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WOMEN



The Journal on Social Change and Development is a collective publication which aims to promote discussion on current issues of importance to our readers. We welcome comments and contributions

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FUTURE FOCUS

The Focus for or next two Issues will be:

- Food and Farming
- Industry and Technology
- The Non-Aligned Movement.

We welcome contributions for these issues.

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contents

Editorial	1
The Political Economy of Rape	3
Can the Law Prevent Discrimination Against Women.	10
The New Labour Relations Act ...	12
Issues on Contraception	14
Third World column: Birth and Death	16
Know your Rights: Maternity leave under the New Law	18
Focus on South Africa: Rethinking the History of the SACP	19
Marxism: Democracy and the Current Political Crisis — Part 2	24
Book Review	23
Letters	28
Poetry Corner	30



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EDITORIAL

With the celebration of the end of the U.N. Decade for Women, the Journal on Social Change and Development could not but focus on the important issue of women. They constitute half of the human race which has, over centuries suffered (and continues to suffer) degradation and exploitation. We however do not view the female sex as a homogeneous bloc that is oppressed, as it were "one class". The female sex has internal class divisions that are oppressed and exploited differently (and oppress and exploit differently) depending on the specific charter of the system and method of production that dominate a society, and the position occupied by these class divisions within that system. We therefore reject the view that 'women' are 'sisters' suffering an oppression and exploitation that has nothing to do with 'class' but with the biological fact of being women. Women's oppression is historical, not natural.

In this issue, Arnold Sibanda considers the question of rape and argues that it must be understood in the context of the historically evolved and evolving political economy of Zimbabwe, which has brought about peculiar types of socio-psychological attitudes and pathologies which manifest themselves - in this specific question - in male violence against the female sex. Although Sibanda argues that tougher punishments should be meted out in courts to the rapists he emphasizes that the basis for ending the degradation and sexual violence against women can only be established by organising the working class of both sexes to lead the struggle for the ending of our patriarchal class divided and monopoly dominated capitalist society which also still has some feudal socio-psychological attitudes and pathologies.

Mary Tandon asks the question: Can the law prevent discrimination against women? By focussing on the minimum Wages Act, and the Legal Age of Majority Act, she argues that these laws are progressive indeed, but their implementation has not been effective.

She concludes that legislation alone is not enough ideological education to dislodge feudal and capitalistic thinking is necessary. She reiterates the point that the struggle against oppression and equality is not a women's struggle alone but one of the oppressed classes of both sexes.

Another contributor looks at the Labour Relations Act 1984 and considers how it affects female and child labour. On women, the mother says the breast-feeding hour is not very helpful to the bulk of the low-waged female workforce because the transport costs may be too high and distance too great. Attention is drawn to the need for creches and nurseries near the place of work and warns against employer strategies to erode the few gains made by female labour. There is a need, she says, for workers of both sexes to unite in trade unions in order to safeguard their interests. On child labour, the point is made that although the law does not recognise contracts with juveniles, (except for apprenticeships) juvenile labour is rampant in agriculture and the law does not touch on this specific issue. A call is made for the labour movement and government to look seriously into the criminal issue of child labour.

On the Marxism page, K. Makamure continues the last part of his views on democracy in Africa and argues that the demand for democracy in Africa cannot be made on the basis of existing conceptions of the 'rituals' of bourgeois

parliamentary democracy as practised in Western imperialist countries. He says the demands must be for people's democracy based upon state institutions under workers' and peasants' power.

Dr Mhloyi in her article on Contraceptive Issues examines the implementation of Child spacing programmes and the acceptance of contraception.

She considers that contraceptive prevalence in Zimbabwe could be increased with better communication, a strong referral systems and greater effort toward the reduction of infertility.

In Focus on South Africa, Moeletsi Mbeki makes a contribution to the important political debate on the struggle in South Africa. This first contribution tackles the problem from the standpoint that the struggle for socialism takes priority over the struggle for national liberation, and that the South Africa Communist party (SACP) has 'shelved' indefinitely its socialist goals for a 'less revolutionary' objective of national democratic liberation. We attach great importance to the exchange of views on the struggle in South Africa and hope the struggle for the emancipation of the masses there will concretely benefit from our ideological effort.

The Know Your Rights column focusses on the rights of female workers with regard to maternity leave under the Labour Relations Act 1984.

Arnold Sibanda
Diana Patel
Trish Swift

Issue Editors



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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY

OF

RAPE

by

Arnold Sibanda

In this much celebrated end of the U.N. Decade for Women, it is pertinent to consider one dimension of violence against the female sex in Zimbabwe and indicate what it generally reflects. It is hoped that this will contribute towards strengthening the position of those honestly struggling against the oppression of women.

From the evidence of cases which have appeared in the local press lately, rape has increased and is increasing. To the horror of various sections of our society the range of rape victims varies from 8 month old infants to 90 year old widows, from 2 year-old daughters of the rapists to their 85 year-old mothers. Rapists came

from different sections of Zimbabwean society: they include former M.P.s, religious leaders, soldiers, policemen, school boys, teachers, members of the lumpen-proletariat, bandits or terrorists who sometimes carry the label of 'dissidents', and indeed members of the business and professional class. Typically in an unjust society the rape committed by the latter class is not publicised. That is the order of things where persons in dominant and privileged (misused) positions commit crimes. Whereas in fact, if a woman is pressured to obtain a job or promotion by sexually prostituting herself - then she is raped! If a young woman is pressured into sexual relations with a person wielding power and domination in society - then she is raped! Our 'respectable' members of society fear defining rape in this way - for they would be the MOST GUILTY!

Month	Offender	Victim	Sentence
Jan 13	Man	8 yr old girl	3 months
Jan 25	50 yr old man	11 yr old daughter	not verified
Feb 10	22 yr old man	2 yr old cousin	5 years
Feb 14	25 yr old man	8 month infant	5 years
Feb 24	19 yr old man	a wife	3½ years
Feb 29	19 yr old schoolboy	90 yr old widow	5 years
March 6	school teacher	14 yr old school girl	3 months plus lobola
March 9	33 yr old children's home boss	several girls	was to be sentenced
March 9	30 yr old soldier	a married woman and a 12 yr old girl	10 years

The seriousness of the crimes of rape was underlined by the announcement by the State on March 1, 1984, that a hard line would be taken towards rapists. The idea was that the decision should rest

with the Attorney General as to which court (magistrate or High Court) would try the case, and in the latter case the sentence would be stiffer in order that would-be rapists would be deterred. To this day citizens still wait

for such tough action. As late as November 27, 1985 THE HERALD reported that a 32 year old man who raped his 6 year old niece was sentenced to only 5 years - while on 29 November 1985, the same paper reported that a 27 year old young man got a similar sentence for raping a 40 year old deaf and dumb woman!

The concern by the State was precipitated by the figures indicating a sharp rise in the crimes of rape. The Herald on March 1, 1984 reported the following:

<u>Year</u>	<u>No of cases of rape reported</u>	<u>No. convicted</u>
1979	428	274
1980	436	—
1981	470	—
1982	554	—
1983	521	—
1984	—	293 plus 44 guilty of less offences

702 cases were withdrawn or the accused were acquitted

Although the above figures do not provide enough information, they do indicate the rise in the number of rape offences brought to court. However, as the people interviewed in the five-part series on Rape in The Herald at that time indicated, many cases are not brought to court for fear of humiliation of the victim who becomes, in many instances, the one on trial. The circumstances of the withdrawal and acquittal in the 702 cases stated by The Herald were not revealed. However, it is easy to surmise that the courts found that the rape victims were 'responsible' or 'insufficient' evidence was produced.

The crime of rape is not unique to Zimbabwe. Neither is the extent of its occurrence nor the types/ages of the victims. It is said that in the U.K., 6 005 cases of rape were tried in 1981 alone. This meant that sexual offences occurred at the rate of 39 cases per 100 000 people! A spokesman from the Embassy of this old and

supposedly civilised 'democracy' told The Herald of March 1, 1984 that British police had 'trouble' bringing cases to court because "sometimes it seems as if the victim is on trial rather than the accused."

The same Herald issue reported that in the biggest, richest, supposedly strongest and allegedly most democratic country of 'high-mass consumption' - the U.S.A. - only 1 in 10 rape victims reported the cases to the law. Even then, forcible rape was the most freque-

ntly committed violent crime in this civilised 'model' to the world! Some states had put the death sentence on statute books for rapists! A Texas judge waived a 99 year sentence to Depo-Provera injection in order to 'curb the uncontrollable sexual drive' of the rapist. The 'democratic' country normally gives the rapist a right to choose between castration and death. The less democratic Islamic fundamentalists of Iran will simply execute a rapist. The point here is, the rapist is seen as a "sick individual" who must be punished by a 'tough' sentence in order to 'deter' others."

What disturbs the moralists on this question (and on other questions) is that tougher sentences alone have not curbed the crime or other crimes, not even where capital punishment or neutralisation of the drive of the sexual apparatus is used. In this article, I will emphasise that to simply call for tougher sentences

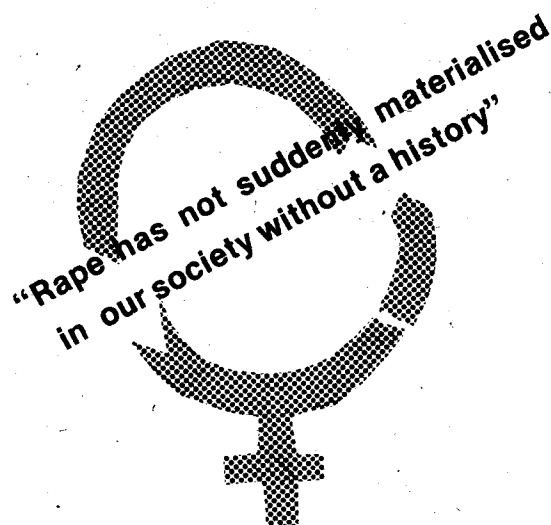
without looking at the nature of the problem in its complexity, is as futile as trying to cure the symptoms of a disease whose cause remains unknown. It is to do battle with appearances which do not immediately reveal the reality behind them. To The Herald, an activist of a woman's group overseas said:

"But with the emphasis on revenge and on retribution in legislative thinking, jail sentences will be used to contain a crime which is more than merely deviant behaviour but a reflection of a society which needs far-reaching changes (my emphasis). To treat the matter as crime and punishment rather than as a chain of causes and effects is to obscure the issue and limit progress."

In Zimbabwe, as with other social problems such as prostitution, school-girl pregnancies, baby-dumping, squatters etc., rape is seen as a 'societal contamination' or a 'social evil.' On October 31, 1983, The Herald reported that 3 000 men, women and children were detained at Chikurubi maximum prison for 'offences' ranging from prostitution, begging, squatting and vagabondage. The 'blitz' on so-called 'prostitutes' was underway and it spread like wild fire throughout our Republic. Women from widows, the aged, middle-aged, single and married - were netted together with children as young as 10! Officially, it was a 'tough action' against a 'social evil' which was blamed squarely on the women of Zimbabwe. The official blitz was called off with an official "sorry" to the innocent that were caught in the crossfire! Yet the apology went with a warning that 'prostitutes' should not rest, for the 'blitz' would come again!

Yet all the social problems seen as 'social evils' or 'undesirable' cannot be understood and tackled without an understanding of the economy in which they exist. Recently a judge declared that there was no reason for a man to rape a woman in our country

because 'sex' was readily available. Apart from the morally questionable attitude of the legal man, this opinion indicates a need to look into our system of production, distribution and consumption which makes sexual relations assume the character implied in our legal



man's 'opinion'. Rape has not suddenly materialised in our society without a history. That history must be investigated. Rape, like all the other so-called 'social evils' that I have referred to, has causes which must be investigated, which are general and specific. The causes are traceable to specific moments in the evolution of any society. Squatting for example, cannot exist unless one social group starts being denied by another the equal right of ownership of and settlement on the good and productive land. It cannot exist unless society has developed classes within it which own and classes which do not own the vast and fertile land, not unless the nation has institutionalised monopoly ownership of the land.

Our Zimbabwean political economy, which is neither a natural one nor an eternal one, is today defined by a certain social structure of oppression and dispossession. This social structure is characterised by unequal and exploitative relations, relations of privilege for a few and bondage for many, of super-abundance for the few and squalor, landlessness,

poverty, disease, unemployment, wage-slavery, insecurity, anxiety and untold suffering and privation for the majority. It is a political economy of inequality between the sexes, of chauvinism of the male sex and oppression, backwardness and exploitation of a large section of the female population. All this injustice is fortified by an ideological, legal, political and psychological superstructure which is overwhelmingly patriarchal. Rape has evolved in the context of the historical development of this political economy.

rather than monogamous and polygynous marriages known today was predominant. Groups or hordes of people had sex in common without any incest taboos.

With this animal like group marriage, the line of descent was traceable only through the mother who alone could be verified. The power of the woman lay precisely in that she alone could claim knowledge of parenthood of offspring, given the fact of communal sexual intercourse. Determination of line of descent was important in so far as it could disqualify one's membership of and entitlement to the resources of a group. Thus, the females had power over access to the property of the communal households. With this power, authority and respect, the female sex could not be raped.

Apart from the fact of communalised sex, matriarchy meant that women were in control. High death rates due to little control over natural conditions and the bad sanitary and dietary conditions meant that the dominant group should control sexual relations, particularly sexual abuse of females in so far as they were a principal force for the reproduction of the group. It was the women who formed this dominant group (matriarchy). Thus, if rape could be said to be a useful concept for that period, it certainly was checked by women who could punish the offender severely by banishing him from the group and from entitlement to its resources. Such banished 'criminals' could become slaves!

But this was the golden age for the female sex which no doubt had its own contradictions based on the primitivism of the social organism itself. Control over the forces of nature had barely advanced. Ideological obscurantism reigned supreme. The power of the woman lay in her command over access to the property of the communal household and her crucial role in production and reproduction. Scientists of history inform us that once this situation changed, a world historical defeat of the female sex took place. Mother-

"All this injustice is fortified by an ideological, legal, political and psychological superstructure that is overwhelmingly patriarchal"

Societies have not always existed as they are on earth, but have evolved and are evolving constantly through stages. Each of these stages has been punctuated more or less by struggles that have resulted in different main methods of obtaining the essentials of life (dominant modes of production). The first stage was when people lived more or less like animals, hunting and gathering things. Broadly, they lived in groups or hordes. The most advanced stage of this early life has been called 'primitive communalism.' In this as yet undifferentiated society, everything was held in common for the group. Importantly, at this stage women had a more superior position than men. The scientists of this history refer to this stage as characterised by mother-right or matriarchy or a period of great respect for the female sex. They say primitive communalism could only be possible with the dominance of the female sex. Group marriage

right was replaced by father-right. With the production of a surplus classes came into existence. A division of labour which had hitherto been merely sexual, assumed a new social character. A male dominated social group came to own and control the means of production and of subsistence while the female sex degenerated into servitude and slavery.

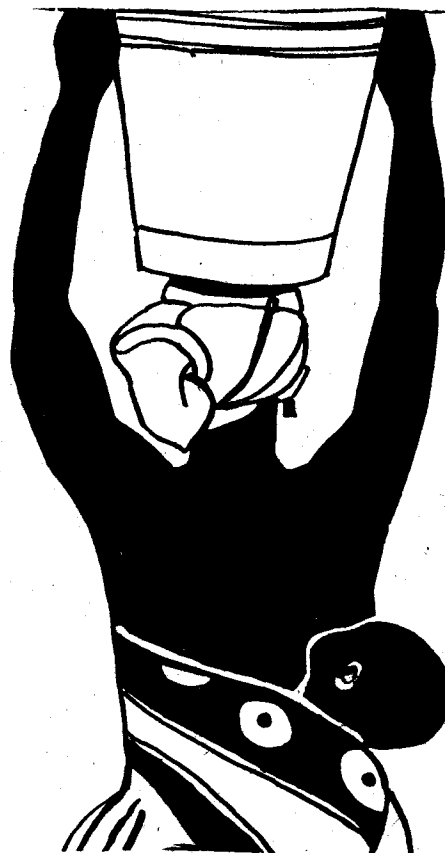
Primitive communalism was superseded by slavery, a method of production of things which make life possible in which the slave-master owns land, products and the producer who is the slave. The slave is a 'thing', a tool like a hoe, a shovel or a hatchet. Augmenting the pool of slaves was achieved by purchasing slaves or by organising and overseeing their biological reproduction. To increase production, the slave-master increased slave numbers and intensified their labour. In this context then, women slaves were abused in every way. The slave-master could force sexual intercourse between slaves who had no emotional attachment to each other. He raped slave women to whom he related as simply things usable for his greatest all-round enjoyment.

Under slavery then, women suffered a double oppression - first, as economically exploited producers - second, as females subjected to a sexual / biological and psychological rape. Slavery, which was based on new relations to property and the means of production represented the emergence of a class divided society which deepened the oppression and sexual abuse of the female sex.

History's motive force for change lies in the contradiction between social forces. This contradiction and struggle led to the overthrow of the slave mode of production and the slaves became free peasants. But they came under a new form of bondage with the inception of the feudal system. 'Free' peasants became serfs bonded to a new land-owner class. To remain on the owner's land, peasants were requir-

ed to pay rent or tax by either working on the owner's plot for a specified number of days (labour rent) or to surrender a specified portion of their produce to him ($\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{3}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$, rent in kind) or, as happened later in history (and happens today) to pay tax in money. In our country, we know that in the Mwene Mutapa empire, for example, peasants were required to work one in every thirty days in the King's field, a perfect feudal exploitative arrangement!

Peasant households worked flat out to meet both their own subsistence requirements and those of the parasitical land-owners, the feudal chiefs. Women and children were the backbone of direct production while the male "heads of household" generally supervised their labour, transferring the surplus product from them upwards through 'chiefs' to the state (king) at the top. The women's role in social production and biological reproduction meant that acquisition of many wives (via abduction and/or purchase through so-called lobola) was a sure way of expanding the



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S TRIBUNE CENTRE.

"Women and children were the backbone of direct production ..."

labour force deployable in production. Sexual abuse of the female sex became rampant and varied in form. Stripped from actual ownership of the means of production, females became helplessly dependent on the patriarchal land-owners and male 'heads of households.' Female oppression became inextricably linked with the general exploitation of peasants by the land-owning class. As in slavery, it was not a crime for the landowner to force sexual intercourse (rape) on a peasant woman. Indeed, in feudal Europe, the lord of the manor availed himself the privilege of the so-called 'right of the first night' in which he demanded sexual intercourse with the wife of his newly married serf before allowing the serfs to enjoy their conjugal rights. This sexual abuse and rape of peasant women, which confirmed the dominant class position of the patriarchal land-owner and affirmed the enslavement of male serfs and their wives, is not unknown in the households of some of our nationalities today, going under the guise of 'our culture'. This situation confirms the position of the lower classes of the female sex as being suppliers of labour, sex, offspring, first, to their immediate male-owners and second, to the entire privileged feudal class.

The class struggles of feudalism - primarily between the feudal aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie allied with sectors of the peasantry - ushered in the capitalist system with a patriarchal bourgeoisie in power. In our own country, a series of bloody struggles between merchant capital and the indigenous ruling and ruled classes, from the 16th century onwards, culminated in the establishment of capitalism by Imperialist capital in the 1890s. This historical fact makes even more nonsensical the twaddles of the many ranters who claim that capitalism is natural to Zimbabwe, that Zimbabweans have always been capitalists and will always be so!

With the inception of capitalism,

in the world generally the peasant and new working-class women fell deeper into a political, psychological, economic and bio-physical double oppression, firstly as females, secondly, as the exploited class. Women and children worked in bad and unsanitary conditions in the cottage industries of the rising capitalists, sometimes even in the mines. With the lowest wages paid to them, they were a cheap source of labour power. The employment of women in the most alienating, tedious, menial, low skilled and lowly paid jobs and in casual labour is widespread under capitalism to this day - this is also true in our own country! Witness the horrible conditions of work and life of women in our Food, Agriculture and Textile industries and in Small-scale commercial shops and undertakings - and all this despite our laws and regulations! This is the lot of the working-class women. Our bourgeois and aristocratic females, who are everyday falsely glamourised as sexual objects and hypocritically revered by the immoral petty-bourgeois males, remain oppressed as members of the female sex. On the question of the class struggle and of setting a basis for the complete liberation of women from rape and sexual abuse, they are not allies of the oppressed classes.

The social subordination and exploitation of women today is rationalised by a combination of a hypocritical capitalist gender ideology, claiming 'respect for ladies', (yet hiding a reality of contempt and violence against women as revealed by the humiliation of rape victims in patriarchal dominated bourgeois courts), with a primitive feudalistic attitude which invokes so-called 'culture' to hide enslavement, sale, sexual abuse and violence perpetrated against women. This on the one hand, confirms the historical defeat of the female sex, and on the other, a real contemporary fear of the potential for the intervention of the oppressed class within that sex. Yet, the greatest trick of the feudal-cum-bourgeois order is

its ability to keep the oppressed masses of men and women in ignorance, to arrest the development of their intellectual capacities, to keep them imbued with an ideological obscurantism which hails their enslavement as "our traditional culture."

It is clear then that the present day specific character of sexual violence against women is a product of a historically evolved society that has developed class antagonisms within it. This has produced socio-psychological traits in our citizens (which some think are mere pathologies) which correspond to the class-based general violence against the oppressed. The world histori-

cal defeat of the female sex with the passing of primitive communalism, sounded the entrance of class society into history. The only sure way to establish a material basis for the ending of immorality arrogance, hypocrisy, rape and violence against women and other people lies not so much in tough legal punishment of the individual - though a case is strongly made for this too - but in organising for the ending of the patriarchal class divided society of monopoly capitalism with its attendant primitive feudal socio-cultural survival. Objectively, to lead other social groups in this mission, there is need for a politically conscious and advanced working-class of both sexes.

A Day in the Life of a Woman in Rural Africa

Source: UN Economic Commission for Africa



can the law prevent discrimination against **Women Women Women**

by Mary Tandon

The independence of Zimbabwe was achieved through the liberation war, a war carried out by men and women fighting side by side. In other words, there was no discrimination against the role of women in the struggle for independence.

Since 1980 the Government of Zimbabwe has taken cognisance of the fact that the former colonial regime's discriminatory policies based on race and sex should be abolished.

Besides the Zimbabwean Constitution which provides broadly against discrimination and inequalities, there are a number of Acts that provide specifically against discrimination on the basis of sex. To name a few:

- (a) The Sex Disqualification Removal Act provides that women have the right, if possessing the necessary qualification, to hold the same offices and positions as men.
- (b) The Minimum Wages Act provides that there "shall be equal pay for equal work, notwithstanding race or sex."
- (c) The Legal Age of Majority Act provides that "a person shall attain the legal age of majority on attaining the age of eighteen years of age." This is the most important Act relating to equality between the sexes.

I would like to analyse the effectiveness of the above-mentioned Acts when administered.

**GUARDIANSHIP
LAND RIGHTS
Inheritance
MAINTENANCE
ICE
Custody**

Equal pay for equal work

The Sex Disqualification Act.

It is correct to state that there are some (very few) women who hold top positions in their employment and that more women are moving away from "jobs" popularly known to be "women's jobs" and entering into the legal, financial and medical professions. But this is only a drop in the ocean for most of these professions are still male-dominated.

Discrimination in employment is apparent but difficult to prove to the standard required by the Court. Nevertheless we are all aware that discrimination exists in the areas of employment and promotion. Evidence of this awareness can be noted in the attitude of the society and the structure of the system. Employers and decision-makers are predominantly men who hold the belief that men are the breadwinners of families and therefore in a choice of the employment of a male or female, the former would be given favourable consideration. Employers complain that women are less productive than men. The reasons are that women are often absent from work due to child bearing and child care, etc. Women are unreliable in that they cannot stay on a job for long, for example a married woman is usually forced to leave her job, in the event of her husband being transferred to a different town to work.

Lastly because of culture and tradition men do not consider it proper that a woman should be a "boss" over male employees, who in most cases consider women to be a rival and a threat.

These statements hold no water. If Zimbabwe seriously chooses to introduce a socialist system, then men and women should share responsibilities equally and create equal conditions and opportunities for women to work in.

The Minimum Wage Act reflects the socialist system. Here again the intention of the Act is difficult to implement in the present system and structure of Zimbabwe. It is difficult to know, whether employers have taken account of this piece of legislation. The discrimination which women encounter in labour is so subtle that law alone is incapable of protecting women (and men). In some cases, women who have the same qualifications and experience as their male counterparts, are ranked low by employers, in order to by-pass the Act. This type of discrimination is not limited to just sex but also to the class of the workers.

The Legal Age of Majority Act.

This Act has, what appears to be a very simple provision - that a person on attaining the age of 18 also attains the status of a major. This simple provision, however, has very wide implications.

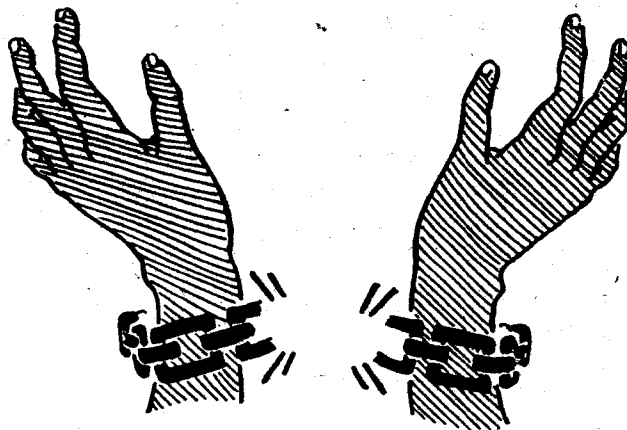
The status of African women under customary law and practice was that of a minor all their lives. Since this Act confers a majority status on all persons in Zimbabwe who are 18 years and above, African women for the first time can enjoy majority status regardless of whether they are married, single, divorced or widowed. They enjoy all the legal rights enjoyed by their male counterparts, that is:

- (a) the right to sue and be sued in one's own right;
- (b) the right to contract in one's own capacity;

- (c) the right for an African woman to marry with or without lobola being negotiated and therefore consent of a parent or guardian to marry is no longer a legal requirement; and
- (d) the right to own moveable property other than those that an African woman is entitled to under traditional practice.

These wide legal provisions under the Legal Age of Majority Act go against the norms of African customary law and customary practice. For example, parental consent to the marriage of an African girl, irrespective of the age, is a legal requirement under the African Marriages Act; the right to contract and to defend any rights in Court by an African woman of the age of majority is contrary to the provision of section 3 (3) of the Customary Law and Primary Courts Acts; and the right for a married African woman to own moveable property after marriage is the opposite of what is provided for under section 13 of the African Marriages Act.

The above examples show that, no steps have been taken by the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to amend or repeal provisions of existing African Customary Law that are inconsistent with the legal rights granted under the Legal Age of Majority Act.



WOMEN as EQUAL PARTNERS

THE NEW LABOUR RELATIONS ACT

AND THE WAY IT AFFECTS FEMALE AND CHILD LABOUR

One can only presume on the basis of section 3(3) of the Legal Age of Majority Act, that this Act overrides customary law practice. This presumption will have to be verified by test cases before the Court like the recent case on the claim of seduction of damages by the father of a major daughter. The supreme court of Zimbabwe ruled, in that case, that the right to sue for seduction damages, no longer lies in the capacity of the father of a major daughter.

I have mentioned briefly some existing legislations and areas of reform that the government has introduced that would bring about equality of rights between the sexes. However it has generally and correctly, been claimed that these legislations have, so far, not been totally effective. In other words legislation alone is not enough. Legislation has to go hand in hand with education, that is, ideological education against feudal cultural and capitalistic thinking and practice as the fundamental strategy.

The struggle against inequality and oppression is not only a women's struggle, intended to be one aimed against the opposite sex. On the contrary, it is a class struggle which includes both the sexes. The female sex has been the one that seems to have received the worst end of the weapon of discrimination and oppression, and, therefore women are consolidating their struggle regionally and globally to claim their basic human rights.

DID YOU KNOW?

Women represent 50 percent of the adult world population.

Women make up one-third of the official labor force.

Women earn 10 percent of the world's income.

Women own 1 percent of the world's property.

Women grow 50 percent of the world's food.

Thirty percent of the households in the world are headed by women.

Source:
World Population
Prospects: Estimates
and Projections
as Assessed in 1982,
United Nations

The new labour legislation has provisions that will benefit female wage workers. For example, equal wages for equal work, non-discrimination against females on any grounds to mention a few. The right of women to an hour's breastfeeding every working day is also safeguarded on condition that it does not disrupt normal production processes. This is progressive indeed. However there are other constraints within industry and the labour movement that may dilute the progressive intentions behind the new labour legislation.



The breast feeding provision is only useful to those women who have company or private transport that allows them to go home at particular times within the working day in order to breastfeed their babies. The bulk of the low-wage female employees in industry cannot afford the transport costs involved in commuting from work to and back home to breast feed. Already, some employers are complaining that some women abuse this provision by going shopping on the pretext that they are going to breastfeed their

children. However, this probably applies to a few enterprises, particularly, those close to town. Most women in industry cannot leave their workplaces to do their shopping within the hour allocated for breastfeeding.

The problems involved in implementing the breastfeeding clause point to the need for nurseries and creches near the workplaces of the bulk of our wage labour force. This is a problem that can be tackled by employers, trade unions and government as part of the process of the advancement of women, creating better conditions for child care and implementing labour legislation. Wage workers have an interest in ensuring that their children are well cared for while they are at work. Child care facilities near work-places will also release more women from being housebound. In turn they will be able to spend more time on income-generating trading and co-operative activities in the rural and urban areas. Women in waged jobs will be more active in workplace-related and union activities when they do not have to worry about their children's welfare. Unwaged women will also have more time for literacy classes, political activities etc.

If childcare is not organised around workplaces, the provisions of the labour legislation may still affect women negatively by curtailing their prospects for wage employment. Employers can say that breastfeeding provisions disrupt production processes, that maternity benefits push up costs of employing female labour, that female workers' rates of absenteeism are higher than men's because women often stay away from work to look after sick children etc. But what can be said against this argument?

On the union side, female trade unionists have often said that the male labour leaders are not concerned about presenting and debating issues that are important to female wage earners in Zimbabwe. In some quarters, it is felt that women should not be working outside the

home anyway so that advancing female wage earners' interests may not be viewed as a priority by unions. All these factors may result in a tacit agreement between employers and male wage earners not to employ female workers. Alternatively, employers might decide to employ females under new job descriptions that actually devalue the jobs particularly those previously performed by men. Employers may decide that it is better to pay women maternity leave benefits which can be offset by the lower wages paid to women doing newly described jobs that are no different from the old ones. In addition to that employers may prefer female workers who are usually apolitical or docile. All these possibilities must be considered by the labour movement because they present possibilities for a division of workers in the interests of pro-capitalist industrial peace. In Britain, the increased employment of female wage labour has been used to press down the wages of all workers coming into the job.

There is therefore, a need for male and female wage workers to unite in order to safeguard their joint interests. They can do this by spearheading the provision of child care facilities at workplaces so that employers cannot use one section of the labour force to disadvantage another. A mixed labour force will prevent the use of 'female' wages to depress the wages of newcomers in industry while assuring promoted women of wages equal to those of their male counterparts. Mixed labour forces can be maintained if males and females co-operate to prevent the replacement of male with cheaper female labour. At the same time male workers need to co-operate with their female counterparts to ensure that women are not discriminated against in hiring, promotion and firing within various enterprises.

Another issue that needs mention is child labour. The new legislation states that no contract of employment is enforceable against

anybody under the age of sixteen. However, the juvenile may enforce any rights that have accrued to him/her under such contract provided that a contract of apprenticeship was entered into and registered under the law governing apprenticeship. Under these conditions, the contract can be enforced against the apprentice even if he/she is a juvenile.

In the agricultural sector, juvenile wage labour is used without any contracts. The legislation will not change this much because there is a mutual interest between the employers and the juveniles and their guardians in ignoring the provision pertaining to the employment of juveniles. This points to the need to examine the agricultural industry as a whole since it seems to thrive by employing both contract adult and juvenile labour.

Against the increasing international abhorrence of child labour, there is some concern among labour scholars about the basis for the profitability and efficiency of our agricultural sector. The long-term implications of having an uneducated and disadvantaged agricultural wage-earning population need to be considered. This view is based on the observation that

farm workers' children do not have schools with proper standards that are recognised by the Ministry of Education. Most of these children are the contract and seasonal adult wage workers of the future in the agricultural sector.

The labour legislation may not be the instrument for tackling the issue but it is necessary to discuss waged child labour on the commercial farms because it does exist extensively. On the employers' side, there needs to be a discussion of the trade-off between exploiting juvenile labour now and the need to reproduce more educated and skilled labour for the future.

The labour movement will have to consider whether its best interests are served by an uneducated, exploited and generally unhealthy labour force, a sizable section of which is juvenile. The government will also have to face the issue of whether its health, education and community development programmes will be implementable given the nutritionally and generally socially disadvantaged condition of agricultural wage workers. The present conditions of wage labour both juvenile and adult, are being reproduced while the government policies aim to eradicate them.

ISSUES ON CONTRACEPTION

by Dr Marvellous Mhloyi

Lecturer in Demography, Department of Sociology, University of Zimbabwe

There is an instinctive unanimous agreement to reduce mortality at local, national and international levels. However, expertise and fact is needed whenever any agency, be it private or public, attempts to communicate the need to effect fertility, a behaviour usually viewed as intimate between spouses. Yet contraception for spacing is a practice deeply rooted in our African culture. Why then could there be a divergence between the individual motives and public policies? The following interrelated issues can partly explain this phenomenon.

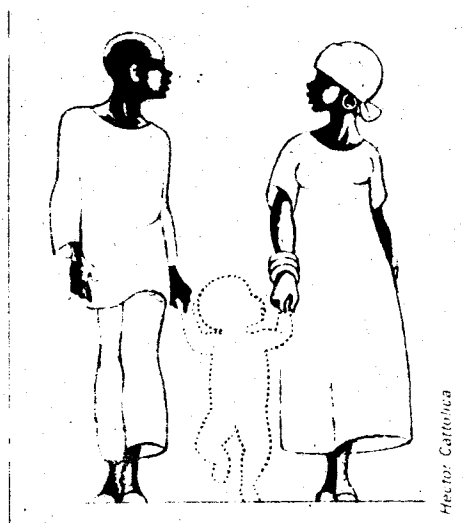
1. Ineffective and/or lack of communication between the governments, implementing agencies and the actors regarding responsible parenthood, methods of limiting fertility, and ways of combating infertility.

2. Failure to take cognizance of the socio-cultural and economic context within which fertility takes place.

3. Failure to appreciate the fact that the individual member of society articulates problems mostly at an individual level and within a specified locality.

4. Parents' fear of losing control over their fertility.

5. Rumours surrounding modern contraceptives which may never be clarified due to poor communication. This problem is often confounded by the fact that some rumours have some element of truth.



Hector Cattolica

Are these problems relevant to Zimbabwe?

Implicit in our contraceptive prevalence of 27 percent (modern methods) is the divergence of the public and the individual choice of solutions. I am therefore asserting that couples' perception and the consequent adoption of modern contraception is determined, to a very large extent, by the approach adopted by agencies at the implementation phase. This argument is strengthened by the results of a comparative study (Mhloyi, 1985) conducted in Chipinge and Masvingo. In this study, male and female respondents were interviewed on issues regarding individual childbearing practices.

Communication

The Western mode of contraception was formally introduced into our culture in 1955 with a subsequent set-up of the Family Planning Association of Rhodesia in 1967. Family planning was generally perceived, by the public, as a vehicle for limiting the African population. When the Zimbabwean government took over the Family Planning Association, its biggest challenge was to illuminate on its predecessors' intent, and to dissociate itself from those issues which culminated in wrong perceptions. The view of neocolonial genocidal tendencies is not any less destructive than that perceived as colonial.

A strong communication network between the top officials and the grassroots people is necessary for an effective family planning programme. Communication here does not mean simply television, radio and/or newspaper items. While these modern modes of communication are theoretically efficient, their effectiveness is limited particularly at our level of development. Sessions where the implementors and the actors discuss these so-called sensitive issues may be more productive. This will enable the implementing agencies to establish how rampant the problems are. Local solutions to the problems will be sought and amplified. In these sessions an attempt should be made to help individuals to project their thinking beyond the individual family unit. I view this sensitization process as necessary groundwork for the establishment of a family planning programme.

Spacing behaviour and mechanisms

Spacing is a practice deeply rooted in our Zimbabwean culture for its enhancement of fertility. With modernisation and the consequent transformation of the socio-economic nexus within which fertility takes place, spacing may take different forms where old mechanisms may be replaced by modern methods, and couples may begin to articulate fertility in terms of numbers.

The Chipinge/Masvingo study revealed that approximately 100 percent of the couples know traditional methods, withdrawal and abstinence. Also more than 90 percent of the couples have practised at least one of these traditional methods as a spacing mechanism. Erosion of abstinence (with an efficiency rate of 100 percent) is immanent though the pace is of varying degrees in different parts of the country. While the mean duration of abstinence is 9 months for the old female generation (women aged 40 years and above) it is only 3 months for the young generation. However, the minimum reported duration of abstinence for the young generation is 1 week and 2 months in Masvingo and Chipinge respectively. Yet withdrawal is not as 'efficient' as it was since the young generation is not as 'careful' as the old generation, eg. avoiding sex whenever the husband is drunk. Are modern contraceptives therefore replacing these traditional practices?

Of the 120 respondents interviewed slightly less than 10 percent reported current contraception. This percentage is much lower than the 27 percent reported by the Child Spacing Centre. Perhaps the areas covered in this reported study are outliers. While approximately 95 percent of the couples know at least one modern method of contraception — thanks to the Child Spacing Centre for successfully communicating that fertility is within the calculus of the individual couple — most couples do not use modern contraceptives because they are afraid of the side affects namely: infertility, giving birth to

deformed infants, delayed pregnancy, continuous bleeding, loss or gain of weight, falling hair, and skin blemishes. This list is by no means exhaustive. These reported side affects are not as mystical as those reported in other countries. Indeed, some of these illnesses may not be related to contraception but are viewed as such because of a poor referral system hence self diagnosis by the clients. Some of these rumours may be reduced just at the inception of the programme if the clients get education on the side affects of each method. On the other hand, absence of a strong back-up referral system has a number of adverse implications among them are:

1. That the implementing agency does not care about the well being of the clients but is only interested in achieving its goals, now likely to be viewed as genocidal.

2. That an individual has to use contraceptives at his or her own risk which is a tough decision to make. This negative perception of the change agents' intent leads to the outcry 'genocide' by the supposed benefactors of the well intended programme.

Infertility

Couples would like total control of their fertility. The relative importance of sterility in shaping attitudes towards, and acceptance of contraception became apparent in one district in Masvingo where a substantial number of women reported having few children because of secondary sterility. A loaded question was passed in two of the group sessions and a few individual cases:

"Why is it that the government wants to intervene when it means limiting our fertility and ignores us when we have infertility problems?"

While it is more difficult to provide services to diagnose and treat infertility problems, setting up a referral system in the central hospitals, and communicating to the couples of its availability is not as difficult since such a system is already in existence. Since our society is highly pronatalistic, couples seek treatment for infertility from as many traditional doctors as possible. And I must argue that helping one sterile female who might have exhausted all traditional doctors to have one such desired child could win more confidence in a given locality than myriads of posters and pamphlets.

Acceptability

Some couples, especially males, perceive modern contraception as a practice by prostitutes since married couples can achieve their spacing using traditional methods. To some, women are there to reproduce as many children as possible to extend the familial line. This hard-core pronatalistic group is not supportive of modern contraception partly because of their limited knowledge and/or fear of losing their fertility. Asked what they could do if they found their wives contracepting, the men responded:

"If my wife is contracepting without my knowledge it means that she must be having extramarital sex, she can only do that at her home" (young man, Chipinge).

"If I buy a cow, I expect milk from it, if it kicks me when I try to milk it, the logical thing is to sell it" (old man, Masvingo).

Yet there are other men who feel the economic pinch of having too many children, with limited resources available to enable children to acquire education, which is the only perceived means of intergenerational status transfer. This group is more keen to space and readily accept modern contraception as a more efficient means for spacing and possibly fertility limitation. The point here is that acceptance of modern contraception is not simply a matter of availability of the means, but also the motivation to adopt such means to achieve a specified articulated goal. And yet motivating couples is the most challenging and essential aspect of the implementation of a family planning programme. It is important to note that in some parts of Europe fertility declined to very low levels while approximately two-thirds of the population was using traditional methods, an indication of the relative importance of motivation.

Conclusion

Indeed, our contraceptive prevalence is the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa which is quite impressive. However, this level must be viewed just as a take-off point and an indication of the magnitude of the task ahead. Yet a more effective communication network, a strong referral system and a more serious effort towards the reduction of infertility may reduce resistance to the new techniques for spacing and/or fertility limitation.



BIRTH & DEATH

Over half a million women die in childbirth every year in Africa and Asia. And the world total is probably very much higher. In Latin America, for instance, three out of every thousand mothers in Ecuador and up to 20 out of every thousand in Honduras die before they can look into their new baby's face or hold it in their arms.

Though thousands die, many millions survive and have to live on with scars of a difficult pregnancy: displaced or weak wombs, cycles of debilitating infection, exhaustion, incontinence and bleeding. An estimated 25 million women a year are seriously ill after having their babies.

The dangers are increased by the weak state many women's bodies are in by the time they feel the first pains of labour, thin from lack of food, exhausted from work and the demands of previous pregnancies.

Two-thirds of women in Asia, half of African women and a sixth of women in Latin America are anaemic, proportions which increase markedly when they are pregnant, when two out of every three women in the poor world have the haemoglobin-starved blood of anaemia.

These women are suffering from 'nutritional anaemia', caused simply by lack of the right kind of food. In India, for instance, though rich women eat around

2 500 calories a day and put on an average of 12,5 kilogrammes of weight during their pregnancies, poor women eat around 1 400 calories a day and gain only 1,5 kilogrammes during those crucial nine months. Little wonder, then, that such women bear tiny, underweight babies. One-sixth of all babies weigh under 2,500 grammes when they are born and 95 per cent of these take their first uncertain breaths in the poor world, where they account for one-third of all infant deaths.

VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN

It is not only the illness surrounding pregnancy that affect women, however. At least one person in three harbours some species of parasitic worm; one in 20 has bilharzia; and malaria, once thought to be on the decline, has made a massive comeback to grip one person in six in its fevers.

There is now more information available on the health of women than ever before. In fact, WHO reports that their commitment to the aims of the Decade for Women has led some governments to start sponsoring research and gathering statistics to discover more about women's particular vulnerability to certain diseases. Over a quarter of the 76 countries reporting to WHO now monitor all health

statistics of men and women separately, and 54 percent collect mortality and nutrition figures separately.

And the evidence indicates that discrimination against women begins as soon as they are born. A Bangladesh survey found more girls than boys under five years old were malnourished because they were allocated smaller portions of food, and that infant girls were 21 percent more likely than boys to die in their first year of life. In Nepal the picture is similar, with more malnourished girls than boys under five years old with women 50 percent more likely than men to go blind as a result of chronic lack of food. Other research shows that, in some countries, when girls fall ill they are less likely to be taken to health centres than boys.

The Decade for Women saw the launching of what WHO calls 'the most optimistic statement of purpose ever made by the world community'. In September 1978, 134 nations met at Alma Ata in the USSR and pledged their support for a world-wide effort to bring health for all by the year 2000'. Primary Health Care was to be the key to the success of this effort. The principles were simple enough. If 80 per cent of all illness in the world is caused by the lack of clean drinking water and sanitation, then improving water and sanitation would have to become a priority. With malnutrition affecting one in four people and making them more vulnerable to disease, basic nutrition would also have to be part of the package.

Suddenly the eyes of health planners have begun to turn towards women: as cooks and feeders of children; as fetchers of water and firewood; as custodians of cleanliness and hygiene; as teachers of healthy habits; as people who bear babies, who breast-feed and wean them; who care for the sick, the disabled and the old - in other words as a vital resource on whom the world's health depends and

whose own health, therefore, needs preserving above all.

Forty-eight out of 70 countries reporting to WHO in 1983 have now formulated a national primary health care policy and a further eight are putting their emphasis on rural areas.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

A major advance for women, arising from the new emphasis on primary health care in many countries, is the increasing attention paid to providing better care for pregnant mothers and their babies. Maternal and child health (MCH) involves pre-natal check-ups, immunisation and advice on child-care, breast-feeding and weaning foods. Forty-two governments reported that they have expanded their MCH activities during the Decade, with Senegal actually restructuring its entire Ministry of Health to incorporate this new commitment.

Proponents of MCH in the US have estimated that 2,7 million dollars spent on pre-natal services would save between ten and 12 million dollars currently spent keeping premature, low birth-weight babies alive in intensive care units. And when pre-natal consultations in Portugal rose eightfold - from 19 000 in 1975 to 150 000 in 1982 - maternal and infant mortality rates plummeted by 12,9 and 12 per thousand respectively.

WATER AND SANITATION

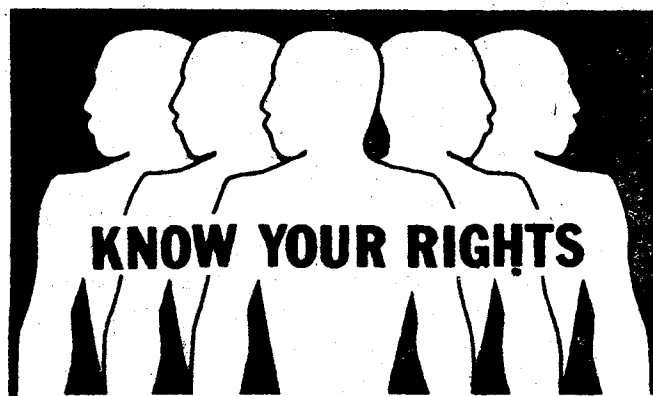
The Decade for Women saw the launch of another major world-wide initiative: the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade in November 1980. WHO estimates that, in the developing world (excluding China), 25 per cent of people in cities and 71 per cent of those in the countryside are without safe water to drink and 47 per cent of town-dwellers and 87 percent of the people in rural areas have no adequate sanitation.

The consequences of being without these basic amenities are ill health for all and great hardship

BIRTH AND DEATH

for women, who often have to walk long distances to fetch water. A person needs around five litres of water a day for cooking and drinking, and a further 25 to 45 litres to stay clean and healthy. But the most a woman can carry in comfort is 15 litres. Even if she lives near a standpipe, that means about 15 journeys a day with a full bucket. Small wonder that an estimated eight million children die each year of diseases that might have been prevented by sufficient clean water from a nearby tap.

Now 26 countries are making a special effort to look into women's particular needs in their attempts to meet the targets of the Water Decade.



MATERNITY LEAVE UNDER THE NEW LAW

1. A female employee who is pregnant and brings to her employer a certificate from her doctor or State Registered Nurse showing that her child might be born in the next 45 days is entitled to an aggregate (total) of 90 days maternity leave starting from a date of her own choice.

2. If the female employee agrees that before going on maternity leave she will give up her leave or vacation days which she was entitled to in the previous 6 months, she must receive not less than 75% ($\frac{3}{4}$) of her normal pay plus all her normal benefits from her employer and this is to be paid in the usual way and in the usual intervals.

3. If the employee was not entitled to any leave as above, or if she was entitled but does not want

or is unable to take such leave, she must be paid not less than 60% of her normal pay and benefits by the employer.

4. Once you have taken your maternity leave with the benefits as above, you must resume your work when the time is up. If you fail to go back to your normal work and with the same conditions as when you took your leave (except if you die or you are fired from your work) for a period at least as long as the time you were on maternity leave, you will have to pay back all the wages and benefits you received from your employer during your maternity leave.

5. You cannot take maternity leave more than once within 2 years. You cannot take maternity leave more than three times while working for the same employer.

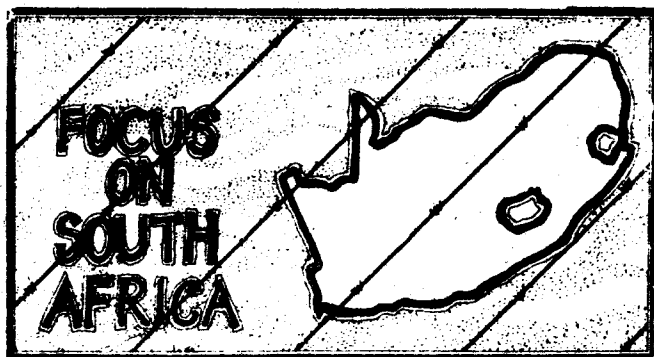
6. You are entitled to a total of 90 days leave (45 days before and 45 days after the birth of your child). If your child is born after 45 days from the day you started leave - say after the 48 days - your total leave can be extended by the same number of days - i.e. in case of 48 days, by 3 days, to a total of 93 days. But you will not be paid for the extra 3 days.

7. If during the birth of your child there were some complications and your doctor or State Registered Nurse gives a certificate to say that you need extra days to recover, your leave can be extended beyond 90 days by the number of days specified by your doctor or S.R.N. But you will not be paid for those extra days.

8. While you are on maternity leave, the law protects your rights to your normal benefits and what you are usually entitled to at work, your rights to seniority or advancement, promotion, your pension rights etc. just as if you had not gone on leave.

9. Once back to work, you are entitled to at least one hour or two half hour periods during working hours to nurse/feed your baby. If it is convenient for you, you can combine these periods with your tea breaks and or lunch breaks to make longer time for yourself.

10. If your employer does not



The Journal on Social Change and Development invites readers to submit contributions to the ongoing debate on the South African Revolution, about the role of different social groups and classes in the struggle against national oppression and 'colonialism of a special type', and the problems and perspectives of the Road to Socialism in South Africa.

RETHINKING THE HISTORY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY.

by Moeletsi Mbeki

"Before the passing of the (Suppression of Communism) Act, Congress, (i.e. ANC) and the Communist Party, though they had several meeting-points, had been fundamentally out of sympathy. The Communists denounced Congress as 'bourgeois reformist', while Congress regarded the Communist Party as a foreign racket led by non-Africans. The (ANC) Youth League was predominantly anti-Communist, and some of its members had even put forward a resolution that all Communists should be

expelled from Congress. But the (Suppression of Communism) Act of 1950 was so palpably a threat to African liberties that the Youth Leaguers decided, in the face of some Congress opposition, to collaborate with the Communists in protesting against it."

Anthony Sampson; The Treason Cage: The Opposition of Trial in South Africa; (London, 1958) p. 84.

To understand the history and politics of a party or movement it is not sufficient merely to read statements and declarations of intent by its spokesman and then lay back satisfied that one is a learned man. To gain a deeper understanding of the politics and history of a party, it is more important to examine and analyse the ACTIONS of the party or movement in question -- afterall we all know about leaders who "preach socialism by day while practising capitalism by night."

grant you all the above rights, he/she is guilty of an "unfair labour practice" and is breaking the law. If you agree with your employer for better conditions than these, so much the better, but if he/she refuses to grant your rights, fight for them by seeing your local trade union representative, your workers' committee or your local labour relations officer.

Kavanagh's letter in the Herald (28-11-85) was a response to my article also in The Herald (21-11-85) headed: Working class leadership in SA struggle: debate reopened. I think Kavanagh ignored the main part of my article, beside insinuating that Alec

Erwin, national education officer of the Federation of South African Trade Unions, Fosatu, is an affluent white academic who is afraid of the nationalisation of the oppressed.

My article was essentially aimed at bringing to Zimbabweans the debate now taking place within the growing labour movement in South Africa. Instead of expressing his views on the debate Kavanagh concentrated on the last third of my article where I had tried to situate in its historic context the debate on whether the working class should lead the struggle in South Africa and if it does not, what kind of alliances it should forge with the black bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and peasants. Kavanagh's main concern, on the other hand, was to defend the SACP claiming that there had been no change in its outlook and practices before it was banned in 1950 and since 1962 when it issued a new programme: *The Road to South African Freedom*: which remains the SACP's programme today.



In the background part of my article, I had written that from the 1920s up until it was banned in 1950, the SACP had "argued that the working class should lead the struggle against minority rule and that that way capitalism would therefore be abolished with the overthrow of minority rule." I had gone further to say that since 1962 the SACP had "shelved the issue of socialism and instead declared the SACP's support for the ANC." Kavanagh took issue with my view that the SACP has "shelved" socialism after 1962. He wrote: "The facts are that as far back as 1928 the Sixth Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow called for 'an independent native South African Republic as a stage towards a workers' and peasants' republic with full equal rights for all races, black, coloured and white.' South African Communists have never deviated from this basic position," declared Kavanagh, adding: "Socialism has not been shelved but the national liberation struggle is seen according to acknowledged principles of Marxism-Leninism as the immediate goal and as a stage on the road to socialism in the context of colonialism of a special type and the national democratic revolution."

This is correct! But what are the other facts? The simple fact is that from its foundation in July 1921 but especially after being prodded by the Communist International in 1928 to "head the revolutionary movement of the black masses for liberation ... (and) become the leader of the national agrarian revolutionary movement of the native masses" the SACP had tried -- with varying degrees of success to be sure -- to understand the class forces at work in South Africa among both the blacks and the whites and to use that understanding to attempt to develop class consciousness and class organisations among the black workers. The 1962 programme on the other hand "emptied" the black community of all class divisions and re-christened the blacks as oppressed people in

general. By this device, organisations of the blacks, at least those friendly to the Party, by the stroke of a pen therefore lost their class character and thus became people's organisations.

"As a national liberation organisation the ANC does not represent any single class, or any one ideology"

ions. "As a national liberation organisation," said the 1962 programme, "the ANC does not represent any single class, or any one ideology. It is representative of all classes and strata which make up African society" in South Africa. By this characterisation of the ANC, the SACP achieved many things all of which added up, in my opinion, to "shelving" -- or removing from the agenda for an indefinite period -- the issue of class struggle and therefore of socialist revolution in South Africa. The above characterisation of the ANC ignored the fact that South Africa probably had the longest history of African middle class organisations in Africa going back to 1880s when Imbumba zaBantu, black independent churches, the vernacular press and many other African middle class organisations came into being. Other black middle class organisations formed in this period were the Natal Indian Congress formed by Mahatma Gandhi in the 1890s and the (Coloured) African People's Organisation formed by Dr. Abdulrahman soon after the Anglo-Boer war.

What then became the character of the national democratic revolution? "The main content of (the national democratic) revolution is the national liberation of the African people," said the 1962 programme. "Its fulfilment is at the same time in the deepest interests of the other non-White groups for in achieving their liberty,

the African people will at the same time put an end to all forms of racial discrimination. It is in the interests (also) of the White workers, middle class and professional groups to whom the establishment of genuine democracy and the elimination of fascism and monopoly rule offers the only prospect of a decent and stable future."

To Kavanagh, the society being described above may look like "a stage on the road to socialism", to me and according to acknowledged principles of Marxism-Leninism, this looks like an old-fashioned bourgeois democracy of the type found in Western Europe, Japan and North America. Bourgeois democracy, no doubt, would be a great improvement on the apartheid system. It would represent a major reform, but it would not amount to a social revolution or even a necessary stage to socialism. It would be such a stage only if bourgeois democracy were achieved under the leadership of a class conscious working class but that, as I have argued, is not what the 1962 programme envisages.

Before it was banned in 1950, the Communist Party saw things differently. It saw national liberation as essentially an outcome of a class struggle; a class struggle by raising progressive bourgeoisie, struggling for its rights against feudalism and even foreign domination in some European countries. In the Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of November 1949 signed by the then general secretary, Moses Kotane, there was no ambiguity on this score as the following extract shows: "The nature of (the national) struggle has been analysed at length by Marxist writers, especially by Stalin in the essays published under the title 'Marxism and the National and Colonial question'. Briefly stated, this analysis leads to the conclusion that however much the national struggle assumes the character of a mass movement, drawing the working class and the peasantry into the fight, it is essentially a

struggle of the capitalist classes among themselves, one that is chiefly to the advantage of the bourgeoisie and under its leadership." These, are the acknowledged principles of Marxism-Leninism!! The notion that African nationalist parties can, or are, parties of all oppressed classes is wishful thinking.

It was this characterisation of national liberation movements that so incensed the ANC Youth League in the 1940s and set the two organisations along "a collision course" especially during 1949-50.

In the eyes of the Youth Leaguers, the Communist Party -- promoting a foreign ideology -- was working to develop class consciousness among African workers. The effect of such a consciousness would be to distance or alienate these workers from following the ANC which the Youth League was in process of transforming into a mass movement. This was what created the tension between the two organisation. The Youth League was in no doubt, however, that the African workers would not follow the Communist.

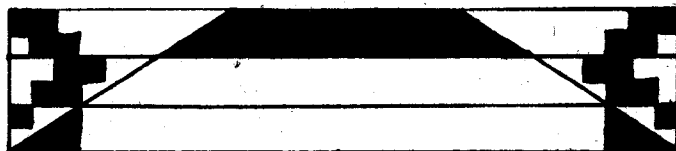
"Since the workers in this country are Africans and since these are oppressed primarily because they are Africans and only secondarily because they are workers, it is clear that the exotic plant of Communism cannot flourish on African soil," declared the Leaguers, (See African Lodestar, official organ of ANC Youth League, Transvaal Province, May 1950).

A far more important question that Kavanagh, and those in South Africa and in Africa generally, who want to follow "acknowledged principles of Marxism-Leninism" should ask, is why the South African Communist Party, at one time the most developed workers party in Africa, theoretically and organisationally, was forced to retreat behind a nationalist movement. This is a very involved question that holds many lessons for many would-be African Marxists. Very briefly, in 1950, the Communist Party found itself, precisely because of the

great influence it had built among black workers during the 1940s, with too many powerful forces arranged against it. Firstly there was the newly elected Malan government, the neo-fascist pioneers of the apartheid doctrine, who were spoiling for a fight with the Party in order to demonstrate their anti-communist and therefore pro-Western credentials to the capitalist countries especially Britain and the United States. Secondly, the British Government, faced with the rapid disintegration of the Empire, was prepared to go to any length to defend Britain's economic interests in Southern Africa. The Communist Party presented a very real threat to those interests because of its support from black workers. According to the SACP's newspaper, The Guardian (29.12.49), the then head of the British secret police, MI5, Sir Percy Sillitoe, was working jointly with Malan and the Americans in a "co-ordinated Empire anti-Communist campaign", apparently, the price Britain had to pay the Americans for receiving nuclear technology. Thirdly, there was the tension between the SACP and the ANC -- in 1945 the Transvaal Province ANC went so far as adopting a resolution calling for the expulsion of Communists! This resolution however overturned at a national conference.

This list is by no means exhaustive. The point however is that the Communist Party was compelled by forces far more powerful than itself to retreat from the road to socialism and instead take a detour along the road to 'freedom'. The fact that some people decades later cannot see the difference between these two roads is evidence enough how far back Marxism has been thrown in South Africa since Moses Kotane's brilliant analysis of the national question in 1949.

Harare: December 11, 1985.





A Guide to Women's Organizations and Agencies Serving Women in Kenya compiled and published by Mazingira Institute, P.O. Box 14550 Nairobi, Kenya, 1985, 311 pages.

This most useful guide is a result of Mazingira Institute's continuing interest in the area of women in development and was produced as a contribution to the 1985 U.N. Decade for Women Conference.

Most of the book consists of organisation profiles, giving general background and women-specific information. The information on the various organizations includes their address and contact person, their objectives, area of activity, funding, organizational structure, accomplishments, membership and future plans.

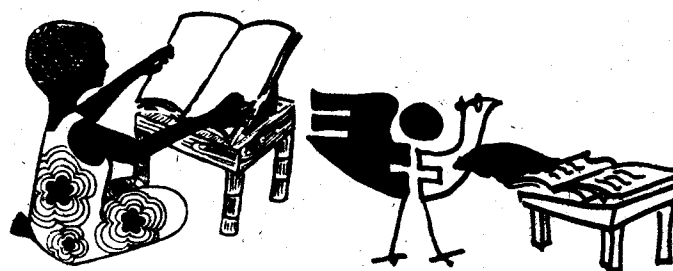
The first section deals with the Kenya Government Co-ordinating Agency for Women, viz., the women's bureau, which is a division within the Department of Social Services in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, and its co-ordinating activities with other Government Ministries are catalogued.

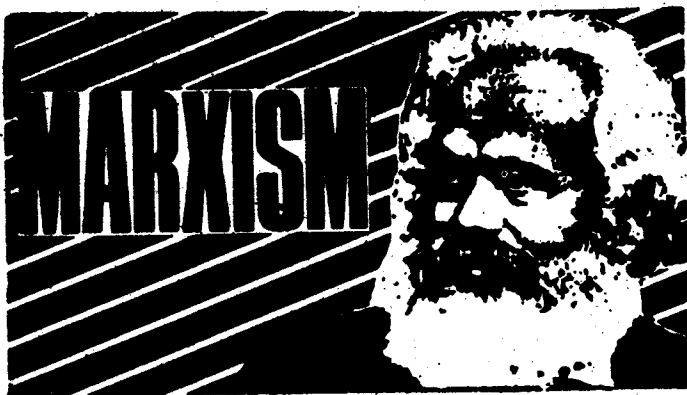
The second section covers Non-Governmental Women's Organizations, under the categories of Apex Organizations (which are national co-ordinating bodies), Special Purpose Organizations (which include, for example, the Kenya Trade Union Women, and the Y.W.C.A.), Professional Associations, Co-operatives and Religious Organizations.

The following section on Agencies Serving Women lists Governmental Aid Agencies, United Nations Agencies, Non-Governmental Aid Agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations involving women in development. This section gives additional information on the type of aid or assistance provided to women and the projects that the various agencies support.

There is also a bibliography of women-focussed research in Kenya. Finally the book is very indexed, with separate indices for activity, geographical area of operation within Kenya, and organization.

The guide is very comprehensive documentation of 'Women in Development' in Kenya, providing invaluable resource material and assistance in co-ordinating activities to those working in the field and to the women of Kenya. A similar guide to women's organizations and agencies serving women in Zimbabwe would also be well received.





THE QUESTION OF DEMOCRACY AND THE CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS IN AFRICA

by Kempton Makamure

The answer to these questions is simple and short. In Africa, the bourgeois form of democracy has demonstrated itself to be the nearest thing to a political orgy. Election times turn out to be occasions for mass suffering. The petty-bourgeois political parties which in conditions of neo-colonialism, each acquire financial patrons from among the multinational corporations whose behaviour in these times is identical to that of the punters at a race-horse event, fight 'dirty' elections in which the game at stake has no agreed rules. The ordinary masses are used simply as voting fodder. Campaigns are organised through paid gangs of hooligans; gang-warfare often erupts in which many working class, peasant and lumpen lives are lost. Election times are often open seasons of political assassinations where political opponents are physically liquidated. Ballot boxes in some cases are filled well before the actual voting commences. Aware of this prevalent chicanery and wishing to satisfy democratic opposition at home, the imperialists often send 'observers' to these neo-colonial elections to certify them as 'free and fair' (note that the certificate is more or less a formality which is invariably given by these 'observers'). The recent Shehu Shagari episode in Nigeria is not an anomaly but a clear demonstration of the nature

and possibilities of bourgeois democracy under conditions of neo-colonialism. The so-called 'democratically' elected leaders of Nigeria turned out to be political crooks who largely accomplished themselves in looting the national coffers of that country, spiriting away large personal fortunes to foreign imperialist banks and leaving the Nigerian masses (starving and impoverished) to foot the massive national 'debt' incurred on their behalf by these 'democratic' political thieves. The much acclaimed democratic system in Botswana has been meaningless to the Botswana workers and peasants as it serves only the interests of the old tribal aristocracy, which has merged its interests with those of the emergent petty-bourgeoisie born of the recent imperialist penetration of Botswana where the multinationals are engaged in a large scale looting of that country's rich mineral resources. The multiplicity of political parties in Senegal merely enables a small compact comprador bourgeoisie to keep a tight hold on the management of state affairs in their primary interest and that of international capital, principally of French imperialism. The masses of the Senegalese people gain nothing except poverty and a miserable material existence. Now, the question may be asked why an apparently open democracy as that which seems to exist in Botswana and Senegal are in fact a mere facade masking capitalist and imperialist political domination?

The answer lies in the property relations that exist in every capitalist system. Political power is derived from social power and social power is nothing but the outward expression of the influence of wealth in any society based upon the private ownership of the means of production and subsistence. Thus, in these societies (they include the pre-colonial African societies) the wealthy ultimately monopolise political influence, even among the oppressed working and wealth producing classes. Bourgeois democracy allows the rich to dominate and control state power without

even the necessity of their direct participation in politics. The bourgeoisie simply employ and rely on the vanity, disposability and instability of the professional politicians.

The point is that far from the bourgeois representative system weakening the political power of property, it is, on the contrary, the political organisation the best adapted to assure the domination of the proprietary class.
(My emphasis.)

This is the reason why the people who live in capitalist societies often speak of this truism - 'Money talks'! This reality behind the pretensions of bourgeois democracy explains why wherever this charade has been attempted and practised in Africa, the political leaderships invariably become isolated from the masses and find themselves politically and economically answerable to a lesser extent to the local national businessmen, and, to a greater and scandalous extent, to the transnational corporations. The forums of political discussion, control and influence become the private dinner parties or cocktail parties staged by resident imperialists to which the local influential bureaucrats and local national politicians are invited and entertained on Smirnoff Vodka and Whisky every other day of the week. No wonder African countries are run by their leaders and bureaucrats on a perennial imperialist induced hangover! Bourgeois Parliaments or Assemblies are, therefore, in fact by their design and nature, mere formal rituals of bourgeois political action.

The inevitable alienation of the masses in bourgeois political systems in the African context result in direct threats to incumbent executive office holders and normally leads to the One-Party state or to military dictators. The political alienation of the masses makes it easier and possible for any populist political hack to upset the neo-colonial political apple-cart. Since the system of

government of neo-colonialism is essentially based upon the corruption of the African political leadership by international capital it has never been difficult for coup d'etat or putsch leaders to stick corruption labels on their overthrown predecessors. But such is the infectiousness and dynamism of neo-colonialism that no sooner have the new rulers legitimise themselves into political control by crying 'corruption!' do they themselves in a matter of months rather than years, become co-opted and corrupted by the system. It is not surprising that over the years, international capitalism has found it necessary sometimes to forego all attempts at toying with formal multi-party bourgeois systems (which in some cases they find inefficient), opting for supporting personal dictatorships in the form of military juntas like that of Mobutu in Zaire, or One-Party dictatorships like that of Moi in Kenya, Nyerere in Tanzania or that of Kaunda in Zambia, not forgetting the crude personal tyranny of Dr. Banda in Malawi. Where you have a feudal monarchist regime such as that in Morocco, the situation is made even more ideal for the operations of international capital which merely has to support an existing feudal dictatorship whose legitimacy derives from the victim country's past traditions of personal rule.



From this exposition of the nature of bourgeois parliamentary democracy and its practice and possibilities in neo-colonial Africa, we should be able to confront the following realities:

1. That the demand for "democracy in general" is a bourgeois demand of capitalist elements who need it as a useful and tried weapon of bourgeois political dictatorship.
2. That the reason why disgruntled petty-bourgeois elements demand bourgeois parliamentary democracy is similar to the demand that emergent capitalists made against personal feudal dictatorships in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries in Europe. In those cases, the attainment of bourgeois democracy, beside doing away with the fetters of feudal dictatorship, also, at the same time, at once resolved intra-bourgeois contradictions unleashed among the bourgeois by the existence of a market regulated capitalist economy. While it succeeded and still survives today in Western Europe, it fails in post-independence Africa where the conditions of the domination of international monopoly capital operate to negate its effectiveness. This difference in conditions is what our African petty-bourgeois democrats fail to comprehend and take account of.
3. That the demand for a democratic Africa cannot be made on the basis of our understanding and conceptions of the rituals of bourgeois parliamentary democracy as practised in Western Europe and other imperialist countries.
4. That the slogan for a democratic Africa must be based upon a new understanding and concept of 'democracy' transcending and overcoming the meaning given to that word by the bourgeoisie and their hangerson. In other words, the demand must be one for people's democracy based upon state institutions under workers' and peasants' power. The question which then remains to be answered

is: what is the nature and form of the new democracy based upon workers' and peasants' power and what are the specific ways of achieving it?

This question can and has been answered historically in a practical way. Lenin and Bolsheviks of the Russian revolution utilised the lessons of the Paris Commune in successfully leading the first socialist revolution of October, 1917. Under the experienced revolutionary leadership of the Bolshevik Party, working class power based upon the government of people's soviets was established in Russia. The Soviet model of government, that is, the system of government based upon organs of people's power enjoying both legislative and executive power called 'soviets' enabled the ordinary workers and peasant masses to take a direct part in the direction and resolution of public affairs. The central national government of a soviet system was then formed on the principle of democratic centralism so as to ensure the security of soviet power from internal and external threats, as well as in order to achieve efficiency of government and economic organisation through centralised planning of the national economy. The soviet state system has been adapted by all revolutionary governments under different conditions and circumstances of revolution to give a rich (but essentially the same) variety of systems of people's power in socialist Eastern Europe, in China, Vietnam, Cuba, Angola and Mozambique. In the case of Mozambique, it can be said that it was the thoroughly democratic network of organs of people's power which has enabled the Frelimo government and Party to survive the bloody and brutal onslaught of the counter-revolutionary organisation, the MNR, which is backed by South Africa and the imperialist governments of the western world. Without these organs of people's power in which the workers and peasants express the reality of their political power, the Frelimo government would long have fallen from the combined forces of mass alienation and MNR counter-revolution.

Beside the assumption of real political power by local popular organs, the phenomenon of people's power in countries advancing towards socialism (e.g. Vietnam, Angola and Mozambique) and those already enjoying the fruits of socialism (e.g. the USSR, GDR, Hungary, Bulgaria and Cuba), these people's democracies have other unique characteristics unknown to the parliamentary type of bourgeois democracies. There is, for example, the wide use of the elective principle. As a weapon of political delegation, the elective principle is guaranteed by the right of electors to recall their delegate for failure to represent them or to perform his duties properly. The delegates are at the same time genuine people's representatives because they are chosen from among the ranks of the electors themselves and are not political careerists marketing their skills of political manipulation. Election by direct and indirect means is also the method of appointment to essential state offices. For instance, judges including those of the highest courts of state are subject to election.

Another unique feature of democracies of the people's power, is the role assigned to the social organisation of workers and peasants in the management of social and state affairs. Principal among these is the Workers' Trade Unions and the Co-operative Movement of both the agrarian and of the industrial type. The professional managers in both industry and agriculture are answerable not only to the state's economic plan, but more important to the Trade Union organisation so as to subordinate the bureaucracy to people's power.

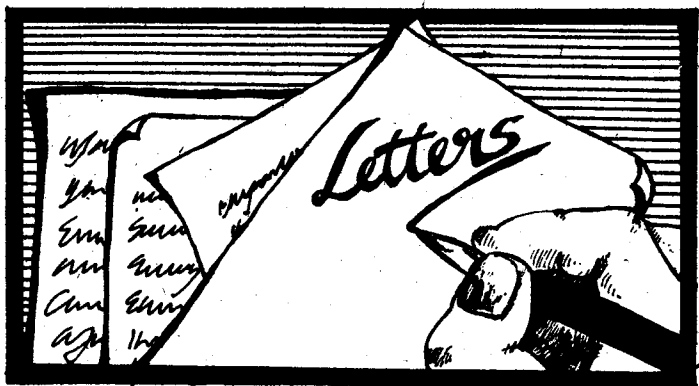
How have the forms of and methods of exercising people's power emerged? This is a most misunderstood question and most bourgeois spokesmen tend to regard soviets or other similar forms of people's power as emanating from the individual schemes of revolutionary leaders such as Lenin or Castro. Forms of people's power were and are in the first place created by the revolu-

tionary action of the workers in alliance with the peasantry in the midst and thick of battle with the exploiting classes for state power. Forms of people's power have, therefore, been an expression of the revolutionary creativity of the masses as their defensive and offensive institutions to fight and defeat the exploiting classes. With the success of the socialist revolutions in the socialist countries, these organs of people's power have acquired legal expression and further development in conditions of the peaceful construction of socialism. In Mozambique, for example, great use has been made of the experience of institutions of people's power developed in the liberated zones before the overthrow of Portuguese imperialism. In Zimbabwe, the institutions of people's power developed in the rear of the war of national liberation and in the semi-liberated areas inside Zimbabwe, were never given a chance and were wiped off by the imposition of a constitution written by and enforced by imperialist blackmail at the Lancaster House Conference of 1979. This imperialist constitution imposes a strict regime of capitalist private property over the country with a bourgeois parliamentary democracy to go with it.

The fact that institutions of people's power are created by the revolutionary actions of workers and peasants is of crucial importance and relevance to the African revolutionary struggle. It is the short answer to those who falsely allege and think that revolutionary institutions for Africa will be imported from USSR or other socialist countries. While African revolutionaries will be foolish not to utilise the wealth of experience accumulated by world-wide proletarian revolutions, and will in fact draw on that experience, the actual form and substance of people's power in Africa will be fashioned by the oppressed African masses in the course of their struggle to overthrow capitalism and neo-colonialism. This is a reiteration of a simple general law of the revolutionary process.

The logical sequel to the fact that organs of people's power in Africa will be created by mass revolutionary struggle on the continent, is that genuine revolutionary parties will be necessary for this task. Liberation and democratisation of neo-colonial Africa can only be achieved through the organisation of broad African masses suffering under the existing system. It has also to be realised further that even if the overthrow of neo-colonialism in an individual African country is achieved initially without much bloodshed, this will be no guarantee that the whole revolutionary process in that country will be without suffering and bloodshed. Experience shows that capitalist and imperialist counter-revolution knows only the language of sabotage and violence against regimes of people's power. It will, therefore, be in the process of building socialism in conditions of counter-revolution that the organs of people's power within the context of a people's democracy will largely be built in Africa.

To sum up, the whole of the above discussion may be put as follows. It is utterly wrong for genuine African revolutionaries to pose the question of 'democracy' and the fight for it in Africa merely in general terms. It is also treacherous for African revolutionaries to view the institution of bourgeois democracy as a 'lesser evil' or as a helpful precondition for the advance to socialism. The idea of using bourgeois parliamentary forms of government is misplaced and constitutes a serious self-delusion among those who seek the revolutionary overthrow of neo-colonialism and the construction of socialism. There is, therefore, one concrete way (and there must be no shying away from this) in which the slogan for 'democracy' must be put under existing conditions in Africa, namely: the complete overthrow of the neo-colonial system and its immediate replacement by a people's democracy based upon the transference of power to the worker and peasant classes under the leadership of a revolutionary workers' movement.



The Editor

Could you please allow me air my views through your magazine, on the question of the "Honour" of National Heroes.

Why are our National Heroes only given the "Honour" of being a hero after their death and not

before, so that they can also know of the honour? I personally think it's wise for people considered national heroes to be given the honour when they are still alive. And, what criteria does one have so as to be given the honour? I thought the late Deputy Minister of Education Comrade Tsitsi Munyati as first woman (African) senator and her contribution during the war of liberation, should have been given the honour. The same with Comrades Jinx, Mutuma Ruth Nyamurowa, Njini Ntuta, John Mataure and Leon Baron who passed away recently. It sounds to me as though Heroes Acre was built for men only and for that matter blacks only.

I would also like to think it should have been proper Comrade Editor, for the authorities to have actually exhumed the mass graves in Mozambique, Zambia,

Angola and Botswana for reburial at the Heroes Acre and we should be talking of the true "Unknown Soldier" where all our parents would be going to the Acre with full vigour and confidence that their sons and daughters were also honoured for the role they played. Right now Comrade Editor, there is really no sign that the authorities see or realise this point and one wonders if it is not important to give these fallen comrades a decent burial in the land of their birth.

Fair Play Vakomana Pakusarudza
Magamba Edu.

Canaan B.M. Mhlanga
AVONDALE

Dear Sir

RE: SOMETHING IS THE MATTER WITH
OUR CO-OPERATIVES

I should think there is something wrong with our co-operatives. The dawn of a move towards a socialist society came along with independence in 1980, in Zimbabwe. But it looks our co-operatives are not experiencing any growth at all. Presently the organisation and formation of co-operatives does not observe the principle of comparative advantage which is in fact an extension of the principle of specialization.

One would be surprised to find that district co-operatives in Chivi, a very dry region, engage in greens market gardening. Although these gardens are established near large reservoirs, the soil is often unsuitable for the vegetables grown thereon. The result is poor yields and a total discouragement to members. Thus some members give up the venture. The organisation lacks much to be desired. Each member has a share of two or more beds from which to meet the needs of the family. How can a co-operative or any business venture expand in this way? Is it

not that the total profit less an expansion reserve should be appropriated among members?

Another surprising phenomenon is that many co-operatives closely clustered engage in the production of homogeneous commodities and expect to secure a viable market within the same area! As a result, we have a situation of excess supply thus depressing price with a consequent effect of reducing the incomes of co-operatives. With reference to perishables like vegetables, which soon go bad, our rural co-operatives suffer great losses because of lack of efficient transport to freight the surplus to areas where there is demand.

Since the co-operative movement is the only feasible means through which we can achieve our socialist goal, Government intervention in the distribution, organisation and formation of co-operatives is necessary. A close research should be launched in various regions to determine what type of co-operatives should be established in each region. The study will reveal the following data:

- (1) What type of co-operatives should be established in this region, - agricultural, clothing etc.
- (2) If it is agricultural or clothing, should tomatoes or school uniforms be produced?
- (3) Is the type of available means of transport suitable for transporting the surplus to other regions for marketing?
- (4) Does the local reservoir of labour have the skill if not, how can training resources be organised
- (5) What is the attitude of the community towards the production they have been suggested to pursue.
- (6) How many co-operative production units can be established in this region?

The above information will highlight such important facts and the quantity of co-operative training officers to be trained and deployed in each region to give guidance to the mass.

To date, our co-operatives lack direction. Although the Adult Literacy Campaign has been a successful exercise, it has not done enough to inject a co-operative attitude in a bigger percentage of our population. Probably the major snag inhibiting the growth of our co-operatives is the lack of well trained co-operative advisers/officers.

Economics Student

RENIAS MTATI



POEM

THAT MAKES SENSE MY SON!!!!

There was a man my son,
Two weeks ago I think.
Did'nt he look well fed my son,
His skin black as that pot you
see there,
And glistering with fat,
I wondered why we couldn't catch
him?
Yes, catch him and melt him!
Melt him into grease!
Melt him into diesel!
To break the monotony of boiled
and salted vegetables,
To grease the water pump,
To run our promised tractor,
That's what we need down here!
Yes, that's what we need I thought.
His collar dug into his neck,
Like a plough into soil,
In those fields down there.

But you see my son,
You have to struggle!
Sweat!
Break your back,
For the plough to do so!

And all he does, I thought,
Is struggle to fit a collar
arround that neck.

No older than your eldest brother,
At the most I could say he was
born in
After the war, Hitler's war,
Which took away my own brother!

As he spoke his whole body
vibrated,
Like an old grinding mill,
And as he raised his arms to
shout slogans,
The flesh beneath his arms
fluttered,
Fluttered like a flag,
And you could see that he did it
With great difficulty!

He used some of the words,
Some of the words you've just
mentionedcapitalism,
socialism, imperialism,
bourgeoisie, workers, peasants,
...the Enemy.
We told him that his language
was beatiful,
But even then we still wanted to
know what he meant??

He got annoyed with us,
Angry, really angry,
He said he should have known
better,
That he was coming to address idiots.
And as he said so,
He pulled out a bottle from his
pocket,
A small flat bottle,
And he drank from it,
Stuff that looked like urine,
He screwed up his face as he did so,
And I said to myself,
"Whatever he is drinking,

I hope it is urine indeed,
 Because that's what he really
 deserves".
 Then he charged through the gathering
 Like a wounded buffalo,
 Knocking over Ambuya Chokwadi as he
 did so.
 He made for his car,
 And with a cloud of dust behind him,
 Disappeared!!

Now that you've explained my son,
 Explained what those words really
 mean,
 It makes sense,
 It makes sense why he got annoyed,
 It makes sense why he got annoyed
 and
 Insulted us,
 That makes sense my son.

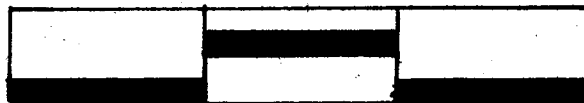
BY. M.C. HALIMANA

29/09/85 HARARE.



ILO Conventions on Women Workers
as of 23/10/84

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>No. 111: Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)
1958 107 ratification</p> <p>No. 100: Equal remuneration 1951
105 ratifications</p> <p>No. 3: Maternity protection
1919 28 ratifications</p> <p>No. 103: Maternity protection
(revised) 1952 27
ratifications</p> <p>No. 4: Night work (women) 1919
59 ratifications</p> <p>No. 41: Night work (women)
revisal 1934 37
ratifications</p> | <p>No. 45: Underground work (women)
1935 87 ratifications
including Zimbabwe 6/6/80</p> <p>No. 89: Night work (women) revis-
ed 1948 62 ratifications</p> <p>No. 156: Workers with family res-
ponsibilities 1981
3 ratifications</p> <p>No. 158: Termination of employment
1982 not yet in force
(only ratified by Sweden)</p> |
|---|---|



FACTS AND FIGURES

The number of unemployed in America has exceeded eight million, in Britain three million and in France 2.5 million. The total number of unemployed in the capitalist countries has exceeded 35 million.

The US has not ratified 30 of the 40 important international treaties on human rights. Among them is the UN International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. The US opposed that convention from the very beginning saying that apartheid should be combatted not by law, but by contacts, dialogue and persuasion. Washington continues its policy of constructive engagement with Pretoria consolidating the regime of apartheid with investments, trade and secret supplies of military equipment, and defending it in the UN from international sanctions that could precipitate the collapse of the shameful dictatorship.

Twenty-one million people in industrialized capitalist countries members of the EEC — are illiterate.

Rape, kidnapping and murder are an everyday occurrence in Chile, where the US-backed fascist regime came to power in September 1973. After the coup General Pinochet dealt with 15,000 Chileans. Half a million people were imprisoned, sent to concentration camps, arrested and tortured. More than 2,000 were reported missing.

Nearly a thousand Black Africans were killed in South Africa last year as a result of military and police repression. Thousands of people were imprisoned after the introduction of a state of emergency. Four per five prisoners were tortured. Despite world public protests the racist authorities executed poet Benjamin Moloise, who fought against apartheid.

The names of some 300,000 Americans are in the electronic files of the CIA. It spies on a great many "dangerous" citizens.

/ Extracted from the book by ex-director, of the CIA Stansfield Turner, "Secrecy and Democracy: CIA in the Transition Period"/

Eleven thousand killed, five thousand wounded, three thousand kidnapped and 250,000 refugees — these are but some of the results of the undeclared war waged on Nicaragua by the US-hired counter-revolutionary mercenaries. The total damage is estimated at over 1.5 billion dollars.

VICTORIA MXENGE

*"Ayasaba, amabhulu; Ayangena, ayaphuma, ayadizela."
(They are afraid, the government's people; they come in, they go out, they dither, trembling.)*

BY MARY RAYNER

On July 20, 1985, this soft but powerful song had welled up from the crowd of mourners gathered to bury four young men. A month earlier, Matthew Goniwe, a charismatic 38-year-old teacher and community leader and three companions had failed to return home after attending a political meeting in the Eastern Cape city of Port Elizabeth. Their burnt and mutilated bodies were found several days later.

Noone amongst the 35,000 people assembled in grief and anger doubted who murdered these men. Goniwe, Fort Calata, Sparrow Mkhonot, and Siculo Mhlawuli had struggled with passion and dedication against a system which had impoverished and disenfranchised their people. Who would have an interest in destroying them and their future work but a government driven by the results of its own catastrophic policies to impose martial law, ironically, on the very day of the funeral.

One person who had no doubts on this score was Nonyama-zela Victoria Mxenge. Addressing the mourners, she denounced the killings as an act of cowardice. And, like many others, she returned home from the funeral with a poster containing the legend: "Stop Apartheid Killing!" Two weeks later she was brutally shot and axed to death by four hooded assassins.

Since the revolt of the South African townships began in September 1984, amidst continued economic deterioration and mounting international condemnation of apartheid, the South African regime has acted with unrelenting force against its opponents. Unrestrained police and military violence has become a frightening daily reality for the majority of South Africa's people. The death toll by the end of October this year had climbed to at least 825. The police have admitted that two-thirds of the casualties were shot by state security forces.

A reign of terror has settled over the townships, affecting thousands of men, women and children. Typically, its victims have been dragged out of their houses in the early morning hours, brutally assaulted and taken away to police stations and secret detention centers. From January through November 1st this year, 7,509 people were detained, a scale of political arrests

HAMBA KAHLE

unprecedented since the State of Emergency in 1960. A majority of those detained have been under 25-years of age. Reports reaching international human rights groups describe beatings, death threats, electric shock treatment and other forms of torture being used systematically against detainees.

The object of this wave of repression apparently lies in the regime's determination to crush the grassroots democratic movement which has been sweeping the country since the early 1980s. In particular, it seems determined to break one of the most important organized sources of opposition, the United Democratic Front (UDF). Formed as an umbrella organization in 1983, by 1985 the UDF encompassed 600 affiliated political, community, labor, youth, women's and religious organizations across the country.

By September 1985, forty-seven out of eighty UDF office-holders had been detained, put on trial or murdered. Thirty-eight of its leading members are on trial for high treason. One of its most active affiliates, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was declared an illegal organization this past August and has been the target of a particularly vicious and relentless harassment campaign by government agents. Five hundred former members have been detained. Fifteen of

the twenty-seven people whom human rights groups know to have "disappeared" between March and June this year were COSAS activists.

In this spiralling cycle of resistance and repression, Victoria Mxenge made clear choices. As a black woman, she belonged to the most oppressed class within South African society. Her commitment to fight for an end to institutionalized racism and the exploitation of black workers brought her additional hardships.

For nine years, Victoria had to endure the loneliness of an enforced separation from her husband, who had been sentenced in 1964 to a term of imprisonment on Robben Island, the maximum security prison for black dissidents, for his support of the newly banned African National Congress (ANC).

In the latter 1970s, she had left her work as a nurse and joined her husband's law firm, which specialized in defending individuals arrested under South Africa's security laws. By 1981, she had qualified as a lawyer and became a junior partner in the firm. It was in the same year that Griffiths Mxenge's mutilated body was found dumped in a stadium outside Durban.

Victoria was shocked, not only by his death, but by the horrifying nature of his injuries. His throat had been slashed, his stomach ripped open and his ears almost cut off. The rest of his body bore multiple stab wounds.

Despite this appalling event, and the conspicuous failure of the police to investigate it, Victoria Mxenge took over her husband's law partnership and his work defending prisoners held on political charges. She represented families in cases considered so politically sensitive most lawyers shied away from them.

At the same time, she became active in a number of grassroots organizations whose emergence have become critical hubs of opposition politics in the 1980s. In the last year of her life, she was an active member of the Natal Organization of Women, an executive member of both the Natal branch of the Release Mandela Committee, and the Natal regional committee of the UDF.

As the climate of repression intensified, Victoria continued to act as legal counsel for the growing number of her jailed friends and political comrades. In the weeks just prior

to her death, she gathered vital evidence which would be used in the trial of sixteen leading members of the UDF who had been charged with treason. In the indictment, the State claimed that the UDF, and four of its affiliated organizations to which the defendants belonged, had conspired with the outlawed ANC and South African Communist Party to overthrow the government by violence. All of the defendants' activities, however peaceful in nature, were construed as furthering the cause of these proscribed organizations. The impact of a conviction for treason, a capital offense in South Africa, would be to make all non-violent methods for bringing about a political order based on freedom and justice criminal.

On the night of August 1st, Victoria Mxenge left her office accompanied by a friend, the Rev. Mcebisi Xundu, the Natal Chairman of the UDF. Her staff had been alerted to the existence of a "death list" which was in circulation. Fearing for her safety, they insisted she

never travel alone to and from work. As Victoria stepped from her car outside her home in Durban's Umlazi township, four burly and hooded men emerged from the shadows. Xundu remembers how Victoria screamed and ran before they shot her down and split open her skull.

A wave of anger spread through Durban's township at the news of her murder. Thousands of students took to the streets in protest. Violent clashes erupted between UDF supporters, the police and armed, right-wing vigilantes. Within 24 hours thirty-two people had been killed.

The mood of anger and militancy was visible at Victoria Mxenge's funeral on August 11. Speaker after speaker referred to her work, bravely carried out in the face of increasing government harassment and undaunted by the brutal slaying of her husband five years earlier. And there were explicit calls for armed resistance. "Now we are going to fight," declared Steven Tshwete a regional leader of the UDF. "If we have to shoot to get our liberation, then we are going to shoot. If we have to liberate ourselves with the barrel of a gun, then this is the moment."

In late August, dozens of activists in the Durban area were detained, the Rev. Xundu amongst them. In October, the Mxenge family home was petrol-bombed. Her children had already been taken into hiding, following continued threats against them.

Victoria Mxenge's assassination was a tragic blow, not only for her three children, now doubly bereaved, but for all South Africans struggling to keep alive the vision of a nonracist and just social order. The tragedy was further underscored by Victoria's lifelong commitment to non-violence. In the face of a regime unresponsive to the morality implicit in non-violent tactics, the majority of South Africans are being pushed to embrace an armed solution in their struggle for freedom.

Mary Rayner, a doctoral candidate in South African History, spent thirteen months in South Africa. She is currently working as an intern with the South Africa Project of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in Washington.

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The opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author.



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