of their democratic rights. The question of popular participation is examined by David Sanders in his forthright discussion of the relationship between the state and popular organisation. Focusing on the transference of power in Zimbabwe from a colonial to an independent state, he looks at community organisation and mobilisation from an historical perspective. He shows clearly that popular participation is essential if the capitalist state is to be replaced by a socialist state.

Nelson Moyo reviews the Zimbabwe Government's policy towards industrial relations and worker participation in industry. He notes the need for more workers' rights which should be embodied in our new Industrial Relations Act. Cain Mathema follows this analysing the need for co-operatives if economic independence is to follow political independence and Zimbabwe is to eliminate capitalist relations of production

This issue also includes an analysis of the media. Julie Frederikse answers questions on who controls the media. Simba Muzuva examines the effectiveness of the media as a form of communication. There are also our regular columns. Focus on South Africa analyses the implications of the Nkomati Accord for the armed struggle for the liberation of South Africa, and its wider implications for imperialist power in Southern Africa. The Women's Page written by Joyce Kazembe looks at the effects of the Age of Majority Act and concludes that whereas the law may have paved the way for equal rights for women, it is still up to women to claim these rights and ultimately fight for them in a court of law. Third World discusses the impact of the revolution in Nicaragua on the family.

We hope the articles in this issue will provide debate. We welcome contributions in the form of articles or letters and seek further discussion and views from our readers on Social Change and Development issues so that we can all learn about and participate in the transformation of Zimbabwe.

Diana Patel
Issue Editor

THE POST-COLONIAL STATE

by Yash Tandon

The state, any state, wields considerable authority, even power, over people and is therefore an awesome phenomenon. It is dreaded by those who fear its power, sought after by those who wish to exercise that power, and for scholars and intellectuals, it is always a challenging topic for discussion.

What is the state? Who are these people who exercise state power? By what authority do they exercise power, and to whose interest? Has there always been a state in all recorded history? Will it always be there? Is the state a good thing or is it an unavoidable evil?

These are very general questions, and we do not wish to get lost at this level of generality. However, there are one or two issues that may be usefully cleared at this level before we come to the somewhat less abstract level of the post-colonial state in Africa.

THE STATE AS A COERCIVE INSTRUMENT OF CLASS RULE

To start with, the state has not always been there in all recorded history. The state, at least as we understand it, is not the same thing as government. The difference is not just one of legal definition, though for some purposes that may be important. Governments, we have often heard, come and go, but the state lives on. Smith's government is a thing of the past, and it is unlikely ever to be resurrected. The state of Zimbabwe, however, lives on, and for the foreseeable future will survive changes in government. This difference between state and government is important; but there is an even more significant, more fundamental, difference.

Most governments in today's world exercise powers of coercion. Most governments, in other words, have recourse to instruments such as the police, the army, the courts and the prisons to force obedience on idividuals or on those sections of the population who attempt to defy the government, either for political or for criminal reasons. But this necessity to coerce people to obedience has not always been the case in all recorded history of humankind. In Africa, not too long ago, we had communal societies with a system of government in which no coercive power was exercised by one group over another. To be sure, they had a system of collective self-defence against outside communities, but as amongst themselves, they did not have a police, an army or prisons to compel obedience. In any case, there was no group set apart who ruled over another group.

This system of rule of one group over another is a comparatively recent phenomenon in human history. We call this the beginning of the state. It arose at the same time as society got stratified into social groups on the basis of ownership and control over the means of production. This process of stratification at the social and economic level went hand in hand with a process of concentration of power at the political level, in the hands of those who also controlled the means of production. Thus arose, taking a very broad sweep of a very complex historical process going over several centuries, the class system in human evolution, and with it the emergence of the state.

Most governments exercise powers of coercion.

The state then, is the political instrument of coercion by which one class exerts power over other classes, in addition to the power that it already exercises over them at the economic and social levels.

In Africa this process of stratification and the emergence of a state system had already begun in many parts even before the Europeans came. We know, for example, how the Rozwi rulers extracted tribute from peasant communities who produced not only food, but also bark and even cotton cloth, soap-stone and ivory carvings, gold-work, iron work, etc. But these societies were still pre-capitalist.

THE COLONIAL STATE

With the colonial rule came the rule of capital. In colonial Rhodesia, the best land was alienated from the peasants and turned over to the white settlers and colonial corporations, so that it could be cultivated along capitalist lines. That means, those who owned the land employed African peasant workers to work the land. The peasant worker produced not only the equivalent of his own subsistence, but also a hefty profit for the capitialist farmer or corporation as well as enough to pay back the interest on bank loans and the cost of other inputs such as seeds, insecticides, fertilizers and farm machinery.

The colonial state, then, was a coercive political instrument in the hands of a colonial capitalist class by which it exercised power over the other classes, in audition to the power it already exercises over them at the economic and social levels. The colonial laws, the colonial ideology, the colonial education system, the colonial marketing system, the colonial banking system, the colonial tax structure, the colonial system for the provi-

sion of social services, these were all, in general, a mutually self-reinforcing system. It was a system of colonial exploitation, whose ultimate arbiter was the colonial state with its instruments of violence residing in the system of courts and prisons, backed by the police (and police dogs) and the army.

THE CONTRADICTIONS OF A "POST-COLONIAL" STATE

The "post-colonial" state is a state in serious contradiction within itself. Why? Because of the fact that it tends generally to express the interests of two contradictory class forces. But how is this possible? Is it not the case that the state is always the instrument of the ruling class, an instrument of class oppression?

This needs a bit of explanation. The contradictory character of the "post-colonial" state arises from the fact that while at one level the people have won their political freedom from colonialism, at another, even more fundamental level, the people continue to be dominated and exploited by capital. The capital in all African countries is, without exception, for the most part in the hands directly or indirectly of an international financial oligarchy of what are sometimes called transnational corporations.

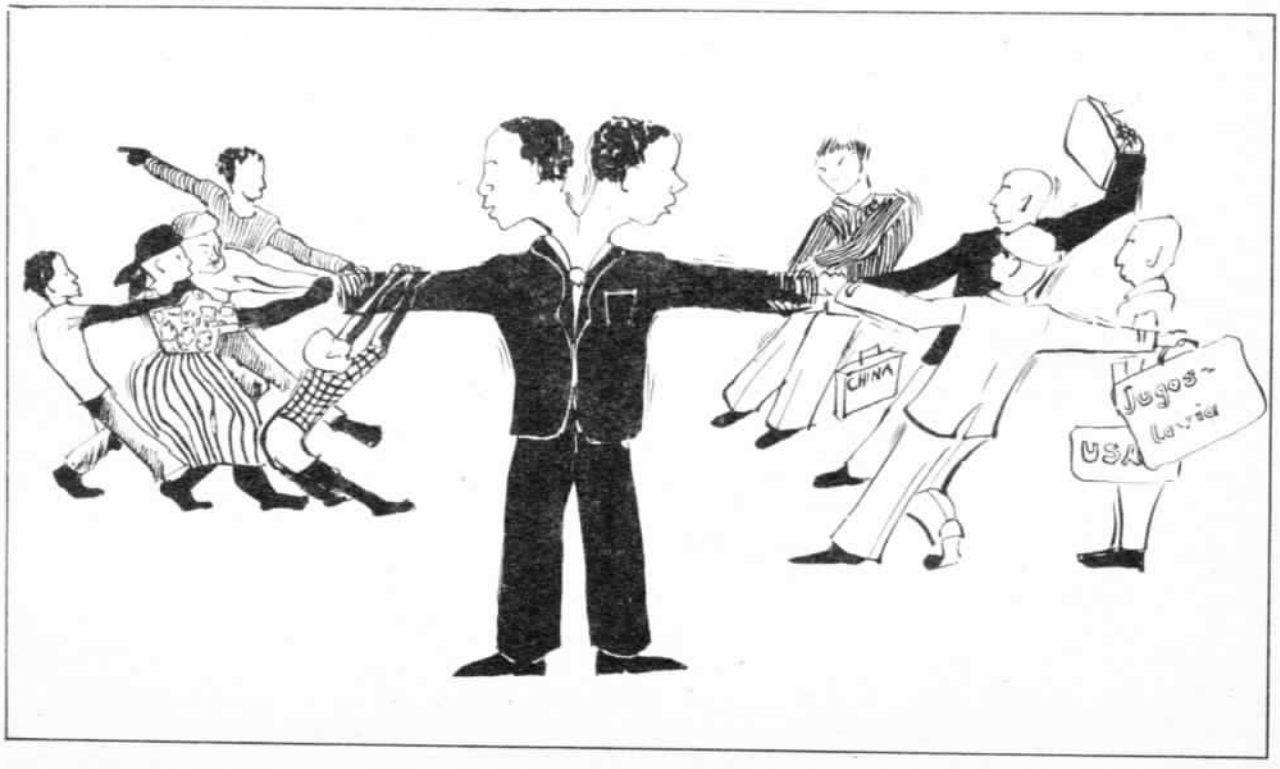
Kwame Nkrumah popularised the term "neo-colonialism", he was right in doing so. After political independence the "post-colonial" state still remains essentially a neo-colonial state, and this continues to remain the case for as long as the means of production are not directly controlled by the labouring masses of the population.

In the post-colonial state, the owners of capital - the international financial oligarchy - do not have as complete a control over the situation as they did during the colonial era. As long as the people are able to exercise their democratic right to elect their government, they continue to keep on the agenda of the government their own demands for a greater and greater control over the economy, and for a larger share in the social wealth in the form, for example, of better education and health facilities, and a fair return to the labour they put in farm and factory production. Any post-colonial government that is even minimally responsive to these democratic demands of the people thus comes up face to face against the demands of the international financial oligarchy.

"...people continue to be dominated and exploited by capital.

Herein lies the contradictory character of the post colonial state. It is at the best of times a state split in two - a schizophrenic state, a state torn apart between on the one hand the democratic forces of the people, and on the other hand the imperialist forces of the international financial oligarchy. This split is in evidence right through all the institutuions of the state - the army, the police, the court system, the parliament and even the government itself (including the cabinet), and we might add, even the political parties. Indeed, even individual political leaders sometimes display schizophrenic tendencies when they feel impelled on the one hand to respond to the democratic demands of the people, and on the other hand feel the pressure of international capital on them which impells them to suppress those very demands they would want to respond to but cannot.

How does this contradiction resolve itself, or does the post-colonial state forever stay in this schizophrenic state? In the long run - very long run- the contradiction will resolve itself when the labouring people have finally won their battle to control the means of production. In the short and medium run, however, the imperialist forces are dominant. They would tolerate some democratic expression at the level of the state as long



as the government has firm roots in the people The moment government slips and loses the confidence of the people, the imperialist forces would move in with all their fascist vigour.

The negation of the democratic rights of the people is the foundation on which international capital accumulates itself. That is why we have witnessed in post-colonial Africa the general deterioration of democratic rights of the people over the last twenty years or so. In some African states, and we do not have to mention these, imperialism has succeeded in imposing an out-and-out fascist state. But a fascist state is an unstable state, for the people will rise again and again to challenge the rule of the international financial oligarchy no matter how often and how ruthlessly they are suppressed. The recent history of Latin American countries is an illustration of this.

CONCLUSION

In the light of the above, we wish to correct faults in analysis to which even leftist writers fall prey. The failure to understand the essentially contradictory character of the "post-colonial" state leads some of these writers to take a rigid either/or position. They contend, perhaps not in so many words, that the post-colonial African state has to be either a "socialist" state or a neo-colonial capitalist state. A lot of scholarly energy is wasted by some to demonstrate how, for example, the revolution in a particular African country has been "betrayed" by the leaders. They forget that you cannot seize the means of production on the morning of independence; that political independence does not mean economic independence; that as long as economic independence of the people is not assured - and that is a long, long struggle - those who control the means of production will continue to influence, even dictate, policy through the instrumentality of the state, even if the state is run by "Marxists". It makes no difference at that level. It does make a difference, however at the grassroots level as to who is at the helm of power, for then the question to ask is; what are they doing about conscientising and mobilising the masses?

The second error is even more absurd. For lack of space we cannot deal with it at length. Some leftist analysts have contended that the post-colonial state is an "over-developed" state. Briefly stated, their argument is that the colonial power ruled through developing the instrumentalities of the State - the army, the police, the bureaucracy, etc.- more than any other institution of society. The result is that when the colonised people got their independence they inherited an "over-developed" state. The inference some analysts draw from this is that it is because of this that there is tendency for post-colonial states to become fascist.

Those who have read the earlier part of this analysis carefully will understand the absurdity of the argument. The colonial state is no more "overdeveloped" than the imperialist state itself. The one is the mere child of the other. Furthermore,a fascist state cannot be explained in terms of the inner dynamics of the state apparatus itself - that is plainly absurd. It can only be explained in class terms: in our epoch, the fascist state is the creation of imperialism itself when it cannot face the organised, and democratic power of the masses in any other way except through using brute force.

THE NATURE OF THE STATE

by Arnold Sibanda

THE BASIC QUESTION OF EVERY REVOLUTION IS THAT OF STATE POWER
Lenin

THE BOURGEOIS VIEW OF THE STATE

Three main opinions feature in the bourgeois view of the State. Firstly, that the State is a natural rather than an historical phenomenon. Secondly, that it is a neutral thing, existing above society and its conflicts, and arbitrates disinterestedly between conflicting social forces. Thirdly, that this neutrality of the State, reinforces its being natural and therefore unchangeable. Consequently, revolutions would have no need to break the existing state machinery but have to inherit it and wield it for their own purposes.

Quite often the bourgeoisie announce that all governments strive to achieve the greatest happiness for the greatest number of citizens. According to this view, the State is not an instrument for entrenching privileges of the already privileged, it does not represent and defend the interest of a particular class, but safeguards the "constitution". This view sees the State as protecting the interests of "all the people", the oppressing and the oppressed people alike. This view does not question whose "constitution" the State safeguards, nor does it question what "interests" the oppressed and exploited have to protect.

The reasons for such a view of the State must be specified. Firstly, once it is seen as natural, the emergence of the State cannot be located historically in the evolution of societies. It cannot be explained except by its being a natural creation. Therefore, any social force that is oppressed by another using the State apparatus, has no option but to resign itself to the "natural order" and to accept things it cannot change.

Secondly, the question of the State is a fundamental one, hence the need to falsify it. Since the class that holds economic power also holds political power expressed in the State, there is need for constant ideological intervention to invoke the neutrality of the State, the alleged apolitical nature of the army, and the disinterestedness of all State action.

Lenin pointed out the poisonous bourgeois ideological and philosophical arguments which claim "that the State is something divine, something supernatural, that it is a certain foce by virtue of which mankind has lived that it is a force of divine origin which confers on people , or can confer on people,

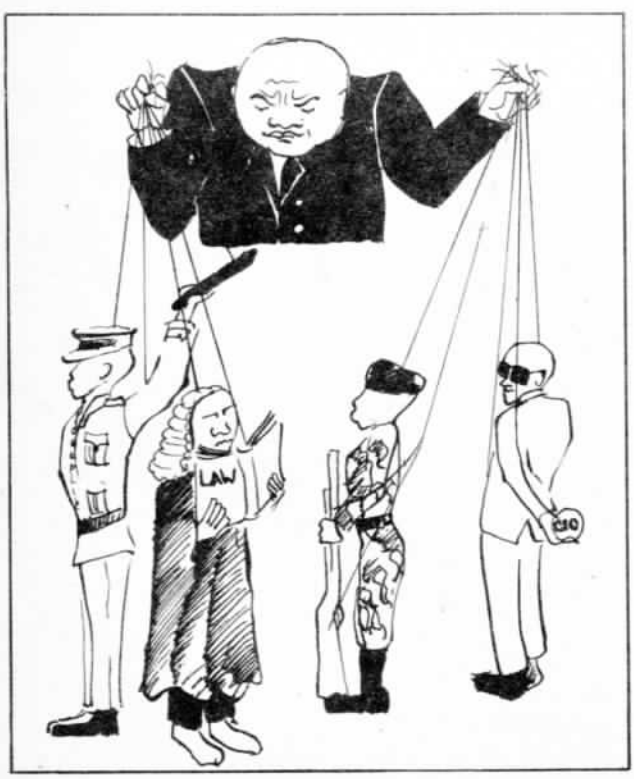
or which brings with it something that is not of man, but is given him from without".

Thirdly, apart from generating an ideological falsification of the character of the State, these views serve to justify support for reactionary and fascist regimes. Reactionary military coups are justified as interventions "to save democracy"; or "house-cleaning" exercises which are almost always declared to be "temporary" since the "non-political" armies would return to barracks and hand over to civilian rule. Military fascism has also been hailed as a "miracle" fostering accelerated modernisation, be it in Latin America, Asia or Africa.

THE MARXIST VIEW OF THE STATE

The Marxist view of the State is the opposite of the bourgeois view. Firstly, the State is seen not as a natural thing, but as a product of the historical development of society. For Marxists, a society does not emerge with a ready-made state apparatus, but this develops as society accumulates contradictions and conflicts within it. Engels stated categorically, that the State "is a product of society at a certain stage of development...,it is the admission that society has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel... it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society".

According to Engels, therefore, the State is not a creation by some god, but emerges when a society develops class contradictions. From the Mozambican struggle, Samora Machel echoed the Marxist view when he declared that: "In their efforts to keep the masses confused and in their deliberate action to prevent the masses from gaining power, the exploiting classes spread the myth of the neutrality of power. According to bourgeois theorists, the State is neutral; the State of bourgeois law is a State above classes and their conflicts; a State that could be used independently by exploiters and exploited. Thus the question of the conquest of power by the workers, of the overthrow of the exploiting classes and their State apparatus is never raised."



For the Marxists, since the State is a product of the irreconcilability of class conflicts, it can therefore only exist as an instrument of the economically powerful and exploiting class. The oppressed class can only end its oppression by overthrowing the rule of the oppressing class. This rule is maintained through use of the State apparatus which includes repressive or coercive organs and the ideological or subtle instruments. The overthrow of the exploiting class therefore requires overthrow of its State machine, crushing it, reducing it to ash.

Marxists further call for the dictatorship of the proletariat, ie. rule by the working class, the class formerly oppressed by bourgeois rule. The dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary in order to prevent the restoration of bourgeois rule.

By denying that the State is a product of the historical development of society, of the splitting of society into hostile class camps, and an instrument for the oppression of the exploited class by the class owning the means of production, the bourgeoisie denies the necessity to smash the bourgeois State and to institute the dictatorship of the proletariat. Machel continued thus: "In consequence, the question of instituting the dictatorship of the proletariat is also never raised. This is an attempt to demobilise the working-class: an attempt to convince the working-class that their struggle to over-throw the power of the bourgeoisie is useless."

Lenin minced no words on this question. The proletariat, that is, the class that is exploited by the capitalists, must first and foremost, wrote Lenin, seize power, capture the means of production from the bourgeoisie, land from the landowners, then start to organise society in a superior form. But to do all this, the force of the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary. Lenin emphasised that the working-class must take State power in order to "crush the resistance of the exploiters and to lead the enormous mass of the population - the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie, and semi-proletarians - in the work of organising a socialist economy".

It is clear therefore, that the class nature of the State makes the dictatorship of the proletariat a necessity. Marx and Engels in the Manifesto of the Communist Party and Lenin in The State and Revolution emphasised that the State is an instrument of oppression of the ruled class by the class holding economic power. During slavery the State oppressed the slaves on behalf of slave-owners; in feudalism the State oppressed rent-paying peasant cultivators and pastoralists on behalf of landowners. In our contemporary capitalist epoch, the State intervenes on the side of the bourgeoisie, the class that owns the things which make human life possible, that is, the means of production. Using the State, this class, this handful of people, oppresses and exploits the proletariat and poor peasantry. It oppresses the workers who own nothing and are forced to sell their power to work to the big and small capitalists at various labour-exchange offices, factory gates and suburban and farm houses.

THE CLASS NATURE OF THE STATE

The class nature of the State is seen not only in the class background and ideological character of its personnel, but also in the nature of State action. In a capitalist society, like ours, the State manifests the irreconcilable conflict between the bourgeoisie (local and foreign) on the one hand,

(continued on p. 21)

The State & Popular Organisation

by David Sanders.

The transfer of state power from the oppressor to the oppressed classes is a fundamentally important question in the process of socialist transformation in both industrialised and underdeveloped countries. In the case of Zimbabwe, it involves the phase from 1977 to 1981 during which period power was transferred from the minority settler state to a politically independent state. Let us examine the unfolding relationship first between the settler state and later between the Zimbabwean state, and the developing institutions of popular organisation.

Since the late 1970s and consistently today, the Government and ZANU(PF) leadership insists that its ideology is socialist and guided by Marxist-Leninist principles. In the commisariat lectures on political education in ZANU appearing in Zimbabwe News in 1978, ZANU foresaw that a "socialist revolution will be undertaken by a movement with a proletarian ideology".

According to Marx, the State is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another. In The Communist Manifesto, written by Marx and Engels in 1867, it is stated that "the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy".

Lenin in The State and Revolution continues: "but since the proletariat needs the State as a special form of organisation of violence against the bourgeoisie, the following conclusion suggests itself: is it conceivable that such an organisation can be created without first abolishing, destroying the State machine created by the bourgeoisie for themselves?" In colonial and neo-colonial countries where the peasantry constitutes a large faction of the population and is (increasingly) immiserated, it is regarded as an oppressed and potentially revolutionary class, an ally of the proletariat - the leading revolutionary class because of its position in and experience of the workings of the capitalist economy. Thus, in a revolutionary process, the bourgeois state would be replaced by a workers' and peasants' state.

In commenting on the Great (bourgeois) French Revolution, Marx concluded that "...in its struggles against the revolution, the parliamentary republic found itself compelled to strengthen, along with repressive measures, the resources and centralisation of government power. All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it". Lenin proceeds to identify the "two institutions most characteristic of this state machine (as).. the bureaucracy and the standing army".

It has been the case in Russia in 1917, and in many other countries as well, that forms of self-organisation of the oppressed classes (workers and peasants) tend to arise spontaneously in revolutionary struggles. It is then the organised extension of this process of popular organisation that is the concrete manifestation of worker and peasant power, and the replacement of bourgeois state by such bodies, which invariably involves some violence- the extent depending on the relative strength of the decaying old and the insurgent new state results in the creation of a worker and peasant state. The revolutionary dictatorship thus created is, as Lenin observed, a different kind of power characterised by: "(1) the source of power is not a law previously discussed and enacted by parliament, but the direct initiative of the people from below, in their local areas - direct "seizure", to use a current expression; (2) the replacement of the police and army, which are institutions divorced from the people and set against the people; order in the state under such a power is maintained by the armed workers and peasants themselves, by the armed people themselves; (3) officialdom, the bureaucracy, is either similarly replaced by the direct rule of the people themselves, or at least placed under special controls; they not only become elected officials, but are also subject to recall at the people's first demand; they are reduced to the position of simple agents; from a privileged group holding "jobs" remunerated on a high, bourgeois scale, they become workers of a special "arm of service" whose remuneration does not exceed the ordinary pay of a competent worker."

"...popular structures were allied to *their* army, the guerilla forces, against the Rhodesian State and army."

I believe that there is evidence that the beginnings of such a "dual power" situation existed in Zimbabwe during the revolutionary crisis between about 1977 and 1981. This situation was most evident in the "semi-liberated" communal areas, particularly where ZANU(PF) querillas had been active for a long period. In these areas the party had created popular organisations, initially responsible for supporting the liberation effort, but later structured to perform essential social and economic tasks effectively as an alternative to the Rhodesian State's rudimentary district administration. In these areas, organisations were made up of various tiers of people's councils, which were set up on a village, ward, district, and provincial basis. Functions of these committees at various levels differed considerably, e.g. grassroots village committees dealt with the day-to-day problems of feeding and clothing the querillas and

providing basic services to the community, while the issues involving the outlay of large sums of money would be passed to higher committees.

Thus, in many parts of Rhodesia's rural areas the embryo of a "new" state, one based to recall Lenin, on the direct initiative of the people from below" was in existence. Importantly, these popular structures were allied to their army, the guerilla forces, against the Rhodesian State and army. This alternative embryonic state was, unfortunately, crucially weakened with the Lancaster House Agreement, and the imposition of the cease-fire with its effective demobilisation of the guerilla army - the armed wing of the popular state (although it has to be admitted that the relationship between the guerilla army and the popular masses was not entirely unproblematic in terms of democratic control).

One of the major gains of this revolutionary experience was the practice of direct democracy, where peasants and workers for the first time, participated directly in the formulation of policies and their day-to-day implementation and evaluation. Furthermore, the ability of the peasants and workers to control, reject and re-elect representatives became a reality - a far cry not only from their previous experience where they had had no vote, but even from the experience of those living in bourgeois "democracies" where representatives are elected infrequently to parliament or local government bodies without any day-to-day control over their actions being exercised by the electorate who voted them in. This gain has been a more lasting one, and has persisted, to some extent, in certain parts of the country.

However, as stated above, it cannot be argued that anything more than the beginnings of a dual power situation existed in Zimbabwe for a number of reasons. Firstly, the forms of self-organisation created were limited in both their geographical extent and also in their class composition. One of the great weaknesses of the popular struggle in this country was that the working class was never mobilised as a class. Of course a significant fraction of poorer rural dwellers who were actively supporting the liberation struggle would, in Marxist terms, be classified as workers in the sense that their dominant economic activity involved the selling of their labour power to the mines, plantations and even to richer peasants. However, the settled workers -the proletariat- was never mobilised, although a considerable degree of militancy and self-organisation was manifested in the strike wave which started to sweep the country only two weeks after ZANU(PF)'s crushing victory at the polls and a month before Independence. It involved 16,000 workers in 46 firms in the first 10 days, according to government spokesmen, and not only mine and factory workers, but also municipal and other public sector employees and even spread to plantations especially Anglo-American's Hippo Valley Estate, and later Huletts Triangle Estate - and other mines. Far from encouraging, organising, and channelling the worker militancy towards the development of a dual power structure, the new government expressed its dissatisfaction with workers' actions.

Cde. Kangai, the Minister of Labour, was inclined to blame the strike on agitators from a political party (unspecified) which lost the election, and - more darkly - on "subversive parts within the worker element". He also showed an inclination to blame the working class itself, insisting in an interview with the National Observer that the government was aware of the workers' problems, and that it was for this reason that it had taken up the liberation struggle in the first place. Yet, he made it clear at an international trade union gathering at Silveira House in May 1980, that "the regulated system of labour relations which we in Zimbabwe have" (the Industrial Conciliation Act, under which strikes are all but illegal, and the state mediates disputes)"is more beneficial for the community as a whole rather than the 'dog-eat-dog' industrial philosophy"(free collective bargaining)"of the so-called free labour movement which operates in some other countries held to be more developed than our own". He concluded by saying,"To the trade unions I would say that modern society requires that trade unions act and behave as a responsible integral part of society with collective obligations to society as a whole, as personified by the State, and in terms of the State's responsibilities to the public interest." The State in this view, represents the interests of all social classes, not those of any particular class, and it must protect society against "irresponsible" social behaviour by certain classes (workers for instance) upsetting the interests of other classes, and thereby the public interest itself (for instance by trying to challenge capitalist management).

What then of recent developments? What is the basic structure of the post-colonial state, and what is its relationship to popular organisation? In contradiction to Marxist-Leninist theory, far from being dismantled and supplanted by a workers' and peasants' state whose attributes have already been discussed a centralised, hierarchical structure with permanent institutions, the security forces, civil servants, judiciary, etc. has expanded since Independence. Not only is the standing army much greater in size, but the civil service has expanded from under 50,000 to 80,000. It is of course true that the racial character of the State has changed,

During the liberation struggle the masses met and worked closely with the guerilla forces to organise the necessary community structures.

although by no means in proportion to the social composition of the population. But has the essential class character of the State changed? Perhaps this question is best answered by looking at the relationship between the present day state, and the embryonic "popular state" previously mentioned.

THE MASSES AND THE STATE

At Independence, it would have been possible- at least in certain geographical areas - to strengthen the existing popular organs by providing them with organisational, financial and technical support, thus, again quoting Lenin , replacing "officialdom, the bureaucracy,... by the direct rule of the people themselves..." For, although the Lancaster House Agreement prevented the dismissal of Rhodesia's civil servants, it did not proscribe the transfer of effective power and decision-making to other institutions, nor indeed did it suggest that the bureaucracy be almost doubled in numbers or a complex system of local government be created.

Between 1980 and 1982, District Councils vested with local administrative and economic development powers, at the expense of the colonial District Commissioners and chiefs, were established. Although this system of local government is a significant advance over the previous D.C.-chief structure, with ward representatives elected by popular vote and greater resources than

"One of the great weaknesses of the popular struggle was that the working class was never mobilised *as a class*."

in the past, it nonetheless remains an extension of the central state. Full-time local government officials are salaried by and responsible to the Ministry of Local Government and Town Planning, and councillors, although elected every few years, are neither answerable to their electorate on a day-to-day basis nor subject to recall (voting out of office) for unsatisfactory performance. With this extension of the central state to local level, and through the resources available to District Councils, the popular committees, particularly those recently established, have become in many instances marginalised. This process of undermining popular initiative and the beginnings of popular power is well illustrated by an example from the health sector, although there are examples from other areas and sectors.

During the cease-fire in 1980, a health worker at Bondolfi Mission, Masvingo, who was also a religious sister and an active ZANU(PF) member, was approached by the ZANU(PF) District Committee and asked to take on the training of popularly-elected health workers in "nutrition, child care, hygiene, sanitation and a little home treatment". The area was well organised into one political district with 28 branches. Each branch had a committee of 16 who were popularly elected. Of these 16, two were responsible for community health matters. Training commenced for these 56 branch health leaders in May 1980. Their six months' training included both theory and practical work, the latter being done after planning with their committees. Due to this project's popularity and increasing community demands, the people decided to have an unpaid village health worker (VHW) for every one to three villages, resulting in the selection and training of 293 VHWs, 35 being from other districts. (It is important to note that selection and control of these workers was at village and branch level with ongoing popular participation.) From this project sprang up a Development Committee, organised by the people themselves. In the words of Sr. Nhariwa, the original trainer; "Its aim is to co-ordinate the work done by VHWs in different areas, and organise other development projects that are not directly involved with health...The formation of the Development Committee has strengthened the health projects and intensified these projects making the people more determined than ever".

In late 1981, the government began training VHWs. The aim is to have about 12,000 VHWs countrywide. To date, about 3,000 have been trained. These VHWs are supposed to be selected by their own communities in consultation with the District Council. In some areas there is real popular involvement in the selection of these workers, this being done at mass meetings at ward level (although many wards would be far too large to allow effective popular participation). However, in many areas, it is done by the District Council and in some it is acknowledged that "there is some nepotism, councillors choose their wives and friends..." further, the payment of these VHWs ($33 per month) is made by District Councils from a grant received from Central Government. This means inevitably that VHWs are subjectively responsible to their District Councils rather than the villagers they serve, although with widespread rural poverty it would be impossible for many communities to fund their own VHWs. (This possibility depends on the success of the government's rural development strategy for the majority - the poor peasants and workers.)

The Bondolfi scheme, although still functioning now involves only about 100 VHWs. There are a number of reasons for this drop-out, but as one local VHW organiser said, "... when the government scheme started, and some were paid $33 a month, others stopped working because they were not paid". The decline in this project and demoralisation amongst the workers is not, in my view, an isolated phenomenon. It is evident in other sectors and areas: a current example is the registration of voters for the August Harare Municipal election. Harare's town clerk has indicated that only some 23,000 had registered in the high-density suburbs some two weeks before the poll, whereas at a similar stage in the 1981 elections, over 150,000 voters had registered.

This decline in voluntary involvement in social and political life is, in my view, one of the saddest developments in our recent history. For it signifies an ebb in the revolutionary dynamic and heralds in a period of stagnation and perhaps reversal of the process of true liberation, a process which, as this article has suggested, depends on encouraging, sustaining and strengthening independent community organisation.

THE STATE and INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

by Nelson Moyo

In capitalist society, the state provides, through legislation, a framework for industrial relations. Almost always the net result of state intervention is to curtail what is often perceived as the potentially destructive power of organised labour and to strengthen the power of the employing class. Is the role of the post-colonial state any different?

Before Zimbabwe's independence, the Industrial Conciliation Act provided such a framework. (This act is still in force today.) There was consensus that this Act needed to be repealed since it gave immense power to the capitalist employers and few rights to the worker. For example, such rights as the right to organise trade unions, the right to engage in free collective bargaining, to strike, and freedom from victimisation, etc. were seriously restricted. The Industrial Conciliation Act clearly bolstered the power of the employer against the worker.

Why has it taken so long to repeal the Industrial Conciliation Act and to install a new act supportive of the worker? A number of isolated regulations have been passed which could be perceived as supporting the workers. For example, the regulation barring employers from dismissing or retrenching workers without the prior approval of the Ministry. The minimum wage legislation can also be seen as an advance for the workers. Similarily, black women can now go on maternity leave without fear of losing their jobs. Also primary education is supposed to be free (although the introduction of levies and the high price of uniforms make a mockery of free education). Health services are now free for people earning less that $150 per month.

But let us look at the minimum wage legislation. Can we really say it has advanced the lot of the workers? Where is the evidence? We could at least argue so with confidence if employment levels were not affected. Secondly, we have to know what has been happening to the cost of living. Has it not wiped out the benefits? There is no doubt that we are today living in an era of high inflation in which prices of everything have at least doubled since independence. With the removal of subsidies the prices of basic staples such as mealie-meal, bread, milk, meat, etc. have increased substantially. One would need to engage in a lot of statistical gymnastics to prove that the ordinary man is better off today than he was four years ago.

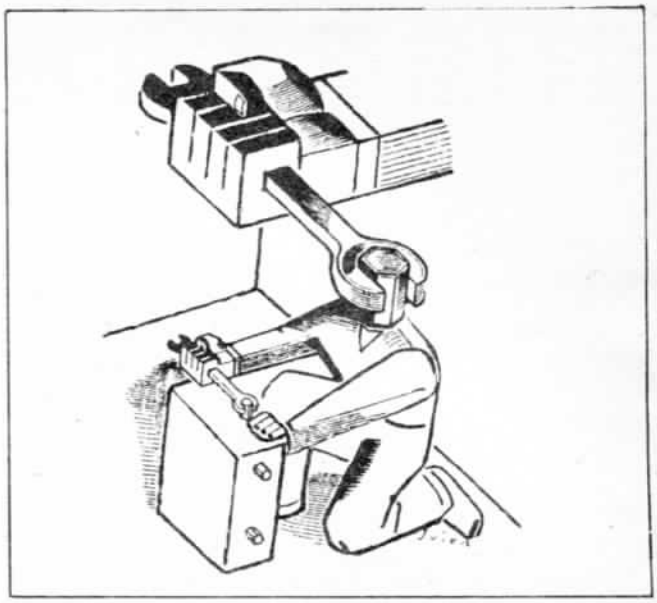
Equally, freedom from dismissal without the right to work is almost meaningless. The bosses do, and will always find ways to dismiss or retrench workers to protect profits. In the final analysis , they can simply close down the firm and open shop in a neighbouring country which does not have anti-dismissal laws, and is easy on profit repatriation. This is what has been happening to the clothing industry in Bulawayo.

A number of reasons could be put forward to clarify why the government has not moved speedily to repeal the Industrial Counciliation Act. One basic problem in all post-colonial states is that the act of political independence does not mean economic independence as well. The economy still remains largely under the control of foreign capital represented by multinational corporations. In some countries, Zimbabwe included, there is a sizeable presence of domestic capital which is however tied up and intimately linked as a junior partner to foreign capital. It is these dominant capitalist interests that the neo-colonial state represents. These same interests tie the hands of governments and make radical changes to the status quo extremely difficult. Sometimes governments do default from making needed legislative changes due to political inertia, and lack of commitment and direction.

After independence, and following country-wide wild-cat strikes, the pressure for change, for greater industrial democracy, was so intense that the government introduced interim measures (short of comprehensive legislation) in the form of Workers' Committee Guidelines, allowing for the formation of worker committees in all industrial establishments. They were supposed to be free and independent organisations elected by the workers themselves.

Apart from the workers' committee, the Ministry Guidelines also recommended the establishment of Works Councils. These are joint committees of management and worker committees. The purpose of the Works Councils, like that of the workers' committees is to "bridge the communication gap between workers and management and to increase the degree of participation and involvement of the work force in the affairs of the undertaking in which they work." The record of workers' committees has been uneven. Among the particular problems have been the poor quality of leadership and the fact that their activities are confined to the one establishment.

Moreover, the Guidelines did not provide for industry-wide or joint worker committees. They are thus isolated entities unlikely to develop into centres of worker power strong enough to provide a real challenge to the rule of capital in industry Futhermore, the Guidelines did not define clearly the relationship between workers' committees and the trade union operating in similar industries. In its evidence to the Riddell Commission, the Ministry of Labour and Social Services said, " it should be emphasised that worker committees must not be seen as substitutes for trade unions, but rather as complementary to the unions". What was needed was perhaps a more categorised statement to the effect that workers' committees were nuclei or local branches of trade unions. This would certainly have facilitated trade union development throughout the country. Instead, what has happened is that trade unions have effectively been weakened, especially under the personalised style of leadership in industrial relations' matters emanating from the Ministry of Labour before 1984.



When industrial problems have arisen, Ministry officials have been sent in to sort out the problems without any overall policy being initiated. It is doubtful whether this "fire brigade" role of the Ministry has helped lay a firm foundation for better industrial relations and for a strong trade union movement. It would appear merely to have caused frustrations on both sides of the bargaining table and in the Ministry itself (witness the high turnover of Industrial Relations Officers).

Furthermore, the process of Ministry Officials taking over the running of industrial relations from trade union and employer organisations was evident in the earlier draft of the proposed Labour Bill. There, a lot of power was given to the Minister, and through him, to Ministry officials. This is a familiar phenomenon in all post-colonial states. In its developed form, the process generally involves the virtual incorporation of trade unions and other workers organisations into the state apparatus. The state takes on the role of disciplinarian of labour and custodian of basic capitalist interests.

the state and co-operatives

by N.C.G. Mathema

When Zimbabwe gained independence on 18th April 1980 it achieved political independence but not economic independence. Although political power was removed from the hands of the coloniser, economic power remained. Economic power was in the hands of the capitalists, the multinational corporations and their local agents and the white bourgeoisie. The task of the Zimbabwe government is now to capture economic power, to transform the economy from a capitalist one to a socialist one.

The period of transition from capitalism to socialism is characterised by an economy which has three main types of ownership: state ownership, co-operative ownership, and private ownership. Private ownership includes capitalist ownership and petty ownership by peasants, handicrafts people, and other small owners. The main economic purpose for this period is to create socialist ownership of the means of production and replace capitalism with public socialist ownership. Socialist ownership is in two forms; state ownership and co-operative ownership.
It is important to bear in mind that the political power in the socialist period is the power of the working class (the dictatorship of the proletariat) in alliance with the peasantry (in a country such as Zimbabwe which has a large peasant population). This means that the Marxist-Leninist (communist) Party, the worker's vanguard party, is the party in power, and that the socialist revolution has been accomplished. In Zimbabwe, we have not yet reached that stage, we are still in the democratic stage - hence the political power is not yet the dictatorship of the proletariat, but a revolutionary democratic power with a mass support of workers and peasants, whose main economic task should be to take away the 70% of our economy still owned by foreign imperialist companies. The political leadership to accomplish this should be anti-imperialist, anti-tribalist, patriotic, revolutionary and democratic. Even at this stage, the Marxist-Leninist element in the leadership needs to be strong. It needs to hold most, if not all, of the leading positions in ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU. It is this Marxist-Leninist element that should chart the way to socialism through national economic plans that are democratic, patriotic, and anti-imperialist in character.

In the transition period therefore the democratic state should, through national economic plans, nationalise the property of the bourgeoisie, with or without compensation. At the same time, the state must encourage co-operatives to be formed in those sectors of the economy which it is thought are better run by co-operatives. For instance, in agriculture and in other small scale enterprises.

Forming co-operatives, however, is not enough, as they will easily fall to the competition of the already established private sector. They must be protected by the state from the capitalist companies and their owners, and such people who want to use them for selfish ends. The state needs to give all types of aid to co-operatives. For example, farming co-operatives need government owned tractor and machine stations from which they will hire equipment and machines. These stations should be scattered all over the country for easy access.

The state should also give financial help to co-operatives. This help can come in the form of easy loans or grants. It can also create financial institutions which will openly favour co-operatives as opposed to private enterprises. The state also needs to have a deliberate policy which will exempt co-operatives from paying tax, or at least demand less tax from them as opposed to private companies.

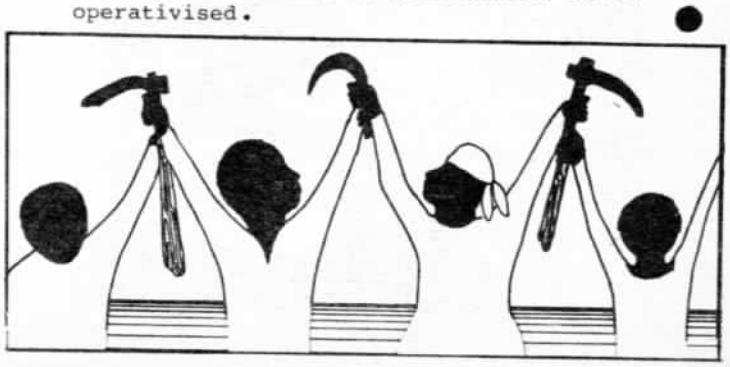
The state needs to parcel out those pieces of land which it is not using to co-operatives and peasant farmers for co-operative use. There should also be a clear programme for expropriating capitalist farmers and foreign companies of the land with or without compensation.

The state needs to embark on a comprehensive and well planned education and training programme for co-operatives for those not in a position to do it for themselves. State farms can play an important role in helping co-operatives. They can work as examples of large-scale farming, and can train co-operative members in modern farming methods. They can help also in the loan of equipment to co-ops.

The state can also help by purchasing the produce of co-operatives, thus providing a market. It should disengage from buying from private companies. For example, the army can buy uniforms produced by co-operatives, as can the schools. Vegetables and other food stuffs used by the state institutions can be bought from co-operatives.

All sectors of the economy have room for co-operative enterprise. Therefore the state must make sure that co-operatives are its allies in all sectors where appropriate. In Zimbabwe many of these things are already happening through the Department of Co-operative Development and many other ministries. The point to emphasise is that a clear bias on the part of the state in favour of state and co-operative enterprises is needed.

The transition period is a period of state and co-operative take-over of the economy so that at the end of it, we have a socialist economy with no private owners of the means of production as is the case in the USSR. What is needed is a revolutionary leadership, a revolutionary state power, and revolutionary state plans that make it clear which companies and industries must be nationalised and co-operativised.



The traditional ways of shaping a society's culture are through the influences of family and school. Our values are first moulded by our parents and other relatives. Later we learn from our teachers and our school texts, and sometimes also from church experience. In fact, the media in modern society has been compared with the church of the Middle Ages, in the way it transmits a world view and values. In these times there is another influence in our society, on our values and our culture, that was not a factor in our grandparents time: the newspapers, magazines, radio, television and film, and the news, features, and advertising they contain.

What is the content of newspaper or news broadcasts? That might seem like a simple question - of course it is the news. A newspaper is run by a publisher who hires an editor, who decides what news developments to cover and assigns reporters to follow those news events and write a story. These are then edited or "subbed" by other editors, and finally appear in the paper as "the news".

But what do we actually mean by "the news"? The dictionary defines news as "recent events and happenings, especially those that are unusual or notable". An old newspaper reporter's saying goes: "dog bites man - that's not news; man bites dog - that's news." Neither definition is satisfactory, for who decides what is unusual or notable? Through what criteria?

Media reporting looks at events. It isolates dramatic episodes from life. It does not deal with processes or ongoing conditions because they are difficult to package in an understandable way. We hear about a sensational crime, but we are rarely told how it fits into the overall social and economic picture. Each news event is presented in such a manner as to suggest that it is an isolated occurance.

News is packaged to be sold. The packaging occurs in the newsroom. News is not some object found somewhere out there, but a carefully thought out product. Because it is so

Those of you who scan the newstands for papers and periodicals may often wonder why certain publications, such as South African produced Scope and Drum are readily available, yet many international news magazines, such as New Africa and South are not. Is this the government trying to shield our view of the outside world (or the outside world's view of us)? Is it the fault of the distributor, who perhaps is involved in some plot to suck us into the world of consumerism? What factors influence the availability of reading matter, and determine which publications will be imported for our consumption?

Kingstons Distribution is the country's major distributor of magazines and periodicals, having more than two hundred outlets throughout the country, and handling on the average two hundred different publications a month. Kingstons has recently been purchased by the Zimbabwe Government from its South African mother company. Perhaps now would be a good time to examine the economics of the magazine distribution service while the policy of the company is being reviewed by its new board of directors.

Last year, Kingstons Distribution was forced to dismiss almost half of its staff due to the lack of magazines being imported. Many readers may have noticed the temporary shortage of imported publications for sale, which was caused by a cut in the foreign exchange allocation which Kingstons receives. This shortage of currency resulted in a cut in employment, including the employment of the unskilled street venders who sell magazines.

who controls the media?

by Julie Frederikse

packaged, it becomes a product to be sold. Most newspapers, magazines, radio and television operations, book publishers, and film producers are controlled by big corporations whose major concern is to make a financial profit. Have you ever wondered why you rarely see critical analysis of political affairs in the magazines sold throughout Southern Africa? Those magazines depend on the good will of the various governments for their distribution throughout the region, so their publishers don't dare to risk offending anyone.

THE ROLE OF ADVERTISERS

The profits from the capitalist media come from advertisers rather than from readers and listeners. Advertising accounts for over two thirds of the average newspaper or broadcast's content and its income. If you don't like what you read or hear, you can write to the editor or complain to the radio station, or refuse to read or listen - but that is all. The advertiser can hit the media far more effectively by withdrawing his business.

Advertisers can also foster media monopolies. Because they seek the audience with the most money, they tend to place their advertisements in the papers and the programmes which attract that middle to upper-income audience. This tends to hurt business for the smaller media outlets and the ones that cater for the working class. The reliance on advertising is also reflected in more subtle ways. It actually affects the content of news and programming - encouraging articles and programmes which support business and the "status quo" and which oppose change or new political and economic systems.

This is not to say that reporters and editors in a newsroom are simply told what to do by publishers and advertisers. There are other factors which affect what we call "news judgement" - that filtering process whereby somebody else decides for you what's news.

THE MEDIA IN THE THIRD WORLD

There has been much criticism of the western media being misinformed and biased. Indeed Prime Minister Mugabe has frequently made this criticism in the past few years. This kind of criticism of the media has recently grown to the point where developing countries have banded together against the Western media. They complain that although people from developing countries make up the majority of the world population, their concerns are underrepresented in the world media.

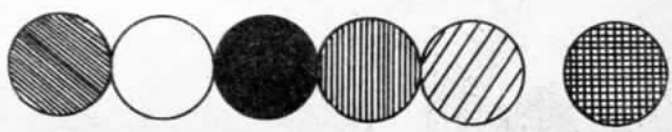
The major reason for this media bias against developing countries is the information monopoly of the "Big Four" news agencies - United Press International, Associated Press (both US), Reuters (UK), and Agence France Press (France), which together provide news and information of 90% of all the international news published in the world. More than two-thirds of the world's people live in the Third World, yet news about the Third World accounts for less than a quarter of the reports from Big Four news agencies.

Since that time, more foreign currency has been allocated, and publications are again flowing into the country, but with a difference: "We are no longer assessing what is good for the people," a Kingstons representative said, "We are making business". He went on to explain that before the shortage of currency, and before the 38% import tax, it was possible to examine publications for their quality, and chose those that may be a bit more expensive, but were more beneficial to the public. Now, in order to get the most in quantity for the small amount of currency available, they are buying poorer quality magazines. In addition, these magazines are actually old stock and come to Zimbabwe two weeks or a month outdated, meaning that they are dumped on our market. These old magazines are still readily sold since they have no timely news - no one cares if it is last month's pin-up girl in the centre fold. Such magazines are purchased at a very low price, and insure a profit.

In contrast, a timely magazine, such as South has a high initial price. When it reaches the airport there are shipping and handling charges to pay. Finally there is a 20% sur tax, and 18% import tax, increasing the cost price yet another 38%. In the end, a magazine which is recommended to sell at $1.19 costs $1.23 to import! One doesn't have to be an economist to work out that it comes to a loss, and not a profit, even without additional expenses of local handling and distribution.

What can be done to correct the situation in order to bring us more quality books and periodicals? Perhaps now that Kingstons is out of the hands of the capitalists and into the hands of our government - representing the needs of the people - the situation can be improved. The first step would be to lift the import and sur tax of 38% on all educational materials. The money which would be lost is by far made up for in the benefit to the masses. The second step would be to increase the amount of foreign currency for specific publications of educational value. These could be specially chosen by the new board of directors. Neither of these measures would harm the fledgling publishing industry in Zimbabwe, as there are still plenty of local publications which could compete fairly with those imported.

Kingstons was purchased by Government because it is a viable business. It also can provide a basis for expansion of services into the rural areas, thus improving communication for us all and ending the gross isolation of the rural population from that of the urban. It is up to the new board of directors to then set policy which will keep the wheels turning; now, not for profit but instead to offer the best information services to the most people at the lowest cost. Value judgements will have to be made, and we hope that in their wisdom, this new board will vote for quality in deciding what material we are able to purchase. ●



This is not only a problem of the amount of coverage given to developing countries, but also of the kind of coverage. Third World people complain that they only make news when their countries are hit by drought, famine, or other disasters. This is not to say that disasters in Western countries don't make news, but such stories are balanced against positive aspects of Western society.

Developing countries also complain of a lack of understanding and analysis of their problems. News agencies often rely on a kind of journalistic shorthand which tends to oversimplify coverage. This gives a tendency, for reasons of space and time, to reduce complex political issues to what is more easily described as "tribal" conflicts. For example most readers who try to follow events in Zimbabwe from outside the country would tell you that the major division in the country is between the Shona ZANU party, and the Ndebele ZAPU party, but they would probably be hard pressed to explain how and why it is that the Vice President of ZAPU is a Shona, and the President of Zimbabwe itself is an Ndebele. It is interesting to note that the word "tribal" is so frequently applied to Africa while the word "ethnic" is used to describe similar conflicts in European and American contexts. It is unfortunate that the word "tribal" is so overused, for it only serves to reinforce stereo-typed images of Africans and impart irrelevant connotations of "primitiveness".

DE-COLONISING OUR MEDIA

With the rise of nationalism in the Third World countries in the '50s and the '60s these concerns about news flow and news images gave rise to charges from developing countries that they were the victims of "media colonialism", just as they had been the victims of economic and political colonialism in the past. They claimed that the developed world was colonising their minds the way they had previously colonised their land and resources. They demanded a "new world information and communication order".

Indigenous communication services were formed as alternatives to the West's Big Four news agencies. With these news agencies, developing countries can disseminate more positive news that is more relevant to their countries, and also receive news from each other instead of from Western agencies who send in foreign correspondents and edit the news overseas to be sent back to Africa.

It is hoped that the reporting of these alternative news gathering organisations will be free from the Western orientated assumptions and capitalist values that colour the reporting of the Big Four news agencies, and will better reflect the reality of life in developing countries. These new agencies seek a differenct approach and get away from the "great men and great events" approach to media coverage. Instead they try to document trends, movements, ideas and ideologies, focusing less on figures in the ruling classes and more on workers and peasants.

A common criticism heard from Western media about the media of developing countries is that it is not as objective as a free press. The concept of objectivity is rejected by the adherents to development journalism. They take the example of a European journalist, living in relative luxury in an African capital city, who makes only periodic visits to the impoverished rural areas. How, they ask, can this journalist hope to understand the reality of a rural African's daily life and report objectively to his audience? Journalists who support the goals of developmental media argue that we are all bound by our cultural values, our class position and our political bias. This argument rejects the idea that news is simply a presentation of facts. It is instead a complex process of selection and interpretation.

When Western countries criticise the developmental journalism approach for its lack of allowance for a "free press", developing countries respond that a free press is merely one that fosters the development of free enterprise and a capitalist system. When the developing countries are criticised for media that only supports goals aimed at the building of a socialist society, they argue that the Western media only support the further expansion of capitalist society. Developing countries point to the fact that since Western media can only exist if they continue to earn profits, their reporters and editors must support the capitalist economic system which earns those profits. The Third World argues that if its media is a kind of "ideological arm" of an evolving socialist system then the Western press is the same for the capitalist system and the status quo.

by Simba Muzuva

One often wonders what the word "communication" implies. It is used very often by media people, educationalists, trainers, students, and civil servants - to mention a few users. As is the case with many "linking" words, it has a negative side and a positive side. Some prefer to call the negative side of the word "bad communication" while many would call the positive side "effective coomunication". But of all of the people who hear or read the word communication, how many know what it implies? And of the people who use it, how many care to know whether they have achieved their prime objective?

Communication basically means conveying or passing on information, ideas, feelings, emotions, etc., and should be a two-way process. In this country, we have a variety of ways and/or means of doing just that- passing on information. The most common means or most widely used ways being through the radio, televison, and newspapers. How effectively do the afore mentioned means serve the purpose? Which of the three is the best way to achieve the objective- effective communication?

Let us look at a breakdown of each of the three and then draw our own conclusion:
a) Radio: the radio has probably the widest audience of any media in Zimbabwe. Currently we have four channels. Radio 1 and 3 specialise mainly in sport and music. Radio 2 and 4 are more concerned with the ordinary Zimbabwean than the other two. Through various programmes and news items people can get an idea of what's going on around them. But how many people or families own or have access to a radio in Zimbabwe? Of those who own or have access to radios, how many share or make attempts to share the news with less fortunate people? The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation is a parastatal body. Is it not the wish of the government to spread the news? It would be worthwhile if ZBC set up structures that would ensure meaningful feedback and hence give an assurance of effective communication.

One only needs to wander around town to get an idea of the cost of a radio. While a radio is regarded as a luxury to many, it is also a necessity where no other form of spreading the news exists, for example, to the illiterate. Government control has been introduced in the pricing of basic commodities, such as sugar, milk and mealie meal. Is government control not also warranted in this respect? Or alternately, is there another form of spreading or distributing news which can also cater for the illiterate?

If news continues to be "urbanised" as are many other things, then Zimbabweans will begin to think that development is for cities and towns, and the feared thing will happen- rural folk will flock into towns and cities.

b) Television: The television is obviously more urbanised than radio due to poor transmission and shortage of technicians etc. Even in the urban areas, a great many people do not possess television - not that they don't want to , but because they cannot afford them. Television is only mentioned here - alongside the radio as a means of communication but it is a luxury commodity in the eyes of many. It is, nevertheless, a means of communication worth reviewing, especially the quality and relevance of programmes, but this is not the aim here.

c) Newspapers, magazines and periodicals : The Herald is one of the most widely read newspapers in Southern Africa, but yet average sales are only hundreds of thousands in a country of seven million. Most of these sales are to people who also have access to radios and television, as are the sales of most magazines and periodicals. The Herald, The Chronicle, Mutare Post, Sunday Mail, and Sunday News, are all limited in circulation.

Which group is the target of the media? Is it the privileged or the masses in general? Are the people supposed to be reached by "media luxury"? Many people in rural and the so called "remote" areas are within the "news hunting ground". Newsmen use them to create or write stories, and make money out of the stories. The "poor man" out there is anxious to listen to himself, or see his/her picture on television. That's not easily possible because the news structure is limited to certain areas, and furthermore tends to be a one-way flow of information from the top down.

Is it not possible for our government to subsidise radios? This would enable citizens to purchase radios and make them available to the Zimbabwean common person. Another suggestion worth considering is the manufacture of a standardised simple and relatively cheap type of radio. The Ministry of Information is trying hard to establish meaningful facilities, e.g., the Chitungwisa telephone exchange and the newly established microwave link with Victoria Falls. Then there is the question of licence fees. These are an extra burden to the poor, and should be replaced by a more equitable system.

The major concern here is the effectiveness of the communications system. Does the

information get to the intended audience? What is the feedback, or is there any feedback at all? It would be a very good "circle" of communication if facilities were provided for feedback. This would give the media people more material to evaluate, and would contribute towards the development of Zimbabwe, e.g. a two-way farming programme, or a discussion on village development problems from the village level and the ministry level.

Absence of a feedback channel has contributed to the "class" orientated media in this country. The middle class are feeding inforation to the workers and peasants, but not the other way around. Television programmes are practically all in English, as are the newspapers. People can write letters, yes, but the editorial pages are usually in English. The television magazine Look and Listen cuts out many viewers because of its language barrier. Again, if you look at the percentage of illiterates,you would begin to wonder whether their views shouldn't be considered- especially in relation to Radio 4 whose target audience is the illiterates.

News material would benefit the nation if the material was within the conceptual abilities of the audience. This does not only apply in the mass media, but at political meetings, speeches, rallies, etc. There are times when speeches are read in English, or times when a speaker addresses an entire Shona or Ndebele speaking audience in English. Why? One extreme case was when a speech was read in English for the benefit of one English speaking visitor. Would it be possible to simply give the one visitor an English version of the speech or to help him with a simultaneous translation?

It has been shown that something should be done to facilitate good communication. If all communicators made sure that they expressed what they intended to the right person, and most importantly, received feedback, then we would soon be on the right road to effective communication. ●

Traditionally armed struggle requires safe rear bases in order to organise logistical support, training, and refuge for the guerillas inbetween attacks. With the advent of the Nkomati Accord and increased pressure on the rest of Southern Africa to follow Mozambique's "surrender", the future for armed struggle in South Africa looks at best uncertain.

In the following article a South African correspondent considers the future for armed struggle in South Africa.

THE PRECONDITIONS FOR ARMED STRUGGLE

In a major policy document "Strategy and Tactics" adopted by the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) in 1968, the conditions necessary for the waging of armed struggle were spelt out. These include;

* that there is disillusionment with the prospect of achieving liberation by traditional peaceful processes because the objective conditions blatantly bar the way to change;

*that there is readiness to respond to the strategy of armed struggle with all the enormous safeguards it involves;

*that there is in existence a political leadership capable of gaining the organised support of the people for armed struggle and which has both the experience and the ability to carry out the painstaking process of planning, preparation and overall conduct of the operations;

* and that there exist favourable conditions in international and local plans.

SUBJECTIVE CONDITIONS

The first two points deal with the subjective conditions necessary for the development of armed struggle - essentially the readiness of the people. The resurgence of extra-parliamentary legal opposition in the form of the United Democratic Front (UDF) should not be understood to be a rejection of armed struggle. The patrons chosen by the UDF, people like Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, etc., indicate the closeness of the UDF to the congress movements of the fifties. Rather than seeing itself in opposition to the armed struggle, the UDF through its public statements has indicated that it sees itself as supplementing the thrust of the national liberation movement. This would seem to indicate that the UDF has a similar understanding to that of the ANC as to how to destroy the apartheid regime. In the words of Nelson Mandela; "It is only between the anvil of mass resistence and the hammer of armed struggle that the apartheid system can be destroyed".

The people of South Africa can therefore be said to be ready for the sacrifices demanded by a national liberation struggle; mass resistence movements within the country are

Armed Struggle in S.A.

gaining in strength, and with every conflict between the people and the state more recruits are gained for the armed struggle.

OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS

It is to the objective conditions that we must look for the problem areas of the SA struggle. ANC guerillas were sent for training as early as 1959. Various African countries, the Soviet Union, and China all played a part in the provision of training facilities. The problem however, lay in getting these trained fighters back into South Africa. Two factors acted against the infiltration of these guerillas: firstly, the "Unholy Alliance" of Angola, the then Rhodesia and Portugese East Africa, created a cordon sanitaire which effectively prevented the early penetration of guerillas into SA soil; and secondly, the domino theory of Nyerere and Kaunda which stated that all resources should first be poured into the liberation struggles of Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe, and only when these struggles were won should resources be channelled into the SA struggle.

Early attempts by the ANC to overcome these two difficulties were to come to nothing, creating a period of relative stability in South Africa during the sixties. It was only with the upsurge in mass struggle in the seventies (the Durban Strikes of 1973; the Soweto Uprisings of 1976; the student demonstrations of 1980; and the emergence of the UDF in 1983) and the liberation of Mozambique and Angola in 1975, and Zimbabwe in 1980 that the armed struggle could re-emerge in South Africa.

ESCALATION OF THE ARMED STRUGGLE

Tom Lodge (an independent researcher within SA) has listed some 150 instances of armed struggle between January 1977 and October 1982. This list was drawn from newspaper reports of ANC attacks. According to a CIA report, SA publicises a small proportion of the armed attacks which take place. These attacks came after almost a decade of quiet in SA, and after the objective conditions in Southern Africa changed.

METHODS OF STRUGGLE

Lodge has also shown through a close examination of treason trials in SA that the training of ANC guerillas includes the use of sophisticated modern weaponry such as the 82 mm mortar, the 75 mm cannon, anti-aircraft weaponry and techniques of urban sabotage,such as those used against the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station and the Sasol Petrol Depot.

The ANC therefore appears to be preparing its guerilla army for a confrontaion with a well equipped army.

Lessons for successful guerilla insurrections in Vietnam, Nicaragua, and Angola show that merely working amongst the people is not enough. Clearly the masses have to partipate in any struggle in order to overthrow the enemy, yet more is needed than mass participation. The army of liberation needs to be well armed, well trained and capable of taking on the reactionary army. In his three stages of insurrectionary warfare Mao Tse Tung spelt out the following –

1.) In the first step small guerilla bands carry out hit and run tactics against the enemy. The purpose of the attacks in this stage is merely to show the people what is possible to raise their morale. The guerillas are lightly armed, and are able to strike and disappear before the enemy has time to use its superior weaponry.

2.) The second stage is one of consolidation. New recruits have been attracted by the tactics of the first stage and the guerilla army begins to expand rapidly. Small industries are set up in sympathetic areas to feed and clothe the guerillas and where possible schools and querilla administrations are established. These areas are the beginnings of the liberated zones.

3.) The third stage is that of the final onslaught. The guerilla army is built into a powerful conventional force which can take on the enemy army on equal terms. Operating from the liberated zones, the guerilla army mounts attacks on enemy areas. Starting with the smaller towns bordering the liberated zones, it slowly expands these zones, until it is strong enough to capture the major towns.

Mao successfully applied this strategy in China - a country in which the vast majority of the population lived in the rural areas. The Vietnamese and Nicaraguan struggles have added a new dimension to the theory of querilla warfare - particularly important for semi-industrialised countries such as SA- that is, the combination of armed struggle and mass resistence. This mass resistence could take the form of building peaceful unions, student and youth organisations which combine and form powerful united fronts against the regime in power. The striking power of this front is sharpened by the blows of the armed struggle which uses methods not

available to the mass legal movements, but which are equally important in the struggle for power.

ARMED STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Together with the mass popular struggle that is already being waged in SA today what is needed are guerilla units which slowly begin to consolidate certain areas into liberated zones. These zones could, in the early stages of the struggle, be located in the neighbouring countries, as their main function is to provide a safe area in which people can be trained in the use of weaponry; political organisation and the essentials of underground work. There is however, no short cut to operating from inside South Africa and establishing sympathetic areas there. It is through this work inside the country that new recruits are attracted into the

"...rear bases are taken away through the surrender of the frontline states to Pretoria's destabilizatin policy."

revolutionary movement and sympathetic areas are expanded. The neighbouring countries therefore need to provide this support until such a time as the movement for liberation is sufficiently strong inside the country to move the rear bases into SA. At such a stage the training of people, storage of arms and communication/command networks would be established within SA.

Although all three stages discussed above by Mao Tse Tung take place inside the country, there is also the question of arms supplies to contend with. There are two possibilities here: either capture all the arms needed from the enemy, or bring in the necessary arms supplies through friendly territories. In the early stages of the struggle, it might be difficult to capture enemy weaponry due to the inexperience and a lack of equipment of the revolutionary forces. Often what is needed to escalate a struggle are safe routes from the rear base into the country and weaponry which places the querilla forces on a par with the revolutionary army (Mao's third stage).

The stagnation of the SA struggle over the years 1974 - 1976 bears witness to the difficulty of an escalation in the absence of routes and weaponry. Both then become available after 1976 and a dramatic escalation of the armed struggle occurs. Together with this escalation of the armed struggle comes heightened political struggle which in turn supplies some recruits to the armed struggle.

THE NKOMATI ACCORD

It is in this context that the Nkomati Accord must be seen. The SA revolution has only managed to acquire effective rear bases (ie. those that are close enough to SA to allow safe passage from the rear base into SA) in the last seven years of so. Just as the armed struggle and symbiotic political struggle are escalating these rear bases are taken away through surrender of the front-line states to Pretoria's destabilisation policy. Even if the SA revolution is able to develop internal sympathetic areas in which to store arms and train guerillas, there remains the issue of bringing in the sophisticated weaponry - the mortars, canons, anti-aircraft guns and perhaps even tanks as the struggle develops. Without these resources the guerilla struggle can only be a thorn in the side of the Pretoria regime, albeit a thorn which cannot be removed. It cannot crush the regime without first crushing the regime's army (Mao's third stage). The only alternative therefore, becomes a negotiated settlement.

This does not however mean that the struggle for liberation is simply a struggle to build as big and as powerful an army as that of the state. But without developing such an army, and without arming the masses (leading towards a national insurrection led by the people's army) neither mass struggle nor isolated guerilla attacks can overthrow the capitalist state.

Whatever strategy the SA liberation movements adopt, it is clear that the Pretoria Regime is not only the enemy of the South African people, and its policies do not only affect the South African people. To believe that South Africa's policies of destabilisation throughout Southern Africa are aimed only at preventing the growth of the ANC would be to ignore the internal contradictions facing the racially exclusive capitalist state in SA. The drive for markets for South African goods in Southern Africa is not only aimed at creating a dependency on SA, but is necessary to prevent recession which results from overproduction occurring in South Africa itself.

The same forces that drove the capitalist nations to colonise Africa in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in their search for raw materials; that led to imperialist relations of production being developed as the First World found that it could not sell all its goods in the First World; that led to two World Wars as these rival imperialist powers fought for the right to expropriate the wealth of the Third World; that led America to send 500,000 troops to defend "democracy" in Vietnam, and now democracy in El Salvador, these same forces are driving South Africa into Angola, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe to protect South Africa's right to exploit the wealth of those countries. The Mozambique and Angolan revolutions finally overthrew the capitalist relations of production that had been established in those countries centuries before and in so doing, denied SA the markets it desperately needed to keep capitalism alive there. With the successful revolution in Zimbabwe and the impending socialist revolution in Namibia, South African capitalism (and the Western interests it represents) realised that unless it stepped up its destabilisation policy to the point where the independent countries are forced, on the threat of being overthrown, to once again open their borders to South African capital, it would be doomed.

The struggle against the racially exclusive capitalist state in South Africa is therefore not the struggle of the people of South Africa alone. It is a struggle of all progressive Southern Africans who wish to see democratic socialism established in Southern Africa. Perhaps Mozambique will be rid of the MNR, but now it has Sol Kerzner (Southern Suns) and Rockefeller to contend with- strange bedfellows for a socialist government.

Nicaraguan Families in Transition

Nicaraguan society is undergoing substantial changes that are reflected in new political structures, in new laws, and in new economic plans. These changes have entered the home, challenging traditional attitudes. Five years is not sufficient time to create new family structures, but it is enough to see the emergence of certain changes that reflect the pres sent conflict and uncertainty.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NICARAGUAN FAMILY

In its structure, in the role played by the various members, and in the way the members see themselves, the Nicaraguan family is a blending of the colonial (feudal-patriachal) model and the indigenous (tribal-matriarchal) model. Many of the family structures throughout Latin America, especially among the poorest sectors of society, reflect this meeting of two cultural traditions.

According to a report by the Office of Family Protection and Counselling, which was set up 15 days after the victory, the father is absent in 34% of urban homes (60% in Managua). In these homes, the mother is economically responsible for the children, and she is the most influential force in their upbringing. Statistics such as these tend to support a matriarchal picture of the Nicaraguan family.

However, even in families in which the father is absent, his presence is felt. The mother tends to foster respect and affection for the father, whom the children see only occasionally, but speak of frequently. The father's presence, which is felt in various ways even though he does not live in the home, reinforces the classical patriarchal pattern:the woman "suffers" because of the man, is helpless without him, is his "property", etc. These tendencies, deeply ingrained in Nicaraguan thinking are the basis for a variety of veiled patriarchy that is reinforced by other clearly "machista" aspects of society. In Managua, to which large numbers of campesinos migrate, it is possible to observe the causes and consequences of this matriarchal-patriarchal conflict.

According to the 1977 study, Matriarchy-Patririarchy, by Nicaraguan J.G. Moncada, in spite of everything, the man dominates the home in the poor sectors of Manaqua. His findings indicate that the father usually decides matters regarding the behaviour of the children, the number of children, or a move to another house. In general, the role of the father is even stronger in the middle and upper classes, where economic dependence seems to be the determining factor. In poorer families, the father compensates for his absence and lack of economic support with strong machista behaviour. The strong authoritarian-patriarchal structures under Somoza encouraged this type of behaviour.

The phenomenon of the extended family is also prevalent in Nicaragua. Few homes consist only of the parents and children, much more often one finds the presence of grandparents, aunts and uncles, and other relatives. Aqain, economic factors play an important role. The housing shortage and the large number of women who have to support or contribute to the support of their families are two factors that determine the presence of other adults in the home. Thus the extended family becomes a small and efficient nucleus whose members are all interdependent and share responsiblility for each other's well-being.

The extended family exists both in rural areas and in the cities. In the country, however, it is better described as a family clan. Frequently the campesino father strives to purchase, bit by bit, parcels of land near his own where each one of his children can establish his or her own family. Thus large families often live in the same vicinity and maintain very close relations.

The situation is somewhat different among the middle and upper classes, in which improved economic conditions and urban advantages allow newly married children to establish their own homes. Nevertheless, this separation does not signify a break with the family. The affective ties, and even dependence, are very strong between children, parents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles. However, economic factors reinforce these ties even in the wealthier classes. Nicaraqua is presently incapable of satisfying the societal needs of its populations to the same extent as a developed nation. Therefore the search for security and for mutual support among family members runs very deep.

Nicaraguans tend to have large families, and Nicaragua is a young country: 40% of the population is under 15 years of age. Family size varies slightly in various sectors of the country. In Managua, where 29.4% of the population resides, the average woman has five children during her child-bearing years; in other cities of the Pacific Coast, the average is between five and six; on the Atlantic Coast the figure is between six and seven.

"My family, even my children, are ready to fight for the revolution, says Noel Velaquez, shown here with his family. "For centuries we have lived under the boot. Now for the first time we control our own history."
-photo Oxfam Facts for Action

THE CHILDREN, LOS MIMADOS'
SHALL BE THE FUTURE OF THE PEOPLE,
WE THE CHILDREN SHALL BE
THE WORKING PEOPLE
WE SHALL BE THE PEASANT,
THE PRODUCER OF EVERYTHING,
WE SHALL BE THE TEACHERS,
DOCTORS,
AT LAST THERE WILL BE PLENTY.
-by an eight year old child in Nicaragua

Generally, the Nicaraguan woman begins her sexual life very early. According to the Family and Fertility Bulletin, 38,28% of women become sexually active between 14 and 16 years of age, and 72,72% between 14 and 19.

In some ways, the Nicaraguan family is unstable and disintegrated. The misery that has existed for centuries in the rural areas, a primary cause of the migration of campesinos toward urban and plantation areas has meant that men usually establish unions with a second and third woman in the area of seasonal work.

The stuctural poverty of the cities, both large and small, where housing is scarce and services are poor, also contribute to the disintegration of the family. In poor neighbourhoods in Managua, 65% of the houses have only one bedroom, where as many as six or seven persons sleep. This contributes to tension between parents,jealousy, alcoholism, increased desperation from unemployment, fatigue from overwork and coping with a salary that will not stretch far enough,and promiscuity.

Despite all these difficulties that affect family stability, the Nicaraguan family sees itself as a monogamous unit. This is the ideal to be striven for, a sign that things are getting better, a life-style in which people will be happier. There is a certainty that it will mean greater emotional stability for both couples and their children, as well as a way to achieve greater economic stability. In spite of all the present ruptures in family life produced by the revolution in morals, in cultural patterns, and in collective ideals - the goal continues to be a united family.

EVERYTHING IS PRESENTLY IN CRISIS

The Nicaraguan family was deeply affected by the revolution, which not only brought out contradictions between social classes, but also contradictions in relations between husband and wife or between parents and children. The resulting tensions occurred as much in families that were supportive of the revolution as in those that had reservations about it. However, the tensions tended to be slightly different, although they all signified a sense of change.

The upheaval began with the insurrection. Men, women, and children participated in the struggle in a variety of ways at a time when the hope of victory was barely a dream. These commitments - which at times involved risking one's life - caused serious conflicts within the family. How many poor families felt their dreams of a better life had been shattered when their sons left home to join an idealist struggle that was to cost them their lives? How many middle and upper-class families had to try to hide the social stigma of a son or daughter who had left the university to become mixed up with "subversives"? During this time, in spite of all the social taboos, the "mother-accomplices" became key figures in the clandestine struggle, giving logistical support to the FSLN in the cities and in the country. David, a lawyer and father of four, explains:

> "My oldest son began to co-operate with the Frente when he was 16. I didn't know the extent of his involvement until after the victory. He even helped his mother to transport arms and to carry out similar activities."

This type of co-operation between mothers and children committed these women to the revolution. It was also during this period that many women began to see their role in life as something more than just doing housework.

Later, in the process of the revolution, the profound changes in the economic, social and political structures brought new and daily challenges to the family structure itself. New tasks and responsibilites in which distinctions faded between men and women, between adults and young people - sometimes children- brought new problems into the home. Mariana, a secretary in a communications office comments on this:

> "I was just a housewife for 20 years. After victory, listening to other wommen talk about their participation in various tasks, I began to feel useless. I could only talk about the price of rice and vegetables. I was just the wife of so-and-so. My husband encouraged me to get involved in the Literacy Crusade. That was my school and the school for many women like me. It made me realise my capabilities and helped me to overcome a mountain of complexes and inhibitions."

The Crusade was, in a very real sense, a learning experience for all Nicaraguans. In one way or another, it touched everyone. 200,000 young people left their homes to go to the most remote sectors of the country. This produced a crisis of obedience and authority within the family. On one hand, young people wanted to participate, and on the other, parents were afraid of the risks and were reluctant to give them permission. Mariana says:

> "We asked ourselves why, if we were their parents, we couldn't refuse to let them go. We didn't realise it then, but that was when the real crisis of traditional parental authority occurred - the challenge to the idea that parents have the 'power' to decide what their children can or cannot do."

The disobedience--rebellion-maturing process at times brought young people into confrontation with their parents. They began to decide for themselves about things that they never would have before. The idea of traditional authority crumbled, and a new set of values emerged, with the common good taking precedence over the family. Daniel, a member of a Christian Base Community in a lower-class neighbourhood of Managua says:

> "We can no longer say to our children, 'you can't go there. I won't give you permission.' The young people, who have become aware of so much in so little time answer us, 'Well, if you don't like it, I'm sorry but I'm going to do it anyway, because Nicaragua needs it.' And we don't know what to say."

The break in the total dependence of children on their parents has been solidified as young people have continued leaving home to cut coffee, pick cotton, participate in militia training, or join the reserve battalions. The challenge is there: children should respect their parents from their new-found autonomy; parents should respect those decisions of their children that are based on new criteria. Both are in a process of learning.

Not only are relations between parents and children undergoing profound changes, but so are those between men and women. Ramon, head of personnel in a Mangua factory and the father of a large family explains:

> "My wife has changed a lot in these years. I see her as much more confident. Before she never had men friends, only women. Now she does. I have to admit that it has been difficult for me to accept this. I am jealous. But sometimes I am delighted that my wife is a woman and not a little girl, dependent on me. In the neighbourhood, she has many responsibilities that even I am not fully aware of."

Zoraida, a mother of four, who is in charge of health in her neighbourhood comments on her relationship with her husband:

> "My husband can't stand it if I'm not home when he comes in. He uses revolutionary phrases, but in his house it's a different thing. Meals have to be served when he wants them served, and they have to be hot, and I have to serve them. It is difficult to make him understand. He also criticises me, saying that I have abandoned the children."

Comments like these are very common. They suggest a certain instability in the family nucleus and, at the same time, the beginning of a new stability based on new values. Factors which have always caused family instability, but which were often ignored, are now being looked at in a different way.

Family unity, among families that are assuming the values of the revolution, is taking on new aspects. The unity is not for personal happiness, but is at the service of collective tasks that need to be carried out "for the common good". The four walls of the family home crumble and "our" home takes on a much broader meaning in accordance with the needs of the country. Says a woman in charge of a small eating place, who is also a mother of six children, all in the militia, reserve, or health brigades:

> "I think that now we care for each other. But it is a love that has broken many old images and overcome them. We learn from each other, we forget about ourselves, and we cry or laugh over things that go beyond our family circles."

from ENVIO, Journal of the Instituto Historico CentroAmericano, Managua, Nicaragua. ●

THE NATURE OF THE STATE

(continued from p. 5)

and the proletariat and landless peasants on the other. The State upholds, defends and reproduces the interests of the class that owns the means of production. It does so in many ways, open here, hidden there. It descends like a hammer on squatters who are claimants to good and fertile land, monopolised by the big land-owner bourgeoisie. It descends heavily on the workers who strike for wage rises to match the high price of goods they themselves, and noone else, least of all those in the State apparatus, have produced.

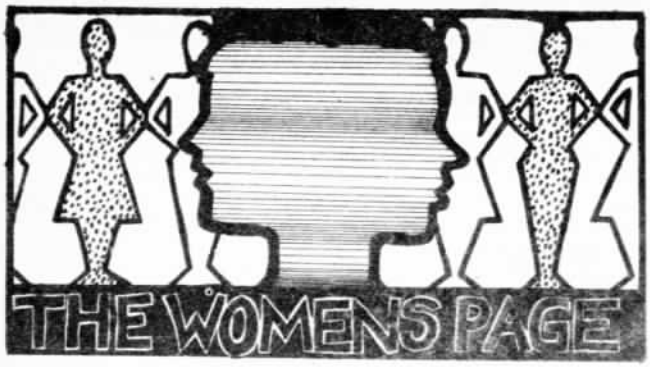
Bourgeois judges and police are recruited to administer bourgeois law in bourgeois courts which 99 out of 100 times, decide against the workers and the peasants.

The State in capitalist society then imposes the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in two main ways: firstly, through its repressive apparatus comprising the army, the intelligence agencies, the uniformed and plain-clothes police, the courts and the civil bureaucracy. Secondly, through its ideological apparatus comprising political parties, schools, the church, the family and the media.

The State, therefore cannot be classless, neutral or non-political. State power and action cannot be independent of the machinations of the class that holds the means of production as its private property, the class that has everywhere erected warnings like "Private Property", "Trespassers will be Prosecuted", "Right of Admission Reserved", the class that has stationed armed guards and killer dogs to protect from the producer what the producer has made - because this class, by declaring as "private property" the wealth of the nation has separated the producer from the product of his/her own toil.

The proletariat has no alternative but to take State power, smash the bourgeois state machine and install a dictatorship of the proletariat which will prevent restoration of bourgeois rule and the system of privilege.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is also the only basis for the transition to a classless society. It is a state whose installation is also the beginning of its "withering away" - that is, it is a necessary political transition period in which classes are being abolished. Proletarian dictatorship cannot be abolished but only withers away as its necessity withers away with the disappearance of classes. The bourgeois state cannot "wither away". It needs to be overthrown because it exists to entrench bourgeois privileges and class society. ●



more on the legal age of majority

by Joyce Kazembe

Erika Ndewere in Issue 4 of this journal, (May '83) wrote on the relationship between the Legal Age of Majority Act and the Customary Marriage Act. Hopefully, without sounding too repetitive, I would like to expand on this article by looking generally at the implications of this Act for customary family law.

The act became effective on the 18th of December 1982, an occasion that was marked by jubilation and ceremony at Stodart Hall in Mbare by hundreds of women who attended the celebration. The Act was long overdue. From that day black women were put on the same legal footing as everybody else. The Legal Age of Majority Act recognises that a person shall attain the legal age of majority on reaching the age of 18. While all black women theoretically welcomed this change, one cannot say the same about the reaction of most black men, regardless of their social class. This goes to show that passing an act is one thing, but having it accepted is another.

Why do black men feel threatened by this act? One need not search far to find the answer to this question. Customarily, a black woman was a minor all her life, whose very actions were governed by the whims and direction of her guardian, be it her father, brothers, uncles before marriage, or her husband after marriage. Having been so used to lording over their womenfolk, black men feel they have been deprived of a privilege of domination, despite the fact that women helped in the liberation of blacks from the domination of colonialism. Surely women have proved beyond doubt that they have the right to enjoy those fundamental freedoms for which the majority of this country fought before independence.

photos courtesy Zimbabwe Women's Bureau

Black men argue that women, by their very nature, should not and cannot be equal to men After all, the women are the weaker sex, and this has been recognised in African customary law. This is where the upholders of African culture rise up and denounce Western culture for wanting to change the African way of life. Looking at these people closely would show that they only invoke culture when it fits their ideas and practices, especially in the field of family law. Most black men love to exercise their dominance over women, just to show who has power in the home, or at work. If persuasion fails, then definitely physical strength will succeed. It is not uncommon to find a man beating his wife just because she has failed to comply with his wishes, even though she may have more reason in her head than ten of such men put together.

Guardianship

The act states that no one of 18 and above has a guardian, man or woman. Each individual has sole determination of his or her own fate. Nowhere in the Act does it state that this should be different for black women. If anything, the Act says that it shall override any other law, including customary law, in all spheres of life. Hence black women now have the same legal status as black men and all whites. This means that a black woman can enter into any legal contract without the help of anyone, just by her own right as a major. It is unfortunate that there are still many papers that require the signature of a husband, where it is not at all necessary. This makes men feel they still control the lives of their wives, like they control the lives of their children. We must understand that the necessity of a guardian falls away, and this includes the need for a guardian's permission in the contract of marriage

Before the Legal Age of Majority Act was passed, it did not matter under which act an African woman married. Both Chapter 37 of the Marriage Act and Chapter 238 of the African Marriages Act required the consent of the woman's guardian before she could marry, which was not the case with a white woman 21 years of age and above, a practice that was highly discrimatory. Today, no such consent is necessary for a major, because she no longer has a guardian and therefore can marry when, how and whom she likes. She can even go as far as marrying without a cent having been paid for her by her prospective husband! Unfortunately, not many girls will take this step simply because they fear their parents may put a curse on them. This superstitious belief in the power of the ancestors to mete out punishment on those who go against the norm is the main obstacle to the full exercise of black women's rights. What we fail to realise is that these laws and norms were enacted by men mostly to their advantage.

It is the men who stand to gain much in the marriage of their daughters and sisters. Lobola is one of the major sources of income for a number of men with daughters and sisters. The more daughters a man has, the more he can be assured of wealth, if the lobola charges now demanded are anything to go by.

How many customarily married men have lived with their wives for years without marriage certificates because their in-laws would no grant them permission to register their marriage, the reason being that they had not paid enough lobola to warrant a certificate? Some parents even refused to accept lobola because they do not approve of the man chosen by their daughter, also meaning that they would not consent to their daughter registering her marriage to this individual. Despite the change in law, these situations are common. There are many reports of young men who complain about the exhorbitant amount of money demanded by their in-laws, and usually these men hold this against their wives, who are but passive participants in the arrangement. Hence they demand that their wives should be submissive to them because they paid for and bought them. I am not against lobola as such, but it has become so commercialised nowadays that I can sympathise with those who are calling for its demise. It is not fun having the statement that one has been bought thrown into one's face. Men do not experience this humiliation. It is alright ás long as they are receiving the payments, but wrong when they have to do the paying. It is now up to the men to rid themselves of this money—grabbing habit, before women take this into their hands and deny them even the little they could get by marrying without consulting them at all, which can now legally be done under the new law. After all, only the consent of the marrying couple is needed in registering a marriage. All that their daughters are asking for is a blessing from their parents. When exhorbitant lobola is demanded daughters are forced to start a family in poverty. Men, educate yourselves and rid yourselves of this exploitation! One can only truthfully enjoy what he/she has laboured for. Daughters are not marketable commodities to be sold to the highest bidder.

Customarily, the custody of the children of a divorced woman reverted automatically to their father so long as they were over seven years of age, or in some cases just off the breast. Children belonged to him and his family as though he had moulded them with his own hands. The Legal Age of Majority Act confers equal rights on women and men. Hence this means that a woman can be the guardian of her children, and can gain custody of her children. The thought of leaving one's children in the hands of another woman was enough to stop many black women from leaving their husbands, even if they were treated like beasts. Because of their minority status, black women had to have their guardians' consent to file for a divorce. This consent was not always forthcoming because their guardians would be forced to return part of the lobola to the man, a step they were not prepared to take, either because of want or greed. But with the changes brought by the Legal Age of Majority Act, any woman can stand for herself in court, and then the men must settle the return of the lobola among themselves. The court can now grant custody of the children to either parent, depending on who has the best interests of the children at heart and who is in the best position to look after them. If custody is given to the woman, then she has the right to claim maintenance from the father. I am glad to say that the cases which are presently being brought before Primary Courts are usually being won by the woman.

Now after the death of the husband, the wife can become the guardian of her children, and not the man's kin, but she must fight for the case in court. There are many cases where a widow and her children have become destitute, even if her husband left them well off, because the deceased's family took everything they could lay their hands on. One hopes that there will soon be changes in such practices as it is now recognised that a woman is as good as a man, and equal to him. So, the old practice that only men should be guardians must necessarily change. The same can be said about unmarried mothers who used to lose their children to the man simply because he had paid seduction damages and rearing fees. An unmarried mother is now the guardian of her child, and the father of that child must maintain the child until he/she reaches the age of majority.

While still on the question of the unmarried mothers, the question of seduction damages arises. The Legal Age of Majority Act says that anyone over the age of 18 is a major. This also implies that anyone over 18 should know what they are doing. Strictly speaking, no guardian should be claiming seduction damages for any girl over 18 because that girl would probably have married without lobola. So, how could anyone claim that her value in marriage had depreciated? The only one who could perhaps claim damages is the girl herself, if she really feels that her chances of marriage have been reduced. Let us hope that there will soon be an amendment to correct this situation.

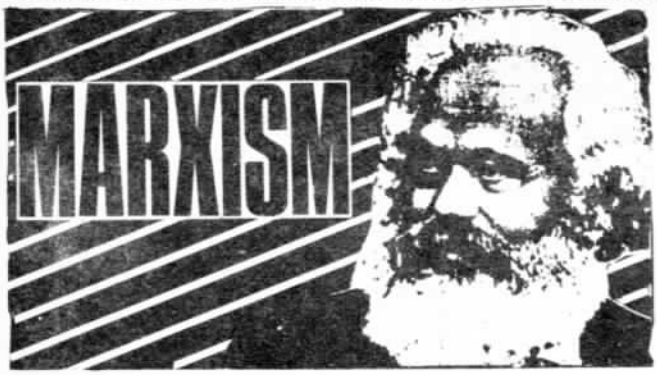
Property

Before the new Act, the only right to property that a black woman had was what was called her "maoko" property, that is what she made by her own hands, and what she got from the marriage of her daughters. But when we consider matrimonial property as such, a married woman had very little that could be called her own in the home. All the main objects in the home belonged to her husband, and the house itself was considered to belong to the husband, even if she had done most of the building as is often the case in the rural areas. This was especially the case if the husband worked in town while she lived in the communal areas. No matter how much

labour she put into tending the livestock at home, she had no right to it, except maybe to a few chickens. Many women work very hard in the fields, but at harvest time, their town-based husbands would come and supervise the selling of the produce to the marketing boards. The woman got very little of the income. The men argued that the fields ploughed were theirs, and so they had a right to the products, even if they spent most of their time at work in town , or loitering around drinking beer in the rural areas.

Should the couple divorce, the woman go few plates and pots, her personal belongings and what she received from the marriage of her daughters. Most of the labour she expended in building the home and amassing household property went unrewarded. Now, the Legal Age of Majority Act implies that everyone has the right to own property that he/she can call her own. Therefore, if the couple get divorced and their marriage was registered, the woman should have the right to all the kitchen ware and the rest of the property can be divided fairly. It works out even better if the woman can show that she personally bought such and such article. I am glad to say that the courts are trying to divide the property fairly, even if the woman was not working. For working women, it used to be generally understood that their salaries belonged to the husband and he would decide how best to spend their earnings. The argument was that a married woman, by virtue of the lobola paid for her, only worked to help her husband, and her property belonged to her husband. But now a woman has a right to property and what she earns is hers, not her husband's. She can dispense of her earnings in any way she likes. One assumes of course that she would use it rationally in the home, as is usually the case. How she invests her money is her own business, and the husband should not demand that she use it only with his direction.

Before women can fully exercise their rights, there is a need to change some of the old laws to fit the new social environoment, but the most challenging step will be the education of the black men, so that they can at least accept the changes and face the fact that women now have equal rights. The women themselves must work hard to change the old fashioned belief that they are inferior, by proving that they are as good as men, if not sometimes better. Furthermore, they must be prepared to fight for those rights in the courts. The Legal Age of Majority Act was passed to fit in with the new social environment, and in recognition of the contribution of women towards an independent Zimbabwe. As women, we must claim these rights.



The Transition to Socialism

There is no simple theory on the transition between social systems. The reason being, that each transition is a unique historical process. Moreover, transitions are never simple or brief processes. They are often long, processes, occupying and even defining whole historical epochs.

But why begin the road to socialism? Because of the irrationality of the capitalist system with its privatisation of the means of production and the expropriation of society's wealth by the few. Because socialism promises a better material and cultural life for the majority of the population who are workers and poor peasants.

The question of whether or not a society moves forward to socialism, or backward to capitalism will depend most importantly, on the location of power, and its uses in the society attempting a transition. A number of preliminary conditions must prevail for the process to begin. For a start, political power must first be transferred through struggle from the capitalist class to the working class and its allies. It is not enough that the leading governmental offices be occupied by representatives of the workers and peasants. For a country which seriously wants to start on the road to socialism, it is important to bear in mind Marx's famous statement that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purpose". Lenin was categorical that the "working class must break up, smash the 'ready-made state machinery' and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it." The trouble is many Third World countries that talk about transformation to socialism have not heeded Marx's and Lenin's message. The fact of the matter is that the bourgeois state apparatus which had, as in colonial Zimbabwe, been fashioned and used as an instrument of bourgeois rule, cannot change to become an instrument of anti-bourgeois rule. Serious and concerted efforts must be made to transform it. And this can be achieved only through far-reaching changes in both structure and personnel. It is not enough simply to replace white faces with black faces, even if they are graduates of Western European and North American universities. The questions is do they have a commitment to socialist transformation?

"...the old relations which permit exploitation and class domination continue to reproduce themselves."

One hoped one outcome of the armed struggle was that new leaders with a scientific socialist orientation would emerge to spearhead the transition to socialism. This unfortunately, did not happen as petty bourgeois nationalist leaders clung on to leadership positions in the party apparatus. The period since independence has seen a resurgence of bourgeois elements in the state bureaucracy and the ruling party. This is the phenomenon in most post-colonial states. What has happened is that political independence has opened the way for the consolidation of power by a bureaucratic elite accompanied and followed by the depoliticalisation of the masses. With little revolutionary enthusiasm and participation by the masses, economic problems and difficulties multiply, forcing the ruling regime to turn to capitalist techniques, giving more power in industry to technocratic managements. The result is the continuing and deepening separation between the masses and the state apparatus.

Without mass support, other steps which need to be accomplished during the transition to socialism become impossible. These include:

(a) abolition of capitalist ownership and the establishment of public ownership of the basic means of production;
(b) gradual socialist transformation of agriculture on the basis of co-operatives;
(c) planned development of the national economy.

The role of the Party is critical in the transition to socialism. What is needed is a party which is linked to the masses and guided by Marxist-Leninist theory and which helps the masses to struggle to gain increasing control over the use made of the means of production. It is not enough simply to "proclaim" that the party's ideology is Marxist-Leninist, or to affirm that the party is determined to build socialism, or that it remains loyal to revolutionary ideals. It must be shown concretely that the political and ideological practices of the party are in fact socialist, and proletarian. The class character of the party's political and ideological practice shows itself in the structure of its internal relations, and in its relations with the state apparatus.

Party activity at the grassroots level is vital. The Party prepares programmes and provides ideological leadership. It is impossible to embark on the transition to socialism without a party of socialism; a party that is clear ideologically. Scientific ideology gives the movement direction and understanding of the inter-relationship between short-run measures and long-term changes, as well as a clear grasp of class allies and enemies.

The transition to socialism requires a combined focus on developing productive forces with changes in social relations. A major problem faced by a government working for a transition to socialism in a country like Zimbabwe, is how to meet the demands of capitalists to ensure their co-operation without alienating workers and the peasants. The government will be subjected to all kinds of threats and blackmail. Some of these threats are testing probes by the capitalist class to determine how firmly committed the government is to its socialist goals. What the capitalists often want is the adandonment of socialism altogether. If the government's socialist programme is to retain credibility, exemplary and resolute actions should be taken against some capitalist enterprises that fail to co-operate to teach others a lesson. Any sign of irresolution and backsliding on the part of the government in the face of capitalist defiance, especially in the early stages, can open the way to large-scale opposition.

Nationalisation of capitalist enterprises though an important step is not enough. What is needed is the "socialisation" of the means of production involving the control by the producers over their conditions of existence, i.e. changing the objectives and class character of the enterprises being nationalised. This requires the development of entirely new social relations, without this the old relations which permit exploitation and class domination continue to reproduce themselves in nationalised industries. Control by the workers over their conditions of existence and therefore over the means of production and the products of their work, constitutes the essence of socialist relations of production. But not only must the relations of society be changed, but workers and their class allies must also change and prepare themselves for political control. This involves many years of popular struggle which must transcend purely economistic demands.

In the final analysis, real transformation can only be achieved by workers and peasants engaging in class struggle at all levels. The oppressing class will not give up anything without a fight.

deposits and lay-bys

Many people have used this form of purchasing and many more are considering doing so. Generally people choose this method of buying to reduce the hardships often suffered in the normal credit system. In some cases a customer wishes to acquire a piece of property quickly but has no adequate buying power at the moment. In both cases, deposits and lay-bys are a "middle-of-the-road" way of achieving what you want.

The system of lay-bys usually means that you pay over a period of time and are only allowed to take the goods when the full amount has been paid.

Below are examples of lay-by agreements: commonly a lay-by agreement involves a seller and a buyer.

a) The seller agrees to sell you the goods when the full price is paid, but he will "help" you by acting as a savings account into which you will pay varying amounts until the price is eventually saved up. Then and ONLY then will the seller enter into an agreement. Very often by this time the price of the goods will have gone up and extra money is needed before they can be delivered.

b) The seller agrees at the very outset to sell the goods at an agreed price; he accepts the first payment, allows the consumer to pay the balance off over a period but WILL NOT DELIVER the good until the price is paid in full.

c) Often, when the goods are not freely available, you may agree to pay a deposit and the seller agrees to reserve them, usually for a fixed period, until you decide whether you want to buy them. In this case the seller will only take the deposit if you agree to forfeit the deposit if you don't buy the goods before a certain date.

In all these examples and in many more, disputes are unavoidable. It is common knowledge that between the two parties in a deal it is usually the seller who knows it all, or at least has a clue. Maybe it is because he or she is bound by trade regulations or some other industrial or commercial force. Even in cases where the necessary documents are provided, the customer generally does not take much care to study the documents before signing.

In many cases the sales personnel don't explain the documents clearly enough to the customer, and when the customer comes back to make a complaint the sales person is a different one. It's also quite possible that you will be nailed down by one little clause you didn't bother to study carefully.

Before you sign a contract:

contracts should be studied carefully. If someone pushes one under your nose and says "Don't worry, it's just a formality," don't be rushed; you might just be signing away your legal remedies. Remember that, if a dispute arises, and unless you can prove duress (that is you were forced to sign) or fraud, the courts will be obliged to uphold the contract, no matter how unfair it seems.

- so the first rule is - read carefully. If you find clauses you don't like, try to negotiate a change. You probably won't succeed but it is well worth trying if you can explain just why you feel a particular clause is unfair. If the other party is adamant that no changes can be made, and you have to accept the terms, then try to make sure that you do nothing to give the company the opportunity to use the unfair clauses against you.

-make sure you know the terms of the contract- so often consumers dig their own graves through their own stupidity.

In lay-bys disputes often arise when a customer changes his/her mind and no longer wants to buy the article, and wants a refund. OR-when a customer begins to pay irregularly, OR-when the goods are damaged before the full amount is paid. Any one of these irregularities can be remedied by knowing the terms of the contract beforehand. ●

TACTICS FOR STUDY

"Studying is the gateway to success", so the wise say. I am sure students, especially those in higher secondary schools and other people reading for degrees know that to pass successfully you need to read widely. While you have to read many books in the search for information, you are going to discover that some of the books have many pages, but do not have all the information you need. At the same time, you need to consult many books to get the right information and to go through this process, you need a lot of skill - that is, good and easy methods which help you to get the information you want in the shortest possible time.

Joan Addison, a former Nyatsime College teacher and now compensatory English instructor at the University of Zimbabwe, has written a book titled Studying in Zimbabwe. This book trys to help the higher secondary school student and those studying for degrees, to build the study skills needed to succeed.

This book also aims to help the teacher in his/her job because he/she has to be well versed in his/her subjects so as to be able to pass on effective and useful knowledge.

Studying in Zimbabwe has a very useful collection of chapters. Joan Addison has tactfully turned problems faced by students in their search for information into interesting chapters.

Chapter One trys to answer the question "why study?". Here the book discusses motives for wanting to study. It is very important to have a clear motive. For example, you may want to study to get promotion, earn more money, get a better job or improve yourself. So having one of these as your motive, will help you to study when reading becomes boring and difficult.

Chapter Two discusses the various ways of studying. It introduces you to what is involved in studying. You should know what type of studying you want. The type of study you want depends on the chances available to you. To an employed person, getting time to study may prove to be very difficult because you have family duties that need your attention. So with this point you need to consider the following:

Part-time stuuying by correspondence, full-time study by corresoondence, part-time study at a university, and full-time study at a university. All these types of studies have their advantages and disadvantages - so the choice is yours, (Shauri Yako).

Chapter Three goes on to discuss methods of studying - that is where you want to study, when and how. When you are studying at home, you need to attend to visitors and family plus study at the same time. So you must decide where to do your studying, when and how, without sacrificing the other.

Chapter Four shows you how to get the most from your textbooks. Chapter Five explains how to be selective. In your search for information from many books you do not have to read everything in those books or when you take notes, you do not have to write down everything. There are systematic ways to take notes so that it will be easy for you when you want to revise. So this chapter has been set out to show you how to take notes.

Chapter Six discusses ways of making use of available resources such as newspapers, books, libraries, radio and T.V., etc.

Chapter Seven discusses how to tackle your written assignments. Chapter Eight goes on to allay your examination nerves. It tells you how to prepare and take examinations.

Understanding yourself better is very important when you want to study, so Chapter Nine gives you lessons on psychology. It tells you how to prepare for and take examinations.

When you have been successful in your higher secondary education and have also been accepted at the university, what do you need to know? What do you start with, and how? The last chapter provides this information.

From the chapters above, you can see that studying for an examination is not just picking up a book and starting to read. You need to have dynamic and well considered systems of study to follow. This cannot be said to ensure succes, but can double your efforts.

Understanding how to study economically and effectively will lead you to organise your life so that you study regularly and systematically. People are different in many ways, so a method that works for you may not work for others, but your success depends on yourself.

If you are a higher secondary school student or you are studying for a course or degreee, you definitely need to plan your ways of reading and decide which methods to use, and where and when you want to study. You need guidelines on how to plan your study. Studying in Zimbabwe will go a long way in trying to answer your questions. This is a book you should buy now if you want to succeed.

Studying in Zimbabwe is by Joan Addison, and published by Mambo Press. It sells at most educational bookstores for $2.95.

WOMEN COMBATANTS

Young Women in the Liberation Struggle, published by Zimbabwe Publising House, edited by Kathy Bond-Stewart.

The role of women in liberation struggles seems to be a favourite topic for the followers of modern day revolutions. Perhaps it is because, for the first time, the role of women in war is being recognised, and the modern feminist movement is not about to let this recognition once more recede as it has in the general view of history. Women have always served somehow in armed struggles, whether it was on the battlefield or at home in the munitions factory is not significant; the fact remains that women often serve as the back-up during times of war, keeping the economy going to supply the army with its needs, not to mention the moral support.

The role of women in Zimbabwe's liberation struggle has been the topic of study for several researchers, and there have been many interviews collected. Women are generally present in any posters, art work or publicity about the war (ie. the monument at Heroes Acre). Yet whether the history books which are presently being written will continue to recognise their role, or relegate it to a minor mention, is yet to be seen. It is for this reason that Young Women in the Liberation Struggle is a disappointment. What is needed is a book which will remind us of the importance of the women, not only in actual combat, but as the eyes and ears of the guerillla movement, as their cooks, and the smugglers of food and munitions. This book fails to state strongly the importance of the women in the struggle, and although it is interesting reading, falls far short of its possibilities.

Young Women in the Liberation Struggle is a collection of interviews, essays, and poems by women who were involved in the struggle. Their writing is deeply personal and touching. One does get a sense of their involvement in the struggle, and the suffering they endured along with the revolutionary spirit that we may have by now fogotten. Some of the poetry is very good and captures the thoughts of these women, not only on the struggle, but on the questions

which plague them as far as their future and their identity as women in the new Zimbabwe is concerned. But how much more beneficial the book may have been if the large amount of white space it contains would hve been filled with some hard-core facts, such as the number of women militarily trained, the numbers actually having served in combat zones, the number who gave their lives, etc. so that it would serve as a real reminder of the role of these women.

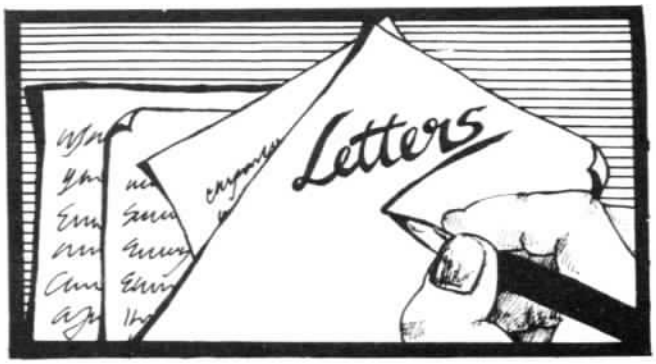
Unlike some other books on the struggle, this book does not make the mistake of contributing the independence of Zimbabwe to one political party alone. There are essays from both ZIPRA and ZANLA ex-combatants in almost an equal number, and the editor deserves credit for her awareness in this somewhat touchy area, which many historians are chosing to ignore.

Aside from the need for further facts, there are two other areas which could have easily been covered, and which are basic in getting a full picture of the role women played in the struggle. The first is their relation to the male comrades. This is an area which I'm sure many of the women would have felt free to discuss, and an area which is still causing repercussions today. The liberation struggle was the beginning of what one might term the "sexual revolution" in Zimbabwe, marking a transition from the traditional norm where men and women had very little contact with each other on a day to day basis, to men and women working and living together as equals. This revolutionary idea is quickly disappearing in our post-revolutionary society, yet these women have known a society where things were different. What did they feel then- in the bush- and what do they feel now - back in "normal" society?

The other area omitted is the role of the "chimbwido". It was these women who actually had an even more dangerous task of supplying information, and food to the combatants. It was these women, some of them not young, who took the risk of smuggling food out of the keeps right under the noses of the Rhodesian Forces. It was often those who stayed in the country who suffered greatly, being subjected to harrassment and beatings by the Rhodesian Forces. Surely they deserve some mention!

The section titled "Our Present Life" breaks from the normally optimistic tone of the book to state the fears and problems which these women now face. This could have again been punctuated with some facts - which however disheartening- would have given us some idea as to whether or not their struggle is indeed making progress. Facts such as; how many of these women are presently still in the army? How many are active in their respective political parties or in government? How many have had the opportunity to go on with further education? In other words, have Zimbabwean women seen real progress, or received just a pat on the back for their efforts?

Young Women in the Liberation Struggle is the first in the Women of Africa series published by Zimbabwe Publishing House.



MAY DAY

Dear Sir;

I attended the 1984 May Day celebrations at Rufaro Stadium in Harare. Indeed, they were colourful, the mood for celebrating appeared to be in total control, and the stadium full to capacity.

Nevertheless, I feel that the celebrations were really a public relations exercise for the private capitalist companies. The banners and colours that dominated the processions inside the stadium were the colours which represented and advertised for the capitalist companies. This must stop! May Day is a workers' day - it is not a day to praise the capitalist companies, and the quality and prices of their goods!

Some of these companies used their workers to throw sweets and fabrics to the workers and children inside the stadium! One should have seen the pandemonium created by this capitalist "magnaminity". Some people were nearly trampled down by the rush of the needy and hungry, especially the children. This must be stopped! Private companies can have their own day if they so wish. The should not be allowed to continue misusing and misdirecting May Day.

I also noticed that there were no speeches by the workers, except one by the president of the ZCTU. That is not good enough. Workers representing different trade unions and industries must speak and say what their grievances are, and how they mean to bring about socialism in Zimbabwe. The speeches must be the culmination of the day that includes processions of flag-carrying, slogan chanting, and revolutionary song through the city of Harare! The processions should snake their way to Rufaro Stadium. Also lacking in the streets of Harare were the May Day flags, placards and banners - I saw very few of them.

When all this has taken place, then the Prime Minister or the Deputy Prime Minister could give the last closing speech.

Workers of Zimbabwe, unite against imperialism, neo-colonialism, colonialism, the multinationals, and capitalism in Zimbabwe, and in other countries! Workers of Zimbabwe unite against tribalism and racism in the economy and politics of the country! Only your unity and class consciousness in alliance with the peasants will deliver us to socialism.

Yours sincerely,

Mushandi-Isisebenzi

MARX ALSO UTOPIAN

Dear Editor;

I read with interest you articles on Marxism (Issues 6 and 7) which I found to be an excellent summary of his ideas. However, I would like to take issue over two related points, namely, you assertion that, unlike the utopian socialists "Marx did not dream of a future" and your suggestion than Marx and Engels were able to predict the future because of their scientific approach to history" - hence the distinction between utopian socialism and Marxism/scientific socialism.

I would contend that for Marx the "dream" preceded the scientific approach and, indeed, prompted Marx to pursure a scientific approach so as to "prove" the inevitable realisation of his dream - of course, he was fortunate to have the Hegelian dialectic at hand which, if "turned upside down" was the perfect methodological construct to use in order to establish the "scientific" basis of socialism. In 1848 Marx was already predicting the downfall of capitalism and the dawn of communism but his "proof" only appeared nearly 20 years later with the publication of Volume 1 of Capital in 1867. In reading Marx one cannot but sense, and indeed concur with, his vehement condemnation of the evil's of the capitalism which led him to socialism. He wished to see an end to the misery and exploitation of the workers under capitalism and therefore developed a philosophy, an analysis of capitalism, that promised just that. In short, his conclusion came first and his "proof" later.

This is particularly evident in the term "scientific socialism" which was used by Engels (but coined, ironically, by the anarchist Proudhon) to encapsulate Marx's doctrine. Is it not too much of a coincidence that Marx's "scientific" study of history pointed to the inevitability of socialism, which just happened to be that state of society dreamt of by Marx wherein the class system is dead and "we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all"? That socialism will follow capitalism was, for Marx, a truth deduced from the laws of social evolution and therefore had a "scientific" foundation In this sense, socialism is merely the next stage in the evolution of mankind, and is therefore neutral. But socialism is also a moral ideal and therefore a value-laden concept. In short, Marx's "scientific socialism" posits that what should be (socialism) is what will be, that what is morally desirable is inevitable!

Where Marx differs from the utopian socialists, libertarian communists and other non-Marxist socialists is in his attempt to construct a scientific basis for his utopianism and in this he failed, albeit that his work contributed immeasurably to our understanding of society.

Yours,

Robert Monro