

The Philosophy of the Working Class



**UNITY AS A CLASS
UNITY IN TRADE UNIONS
UNITY IN POLITICS AGAINST
EXPLOITERS**

by N.C.G. Mathema

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CHAPTER 1. THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

The world we live in can be divided into two parts. One is that of nature. The other one is that of society.

Nature is made up of things like trees, the soil, mountains, animals, clouds, rain, stars, the sun, rivers, grass, flowers, insects, birds, fire, water and the sea. These are things that are created by nature, not by human beings. All these things existed long before there were human beings on earth.

Society is made up of people and their way of life. This part includes things like culture, politics, the family, languages, the education system, the division between poor and rich people, tools and machines, wars, the way people produce their food, clothes and houses, the way people distribute what they have produced, leadership, the army, police, courts and jails, the ownership of what people use to produce wealth, and the human beings themselves. Human beings belong to the natural world too.

We as people cannot exist outside nature. We live on nature. Our food is part of nature. Our cattle are part of nature. Our farms are part of nature. The grass and poles we use to build our houses are part of nature. The iron we use to make our hammers, spanners, cars and pots with is part of nature. The cotton we use to make our dresses is part of nature. The wheat we make our bread with is part of nature. The wood we make our tables and chairs with is part of nature. The fire we use to cook our food and warm ourselves with is part of nature.

What does all this mean? It means that people have to work on nature to produce whatever they want for their living. If people do not work, they will all die. This means that for people to live, they have to work. People therefore, cannot exist without working (except exploiters). Work therefore is the most important thing people (human beings) have to do for them to continue living. If people stop working, they will have no food, no shelter and no water. For people to stay without working means the end of human beings.

What is also important about people is that they live in groups. Nobody lives alone away from other people. Even mad people live among people. Whatever is produced by people, it is not the work of one person. A factory worker may produce a dress. But the material he or she uses was produced by somebody else. So was the thread, the

buttons, the sewing machines and the electricity. A peasant farmer in Tsholotsho or Murewa may produce maize. But the hoe he or she uses was produced by somebody else. So was the fertiliser, the plough, the pesticide and what he or she wears when working on the farm. So people are what are called social animals. Each one of them depends on others and on past generations. Each generation lives something for its children and grandchildren. The children and grandchildren develop what they have inherited. They develop the tools, the machines, the ways of ploughing, the ways of producing tools. As these develop, society develops too, society gets better and better all the time. This means that as society develops, people understand the world they live in better and better all the time. This enables them to conquer the world more and more, making it serve them better and better all the time.

Society also includes the ideas people have about nature, about society, about their tools, about themselves and about many other things. These ideas, the thoughts of people are very important because they help people in their daily lives. Ideas and thoughts make people control and remake the world. The ideas come from their everyday life, problems, successes and experiences. Through work and other everyday experiences, people try to understand their world, they ask what causes this and that. Using their experiences and successes, they answer the question, and take the answer as representing their world in their minds. Society cannot live without ideas. It is these ideas, the ideas about the cause of things, about society, about religion, about tools and instruments of production, about the ownership of factories, banks, the land, money, mines, about the distribution of wealth, about the army and about other things that this paper is about.

People have different ideas about the world and other people because of their different positions in society, because they are rich and poor, because they are workers or owners of factories, mines and farms, because they are communal farmers or commercial farmers, and because of many other reasons. But the strong ideas people have about society and nature are influenced by whether they are poor or rich, by whether they work for others or there are others working for them. Strong ideas are influenced therefore by the class people belong to. Let us look a bit more at what we mean by classes.

CHAPTER 2. CLASSES IN SOCIETY

(i) What are classes?

Classes in society are groups of people. But we do not call any group of people a class. Some people do though. For us, classes in society are groups of people differing from each other according to whether they are rich or poor, according to whether they are employed by others or they employ others, according to whether they work for themselves or they work for others.

What does this mean? This means that classes are groups of people differing from each other according to whether they own land, factories, mines, banks, shops, buses, lorries, and so on, or they do not own these things. These things are called means of production. People use these things to produce food, clothing, houses and so on.

The following are different classes:- workers, capitalists, peasants, small shop owners, slaves, feudalists, and slave owners. Workers (also called the working class, or the proletariat) are people who do not own means of production. These people live by being employed by others who give them wages.

Capitalists (or the bourgeoisie) is that group of people who own means of production but employ others to work for them. Capitalists pay wages to those who work for them. Capitalists live by employing workers whom they exploit. To exploit here means to use others to enrich yourself when they remain poor. Capitalists are exploiters, workers are exploited.

Peasants are those people who own or use small farms. These people work for themselves on these farms. They live by working on these farms and no where else. But some of these become very rich. When they become very rich, they start employing wage workers, they become big peasants, or small capitalists. Some of these big peasants end up being capitalist farmers proper. In the past in Zimbabwe peasants used to work for chiefs and kings who owned the land. The peasants were exploited by the chiefs and kings. The peasants were forced to work a certain time for themselves, and another time to work on the land belonging to chiefs and kings without pay. Chiefs and kings were feudalists.

Slaves are people who are owned by others. Those who own slaves are called slave owners. Slaves work for slave owners, they have no rights at all, they are treated like domesticated animals which are there to work. The slave owners own land, but they do not work on the land themselves. They use slaves to work for them. Slave owners are exploiters, and slaves are exploited.

Many small shop owners work in their shops themselves with their families. They do not make enough money to employ wage-workers. But almost all of them in Zimbabwe employ one kind or another of part-time workers every now and then. The bigger small shop-owners employ fulltime workers who work side by side with the shop owner and members of his or her family. Some of these small-shop owners end up being big-shop capitalists employing workers.

The exploiting classes are always in a minority in society. While the poor exploited classes are always in the majority. Yet the exploiting classes own most of the wealth and control the economy and politics in the society they dominate. The exploiting classes do things in such a way that if it were possible, everything done in society must satisfy what they want. Even ideas, the law, the army, schools, the police, parliament and government work for what the exploiting class wants.

The exploited classes are always fighting for a better life. They fight even if the exploiters kill them or torture or jail them or detain or restrict them. The exploited blacks in Zimbabwe before independence were always fighting against colonialism and exploitation. They fought until they won independence in 1980. This happened in other countries like Mocambique, Zambia, Angola, Malawi, Ghana, Tanzania, Malaysia, India, Cuba and Vietnam. The oppressed and exploited people of South Africa and Namibia are fighting to free themselves from colonialism and exploitation. They will fight until they are free. The fighting between exploited classes and exploiting classes goes on until the exploiting classes are defeated. There is no compromise between the exploited and the exploiters.

(ii) Classes in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe we have many classes. These are the working class; the capitalist class; the peasants (or peasantry); the small shop owners and those who make things like wooden stools, who mend shoes, who make baskets and other things for a living (these people are also called the

petty bourgeoisie, the small capitalists); the comprador bourgeoisie (those Zimbabweans who are managers and directors of the big companies of capitalist countries like Britain, South Africa, the United States of America, France and West Germany); and chiefs, who are the last remains of feudal chiefs and kings of Zimbabwe before colonialism.

The largest class in Zimbabwe is that of peasants. Most of our peasants live in the communal lands. The land they live in and cultivate belongs to the government of Zimbabwe. They are allowed to live on it and use it for as long as they want to. But they cannot sell it because it is not theirs. But what they produce or rear on it is theirs to eat or sell or keep.

Peasant farmers cultivate the land themselves. The animals they keep, like cattle, sheep, goats and donkeys, are looked after by the peasant farmers and members of their families. Most of our peasants do not exploit anybody because they do not hire people to work on their farms. But there is a small number of our peasants who employ one or two workers part-time or full-time to work on the land or to look after the animals. These peasants, have become exploiters.

The working class in Zimbabwe works in factories, mines, farms, shops, hotels, transport and bus companies and in many other places that employ those who work for wages. Many of our workers still have land and livestock in the communal lands and that is where they have their wives and other family members. These workers are not pure workers. And they are not pure peasants either. They are both workers and peasants. They are worker-peasants. These people are employed as wage earners to earn extra money for their families in the communal lands. But as time goes by, more and more peasants will become proper workers. A proper worker is somebody who has no other way of living than working for a wage. He or she is somebody who owns no means of production like the peasant and the capitalist does.

The capitalist class in Zimbabwe is divided into two main parts. One part is made up of the local (Zimbabwean) capitalist. The other part is made of capitalists of other countries. The capitalists of other countries own big companies like Lonrho, Barclays Bank, Anglo-American Corporation, Rio-Tinto and many other big foreign companies. The foreign companies own more of our economy than anybody in Zimbabwe, they own even more than our government.

production. They took them away in order to make profit out of them by employing wage workers. The African Reserves became the places from which to get workers for the farms and mines. The people did not like to work for the colonialists. So the colonialists used their army and police to force people to work for them at very low wages. Taxes were also introduced to force people to go and work. Also because the African Reserves were very poor, people were forced to go and work for the colonisers. But the number of Zimbabweans who were forced to go and work for the colonialists was not big enough, and those who went to work were not reliable. So the colonisers brought in people from countries like Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia to come and work on the farms and mines plundered by the colonialists. Conditions of living and working conditions for all the black workers were horrible, and their pay was very little, but what they produced made the colonialist plunderers very rich.

As time went by, towns grew. In towns capitalist factories and other businesses were built. Again African Reserves were used to get workers for these businesses.

Meanwhile, those blacks who had enough money could buy the land in what were called the African Purchase Areas. These areas are now called small-scale commercial farming areas. These blacks were teachers and priests, the educated blacks. They employed a few wage workers to work on their farms.

Some whites came into the country as wage workers from Britain and South Africa. Small shop owners and other small owners in towns and administrative centres also came into being.

This is how Zimbabwe became a capitalist country. Capitalism in Zimbabwe and in all the colonies was introduced from outside the country and was serving the interests of foreign capitalists mainly. These capitalists were interested mainly in the production of raw materials like minerals and crops which went to Britain, South Africa and other countries of Europe.

Our peasants and chiefs came from the past before colonialism. Workers, capitalists, the petty bourgeoisie in towns and the petty bourgeois farmers in the small-scale commercial farming areas are less than a hundred years in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 3. PHILOSOPHY

(i) What is philosophy?

Philosophy is made up of people's views about the world, and its origin, and about what makes things happen the way they do. Each class has its own philosophy, its own views about the world and what makes things happen the way they do. And each class uses its philosophy to fight for what it wants and to defend what it has won. There are many philosophies therefore.

(ii) The most important question of philosophy

In Chapter 1 we said the world we live in can be divided into two parts. One part is that of nature, and the other part is that of society. The world we live in can also be divided into two other parts different from those of nature and society. These other two parts are the world as it exists outside our minds and thoughts, and the world as it exists in our minds and thoughts.

The world that exists outside or independently of our minds is called the material world, it is nature. The world that exists in our minds is called the ideal world or the spiritual world, it is called consciousness.

The material world exists whether we like it or not. For example the planet earth is there whether we like it or not. So do stars, the moon, the sun, trees, rivers, breathing, society, animals and rain.

The spiritual or ideal world includes our ideas, feelings, our thoughts, and our emotions. It exists in us.

How do these two parts relate to each other? Which came first or which comes first — consciousness or matter? Do ideas give birth to the material world? Or does the material world give birth to ideas? This is the most important, the fundamental, question of philosophy. This question is important because on its answer depends the solution of other problems faced by people or by classes.

(iii) Materialism and idealism

Those philosophers who say matter comes first before consciousness are called materialists. These philosophers say that the world exists independently of the mind. They say matter has always existed, and will

exist forever. They say matter has never been created by anyone and that there is nothing superior to nature or outside nature.

Philosophers who say the ideal, the mind, consciousness comes first before matter are called idealists. These philosophers say the ideal brought about matter. The idealists are divided into two groups. One group says that matter is created by the individual. The other group says the world is created by a spirit, by a mind which is independent of people and nature. This is very similar to saying the world is created by God.

(iv) Is the world knowable?

The other side of the fundamental question of philosophy is whether the world is knowable. Can people know the world they live in? Can they control it or use it to create a better life for themselves because of the knowledge they have gained?

Materialists say the world is knowable. They say people are capable of understanding the secrets of the world. Once they understand them, they control the world and use its forces for a better life. Indeed, this is what is happening in our everyday lives.

Some idealists say the world is not knowable, it can never be understood. Others say it is knowable, though all people understand are thoughts and emotions of individuals, or thoughts and emotions of a spirit above nature.

(v) Who is served by materialism and idealism?

Since a long time ago, materialism has been used by those classes that want to see people developing to higher, better societies. It has always been used by classes that want to change the old ways of doing things and replace them with new better ones.

Idealism has always served those classes that do not want to change old ways and old societies. To these classes the old ways are good because new ones threaten the positions of these classes in society.

In capitalist society (in Zimbabwe therefore) materialism serves the working class, and idealism serves the capitalist class. The working class wants to get rid of capitalism and build socialism. Life itself in capitalism clearly shows that there is a better life than capitalism, and, therefore, capitalism has to go. This is there whether anybody likes it or

not. But capitalists live by wishful thinking. They want to go against what the real world shows should be done. That is why they oppress and kill workers and peasants all over the world, and in South Africa and Namibia in particular.

CHAPTER 4. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE WORKING CLASS

(i) Dialects

What is the meaning of dialects? Dialects means that nothing is at a standstill. Things keep on moving and developing and changing, old ones dying and new ones taking over. The world we live in is like that. Tools change, cultures change, political systems change. Rivers change, rocks change, trees change. Even people change. Dialects also means that things in the world are connected. For example, cows eat grass, then people eat the cows or milk the cows. The grass grows because there is water from the clouds, and because there is sunshine that makes sea water evaporate and become clouds that come down as rain. Also, the grass needs sunshine, it cannot grow in the dark. Dialects also says that the source of development, of change is within each thing (object), it is the fight of different forces within the object that bring about change.

Dialects is very important therefore for people to understand and make the world. It is an important method for the working class and its revolutionary leaders and its party, the Marxist-Leninist party. It provides a key to understanding not only separate spheres of the real world, but all fields of nature, society and thought. Dialects is the key to the understanding of the world as a whole. Dialects sees the world as it really is. This makes dialects the only scientific method of dealing with the world.

(ii) Dialectical materialism

We have seen what dialects is, and what materialism is. If we combine the two we come out with what is called dialectical materialism. This is the philosophy of the working class. It is materialist because it says matter comes first before consciousness. It says the world is knowable. It is dialectical because it says the material world is in constant motion,

change and moving from the lowest to the highest levels whether anybody likes it or not.

(iii) Marxist philosophy

The philosophy of the working class is also called Marxist Philosophy. It is named after Karl Marx who, together with his comrade and friend Frederick Engels (the two of them were Germans), became the leaders and philosophers of the working class and the communist movement. They thoroughly studied nature and society and came out with dialectical materialism. They used dialectical materialism to study society too. The Marxist theory on the development of society is called historical materialism. Historical materialism says society changes and develops whether anybody likes it or not (more on historical materialism in the next chapter). Marx and Engels clearly showed why socialism and communism were not avoidable eventually. But they will come about only when the working class takes over political power from the capitalist class. The teachings of Marx are called Marxism.

When Marx and Engels died, V.I. Lenin, the leader of the working class and communist movement in Russia and the most outstanding of their students and followers, defended and developed their ideology and philosophy and actually led the first socialist revolution in the world in Russia in 1917. Lenin and his comrades in Russia implemented what Marx and Engels had discovered, elaborated and taught. Because of what Lenin did, the working class ideology is now called Marxism-Leninism, and the working class philosophy is now called Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Leninism is Marxism today, the days of socialist revolutions and the construction of socialism.

(iv) The basic laws of materialist dialectics.

Materialist dialectics has three basic laws. These are:- the law of the unity and struggle of opposites; the law of the transformation of quantitative into qualitative change; and the law of the negation of negation.

The law of the unity and struggle of opposites

This law reveals the real causes of change, of development of the material world.

What does it mean then? What it means is that things exist because they

are made up of things which are opposite to each other. These opposites cannot exist independently of the other. If they do, the object they make up dies. This is what is called the unity of opposites.

Let us look at examples. A magnet has a south pole and a north pole. Without these poles there is no magnet. People eat, yet they have to go to the toilet again. Eating and going to the toilet keep a person alive. If one of them is stopped, the person will die. Capitalist society has capitalists and workers. These two classes can never agree on their differences. The capitalist class wants more and more from the working class. The working class too wants more and more from the capitalist class. The two of them depend on each other, and the existence of capitalist society depends on the two living side by side. When the working class overthrows the capitalist class, capitalist society comes to an end.

It is the struggle of opposites that is the main source of development. Without this struggle there is no development.

In society we have what are called antagonistic and non-antagonistic differences (contradictions). Antagonistic contradictions are those between classes whose interests can never be the same. These contradictions exist between workers and capitalists, between slaves and slave owners, and between serfs and feudalists. The only way to solve these contradictions is the overthrow of one class by another, of the ruling exploiting class by the exploited class. In capitalism the solution is the overthrow of capitalists by workers.

Non-antagonistic contradictions are contradictions between classes and other social groups whose fundamental interests are the same. These are exemplified by contradictions between workers and peasants in both capitalist and socialist society.

We also have internal and external contradictions. Internal contradictions are made up of the struggle of opposite sides within a given object. The external ones are made up of relations between an object and its external environment.

We also have what is called basic and non-basic contradictions. Basic contradictions are the ones that play the leading part and affect all other contradictions. In capitalist society the basic contradiction is that between the forces of socialism and the forces of capitalism. The non-basic contradictions are those that do not play a leading part in society,

for example the contradictions between capitalist farmers and capitalist industrialists.

It is important to remember that there are no hard and fast boundaries between internal and external, antagonistic and non-antagonistic, basic and non-basic contradictions. In real life they are interlinked and change from one into the other.

The law of the transformation of quantitative into qualitative change.

This law shows how and in what direction developments take place and what methods bring this about.

What this law means is that increasing quantity of an object can end up completely changing this object to become a totally different thing altogether. For example millions of drops of water into the pool end up turning the pool into a lake. And many more millions of drops of water into the lake end up turning the lake into a sea or an ocean.

If we put a pot of water on fire and keep on increasing the heat, the temperature of the water will increase until the water boils and turns into steam. Increased temperature of water changes the water into a new substance altogether, steam. On the other hand, if we continue decreasing the temperature of water, the water will become ice. Again a new substance altogether.

Another example. The increasing exploitation by the capitalists organises the working class into trade unions. Increased trade union activity makes workers form their own political party. Increased activity of the workers' party leads the workers into overthrowing the capitalist class. So the working class is turned into a powerful revolutionary force as its understanding of capitalist society increases. Increased colonial oppression and exploitation forced the people of Zimbabwe to form welfare organisations, trade unions and powerful anti-colonialist political organisations that brought about the downfall of colonialism in Zimbabwe.

The law of the negation of negation

This law shows the general development of the material world. Everywhere the old dies and its place is taken by the new. Replacement of the old by the new is called negation. This can be seen in the natural world where changing climate and weather can be so drastic that plants

and animals will die unless new species better-adapted for the new weather conditions come up too replacing the old plants and animals. In society negation can be seen in that primitive communism is replaced by slave society; slave society by feudalism, feudalism by capitalism; capitalism by socialism. It can also be seen in old tools being replaced by new ones. Each new thing does not remain new for ever. Each new thing creates conditions for it to be replaced or further developed. Therefore what negates one thing is also negated by a new and better thing. This is the negation of negation.

(iv) The theory of knowledge of the working class

We have said materialists say the world is knowable. People are capable of penetrating the secrets of the world they live in and use these secrets to create a better world for themselves.

But what is knowledge? Knowledge is the image, it is the reflection of the world in our minds. But it is not just an image, a simple reflection. It is an active reflection whose purpose is that of changing the world we live in so that it becomes better.

There is no other source of knowledge than the material world. On the other hand, idealists say knowledge comes from ideas and emotions of individual people, or from a force above nature. All this means that people are not capable of really understanding the material world, and therefore are not capable of changing it. The working class theory of knowledge says people can really understand the world, and, because of this understanding, can change it for the better.

The working class theory of knowledge goes on to say that the understanding of the world is based on practice, it is based on the production activity of people themselves. There is no other way of knowing the world than to actively work on it. Practice is both the starting point and the only judge of the truth of knowledge.

Knowledge belongs to all because no one person works alone. On the other hand reactionary classes, like the capitalist class, try their best to hide certain knowledge from the oppressed working people for fear that the working people will use it against them. That is why the colonialists and racists in Zimbabwe during colonialism did their best to give the oppressed people of this country as little knowledge as possible about the world. The racists distorted knowledge, and told all sorts of lies about the anti-colonialist armed struggle in Zimbabwe and

everywhere in the world. However, these lies worked only up to a point because the truth is difficult to hide. Everyday conditions of existence are the true teachers of what the world is really like.

Practice is also the aim of knowledge. The reason people study their world is to use the knowledge gained in order to change and develop this world. It is important therefore that people bring together practice and knowledge, or theory and practice. None of these should go alone without the other.

Knowledge, like everything else, develops, it does not stand still. From knowledge about what we directly see or feel, people move on to knowledge that enables them to understand things deeper than what they see at first sight, it makes them more imaginative.

Dialectical materialism says something about truth too. What is true? Only that which correctly reflects an object is true. Truth therefore is objective, it exists independently of what our wishes may be, it too is based on the real world. Those who said armed struggle against colonialism was necessary in Zimbabwe were later proved to be correct because independence came to Zimbabwe only after the armed struggle.

(v) The philosophy of the working class, a weapon of the working class
Only the philosophy of the working class, the philosophy of Marxism, gives the truly correct explanation and picture of nature and society. Because of this, it is a powerful weapon for the revolutionary remaking of nature and society. The only class interested in the true understanding and revolutionary remaking of the world is the working class and its political party. That is why dialectical materialism arose and developed as the theoretical, ideological weapon of the working class in its fight against capitalism. The philosophy of the working class is revolutionary, it says different social systems can be changed, capitalism can be removed, it should be overthrown by the working class.

It is important therefore that the working class masters this philosophy. Without it, it will be difficult for the working class to understand the very complicated conditions in which it operates. The capitalist class is clear about what it wants. That is why it is lying so much about life, about capitalism, about the working class, about socialism and communism. The only way for the working class is to fight and fight

until it abolishes capitalism. On the ruins of capitalism the working class then builds socialism as was the case in Russia, in Hungary, in Vietnam, in Poland, in Cuba, in the German Democratic Republic, in China, in Mongolia and in other socialist countries.

CHAPTER 5. HOW SOCIETY DEVELOPS

(i) Society develops whether anybody likes it or not

It was Marx and Engels who actually showed how society develops. These founders of scientific socialism clearly showed that the development of society too is dialectical materialist. Their theory on social development is called historical materialism, which is part of the philosophy of Marxism, the philosophy of the working class.

Marx and Engels showed that in society too there are objective laws which are knowable too. There are of course differences between the laws of nature and the laws of society. For example, the laws of society involve people who think and have emotions. The laws of nature operate blindly on their own.

The capitalist class, however, does its best to go against the laws of social development. The reason being that these laws clearly show that capitalism must be done away with. Whether anybody likes it or not, society develops from the lowest to the highest levels.

Society developed from primitive communism (the example of this society is the life of the San people in Botswana) to slave society (examples of this society are ancient Egypt, Rome and Greece); to feudalism (the example of this is Zimbabwe before it was colonised); to capitalism (the examples of this include Zimbabwe today, Britain, the United States of America, racist South Africa, France, Japan and West Germany); to socialism (the examples of this include the Soviet Union, Cuba, Vietnam and Czechoslovakia).

It is the contradictions in each social system that bring about social change and development. Above all, it is the class struggle that brings about change in societies that are divided into classes.

The development of tools, machines, and the people who use them determines the development of society. In capitalism methods of production and the instrument of production develop all the time. But as they develop, the workers develop too and the class struggle develops

too. Almost all new inventions in capitalist production are a result of the class struggle. The capitalist class invents new machines and production methods in order to try and fight workers who want less working hours and higher wages. But these inventions lead to more and better organisation of the workers into trade unions and political activity.

It is also true that competition among capitalists brings about new machines and new methods of production. But these too do not make the workers' life better. In fact when new and more efficient machines are invented, workers lose jobs because capitalists do their best to reduce the cost of wages. Therefore capitalist competition too heightens the class struggle and heightens the consciousness and organisation of the working class.

Socialism too develops, and it develops because of its own internal contradictions. But these are not antagonistic contradictions. Socialism develops into communism. These are the two phases of one and the same social system, communist society. Communism is a classless society of highly educated and trained working people. Communism too will develop because of contradictions within itself. However, there is no other social system above communism.

Each of the five social systems depends on a definite mode (method) of production. This mode of production includes the ownership of the means of production, the distribution of wealth, the people and the instruments of production. Primitive communism is based on communal ownership of the tools and whatever is produced. There is equal sharing of whatever is held. There is no exploitation here, and there is very little understanding of the world people live in. That is why it is called primitive. The slave society is based on private ownership of the means of production and of the slaves by the slave owner. In slave society what is produced is owned by the slave owner. Feudalism is based on private ownership of the means of production by the feudal lord who uses serfs to produce for him. In feudalism what is produced by serfs is owned by the feudal lord. Capitalism is based on the private ownership of the means of production by the capitalist who employs wage workers to work for him or her. In capitalism what is produced by the workers is owned by the capitalist. In socialism private ownership of the means of production is abolished. All means of production end up belonging to the state and co-operatives. In socialism what is produced by the working people belongs to the working people.

In each society there is a definite way in which people relate to the means of production and to each other when engaged in production. People relate to the means of production and to each other either as owners of means of production, or as those who own no means of production. This relationship in production is called the basis. It is the basis because society is based on it. However, the basis does not exist alone. It exists with political, legal, philosophical, moral and religious views. In addition there are things like the army, government, courts, parties, trade unions, co-operatives, etc. These views and the organisations and the institutions mentioned make up what is called the superstructure, what is built on top of the basis. The superstructure defends the basis in society. So we have the primitive communism, the slave society, the feudal society, the capitalist society and the socialist basis and superstructure.

CHAPTER 6. THE STATE

(i) What is the state?

The state is exemplified by the army, the police, the courts, parliament, government, and jails. The state is an instrument of maintaining the rule of one class over another. The state is not neutral therefore. But the capitalists (like the Rhodesian racists) want the working class and the peasants to believe that the state is neutral, it works for and supports all classes in society. This is not true.

Once we say that the state is a class political instrument, we are also saying that the state has not always been in existence. Why? Because we have already said that there was a time when there were no classes in society. This was during the primitive communal days. In those days there was no army, no police force, no jails and no law. Indeed, this is the case among the San people in Botswana. The state only came with classes. The state only came into being when one group of people became richer than others, and took away from the others the means of production. For the rich group to defend its property against those who had nothing, it had to have an instrument, a machine against those with no property. And to force those who had no means of production to work for it, the rich group had to use a machine — the State.

In slave society the state belongs to the slave owners. In feudal society it belongs to the feudal lords. In capitalism it belongs to the capitalist

class. In socialism it belongs to the working class.

The state in slave society, in feudalism and in capitalism is designed to keep control over the working people, it is the state of exploiters, the state of looters, the state of plunderers. It is designed to force the working people to submit to the small groups, the rich and exploiting class.

In socialism the state is designed to suppress the capitalist class and those others who do not want socialism. In socialism the state belongs to the working class. In socialism the working class owns and controls the means of production through its own state. The working class defends its ownership and control over the economy against capitalist class by using the state. But as socialism develops into communism, the state goes away, it slowly becomes no longer necessary, it withers away. The reason for this is that as socialism develops into communism, class divisions in society die out too. In communism there are no classes. Therefore there is no need for the state in communism.

All states are dictatorships of the ruling class. Each one of them is a machine of suppressing one class or another. Yet each state is democratic for its own class.

The capitalist state is vicious, repressive and cruel against workers and peasants (we all remember the Rhodesian state). This gets worse during the imperialist stage of capitalism. Imperialism is what capitalism is today. It is characterised by big companies that control the economy and the state. Imperialism is the last stage of capitalism. That is why the capitalist state has become more vicious, more repressive than ever before. It has run out of ways to justify capitalism and the plunder of other countries. Only military savagery and poisonous propaganda remain to maintain the capitalist system. The imperialist state will engage in world wars and local wars just to maintain capitalism against the will of the people. Imperialism is dangerous to world peace, humanity and social development.

The main functions of the dictatorship of workers (the dictatorship of the proletariat) include the suppression of the exploiting classes; directing the building of socialist economy; and the education and training of working people to equip them for the building of socialism and communism. It nationalises the main means of production and helps the working people form and run cooperatives.

But the socialist state is guided by the working class party, the Marxist-

Leninist Party. The Marxist-Leninist Party is the best, the most conscious section of the working class. Only communists are members of this party. Only those who have proved beyond any doubt that they are the best, the most fearless sons and daughters of workers become members. Only those who are guided by the philosophy of the working class can be members. In any field of activity, only the best in that field must lead. So it is in the struggle for and in the construction of socialism. Anything less than this will not bring about socialism.

(ii) The State in Zimbabwe

The state in Zimbabwe before colonialism was that of feudal lords. It protected them against the peasants and serfs. It was an exploiting state. It had no mercy for those who did not do things according to the wishes and interests of the feudal chiefs and kings.

The state in Zimbabwe during the colonial days was that of colonial capitalism. This was a cruel, repressive, sadistic, racist state against the people of Zimbabwe. It served the interests of the settler capitalist farmers, settler capitalist factory owners, settler capitalist shop owners and the big British, South African, American, Netherlands, West Germany, French and Belgian companies, the multinational companies. This state killed, tortured, detained and restricted thousands of the people of Zimbabwe. The racist and colonial state made sure that the whole black population of Zimbabwe lived in fear all the time. Yet the racists used to say that their state stood for the interests of all.

The state of independent Zimbabwe is a democratic one, it is a state with the support of the majority of workers, peasants, capitalists, the petty bourgeoisie and all our races and nationalities. But the state is not in control of the economy, Zimbabweans are not in control of the economy. Over 80 per cent of the economy is owned by the same multinationals that made millions of dollars during the colonial days. Zimbabwe therefore is a neo-colony. It is a country that has gained political independence, but has no economic independence.

However, the government of Zimbabwe has made it clear that it wants to change this state of affairs so that we end up being economically independent too. Not only that. The ruling party, ZANU (PF), has declared many times that it wants to lead the people of Zimbabwe towards socialism. ZANU (PF) has Marxism-Leninism as its official

ideology, though some of its members are anti-socialist,, they are exploiters, or mean to be exploiters. There is no doubt that the majority of ZANU (PF) members (that is workers and peasants) want to see a better system for themselves, that system can only be socialism of the working class for they already know that capitalism has nothing for them, they have lived in it for tens of years and it has brought nothing to them but unending suffering.

The government of Zimbabwe has made it very clear thant only socialism of the worknig class is the correct road for the people of Zimbabwe to follow. This calls for more education of the party members, particularly the working class members. It calls for more education of the working class and the peasantry along the path of socialist transformation. The working class has to emerge as the leading force in ZANU (PF), in the state and in the economy. Otherwise socialism will remain a dream. Our trade unions and cooperatives have to be more active, they have to master socialism, and they have to be very strong organisationally. For it is only when the working class is clear that our steps towards socialism will be meaningful and will be better defended. Our peasants too have to strengthen their organisations, co-operatives and clubs and direct them towards socialist transformation of agriculture.

The Philosophy of the Working Class

"Here is a workers manual on the Philosophy of the Working Class. This booklet is easy to read and understand, it has turned Philosophy into a very easy subject for anybody who can read the daily newspapers.

The booklet can be used by trade unions in their Seminars, Workshops and in other trade union learning situations. It is also easy to carry, it can be used by each individual worker on the bus, on the train, at home, during break at work, or in a bus, train, hospital, clinic or any other queue.

The booklet can also be used by Co-operatives and the Co-operative movements, school teachers and secondary school children for political economy lessons. It can also be used by members of the youth movement individually or in groups as at youth seminars, workshops and in other learning situations organised by the youth movement.

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