

Labor, the State, and the Struggle for a Democratic Zimbabwe

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When Zimbabwe attained its first independent government in 1980, led by President Robert Mugabe and liberation fighters of the Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), there were reasons to hope for a bright future. The new country inherited significant infrastructure from the prior Rhodesian settler regime, including relatively modern transportation and communications systems and an impressive set of import substitution industries. The economy had been built with extensive state support and planning (along with capital controls) to evade UN sanctions. By way of reconciliation, Mugabe sought good relations with local and regional capital, while establishing economic ties to China and East Bloc countries that had supported the liberation struggle. Roughly 100,000 white settlers remained in the country, operating the commanding heights of commerce, finance, industry, mining, and large-scale agriculture, as well as domestic small businesses. The 1980s witnessed rapid growth at first, then droughts, with 5 percent GDP growth when rainy seasons were average or better. Thanks to the construction of thousands of new clinics and schools, indices of health and education showed marked improvement.

But 1991 was a turning point for Zimbabwe, as it was for Iraq, the Soviet Union, Argentina, India, Cuba, and elsewhere. The United States was suddenly the sole superpower, and the IMF, World Bank, and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (later the World Trade Organization) wasted no time imposing a global neoliberal iron heel. Zimbabwe had significant international debts, and suddenly new debt service was “conditioned” on yielding to the global neoliberal dictatorship. The large state sector and protected local industries inherited

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from the prior regime were condemned as “inefficient” and an Economic Structural Adjustment Program (ESAP) was adopted by Mugabe with considerable enthusiasm. The results were disastrous. Manufacturing output declined by 40 percent from 1991 to 1995, accompanied by a similar decline in workers’ real standard of living and a dramatic increase in inflation that ravaged savings and those in the informal economy. Hunger struck the countryside. Public education and health expenditures shrank at the very moment that the AIDS pandemic struck the country. The adult HIV infection rate is over 20 percent, and according to government figures, about 5,000 people die of AIDS-related illnesses each week. More than one thousand schoolteachers have died of AIDS since mid-2004, and the teachers union reports that 25 percent of its members are living with AIDS. The great majority can no longer afford the government-subsidized antiretroviral therapy, which in any event is available only in the two major urban centers. Foreign exchange is scarce, and with domestic industry destroyed in the 1990s by ESAP, many consumer goods are often unobtainable, from gasoline to sanitary napkins. At one time self-sufficient in food grains, Zimbabwe must now import massive amounts of cereals from donors to avoid outright starvation in the countryside. Through this nightmare the exhausted nationalist Mugabe ZANU-PF regime has clung to power, too sick to arrest the accelerating decline but yet too strong to die.

Beginning with the introduction of ESAP, Zimbabwe’s workers in the shrinking organized economy and especially the head office of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) have been the center of gravity for the country’s political opposition, broadly defined. In elections the Mugabe regime resorts to blatant vote-rigging, patronage politics, and brutal repression. As the economy disintegrated, the regime responded to the consequences (including rural flight to the cities) with force. The mid-2005 Operation Murambatsvina—“clean up the trash”—was one of the more extreme instances, leaving an estimated 300,000 urban families uprooted during the cold winter without warning, their informal township houses and market stalls razed while they were dumped in the countryside.

Although ZCTU membership has oscillated between just 150,000 and 200,000 (roughly 15 percent of the employed workforce), in a country of approximately 12 million, the labor movement is today the most powerful single non-state force in the society. As in Zambia to the north during the late 1980s (leading to a change in government in 1991), and in South Africa from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, organized work-

ers could still play the decisive role in this society's slow, painful democratization. Moreover, in advancing a desperately needed anti-neoliberal alternative, a left alliance between labor and Zimbabwe's emerging social movements remains the sole continuing hope for a truly democratic way out of the disaster.

Over the post-1991 period the ZCTU has oscillated between, on the one hand, opposition to neoliberalism and, on the other, anti-Mugabe electoral pacts with petit-bourgeois sectors that openly called for *increased* neoliberal measures. A crucial period lies ahead, during which corporatist bait may once again be dangled in front of the ZCTU. The prospect of personality-pacting within the petit-bourgeois political elite, combining "moderates" from the ruling party and the badly-split opposition Movement for Democratic Change, will arise when eighty-one-year-old Robert Mugabe is finally—before a scheduled 2008 presidential election—eased out from his now quarter-century-long rule, in part by South African president Thabo Mbeki. (The opposition is divided over whether to participate in the November election of a new Senate, with the labor-oriented bloc advocating a boycott due to the Senate's illegitimacy and Mugabe's vote-rigging tactics.) Mbeki must also be worried about the potentially parallel role of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which last year embarked on a ZCTU solidarity offensive, putting it in direct conflict with Mbeki's African National Congress (ANC). The danger in Zimbabwe is that both the established and the new political elites seek a transition to a post-Mugabe government that will entail marginalizing the popular sector.

Democratic Challenges, State Responses

Since Zimbabwe's formal independence in 1980, the majority of the country's workers and urban poor have come to understand and criticize the exhaustion of the national liberation movement's moral standing, the state's zigzagging economic policies, the ruling party's malgovernance, and Mugabe's dictatorial tendencies. Workers were not as important as the guerrilla army in bringing an end to Rhodesian colonial rule in 1980, but they voted overwhelmingly for ZANU-PF—even over the Zimbabwe African People's Union, led by the late Joshua Nkomo, the country's first national trade union leader—given the former's stronger military presence across the country and its broader-based linguistic and cultural links. The honeymoon ended nearly immediately, as Mugabe conspired with Anglo American Corporation leader Harry Oppenheimer to smash strikes at the company's Hwange colliery and sugar plantations a few

weeks after independence. Shortly afterwards, Mugabe declared a strike of bakery workers to be “nothing short of criminal,” as he reined in potentially explosive urban demands for change.

Long a site of factional conflict and competition in the late colonial period, the labor movement became a key target for ZANU-PF’s political restructuring shortly after 1980, following a series of widespread and sometimes violently suppressed industrial actions. In 1981, the ruling party engineered institutional control over labor by welding existing labor centers into the ZCTU and manipulating the key leadership positions. Debased by direct political intervention, unaccountable union leadership and an increasingly hostile labor regime put in place by government, the new national labor center crashed by the mid-1980s under the weight of corruption, conflict among political factions, and growing unpopularity among workers. They saw few results produced by the politically ensnared organization. A significant factor was the rise of a new generation of union activists, slowly moving into affiliate positions of authority, who were in place to demand greater accountability to workers. By 1987 a new ZCTU leadership emerged from the ranks of the labor center’s affiliates, including ZCTU Secretary General Morgan Tsvangirai from the mines and President Gibson Sibanda from the railways.

Slowly, the ZCTU began to nurture a degree of autonomy from the ruling party, reflected in the formation of public alliances with other groups—especially students—petitioning the state over the fading of progressive values and over the first revelations of corruption in the ruling party and civil service. While ZANU-PF maintained the rhetorical pretense of a socialist development program, this presented few serious points of conflict. But with the ruling party’s shift to the right at the end of the 1980s, confirmed by its wholesale adoption of ESAP, the labor movement’s growing autonomy, grassroots popularity, and vociferous skepticism about adjustment represented an important obstacle for ZANU-PF.

Already in 1989, Tsvangirai was jailed briefly after he endorsed strident student protests against government corruption and multinational corporate influence. As structural adjustment bit harder, Mugabe introduced labor laws that severely restricted collective bargaining and other union activities. The government used security forces to disrupt peaceful demonstrations against structural adjustment and the labor regulations. A decade of unprecedented industrial and social action was launched, featuring a wave of public and private sector industrial

actions in the mid 1990s that soon grew to include nationwide “political actions” against government intransigence, unaccountability, and mismanagement.

In the first national strikes since 1948, commerce and industry were brought to halt in “stay-aways” on three occasions during 1997–98. In December 1997, more than one million workers, management, informal sector entrepreneurs, and civil servants left work and joined street demonstrations to protest new levies and taxies imposed by the government to cover the unbudgeted costs of a secret, enormous payout deal struck between President Mugabe and “war veterans”—a move provoked by public revelations of high-level political corruption in draining a war veterans injuries compensation fund dry. Follow-up strikes in 1998 were equally successful in attracting broad-based support across social and economic interest groups. Again, the ruling party and its allies responded with violence backed by increasingly exclusionary, nationalist posturing. In December 1997 Tsvangirai was severely assaulted in his office by suspected ZANU-PF militants, and in March 1998 the ZCTU’s Bulawayo offices were firebombed.

“IMF Riots” occurred in Harare periodically during the 1990s, as in so many other Third World settings. Finally, Zimbabwe’s creative worker, NGO, social movement, women’s, youth, student, church, and media activists unified in search of programmatic action, through the February 1999 “National Working People’s Agenda for Change” convention. This seminal meeting issued a progressive platform, which inspired its leading participants to form a new party, soon known as the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). But within months of its September 1999 launch, the MDC revealed ambiguities. On the one hand, Tsvangirai worked hard to build local structures. On the other, the MDC attracted funding and support from the black petit-bourgeoisie and white elites, and found dubious international allies.

In many ways, contemporary Zimbabwe politics date from the pivotal moment in February 2000 when an alliance of diverse civil-society organizations including the ZCTU and its National Constitutional Assembly allies defeated the government in a constitutional referendum. It was the first referendum in the country’s history, and the first-ever defeat of ZANU-PF in a national poll. The result sent shock waves through the ruling establishment and with parliamentary elections looming in June 2000 precipitated a series of deeply destabilizing events—including the invasion by veterans of the liberation war of settler-owned commercial farms, and eventually mines and other produc-

tive enterprises. Since then, state institutions have been dramatically restructured, and the militarization of society has altered the nature of both the ruling-class alliance within the political hierarchy and the terrain of civil-society activism. By these and other means, new challenges have emerged for the consolidation of the labor movement's political-economic agenda since 2000.

The state's onslaught on the MDC's structures, leadership, and rank and file did not eliminate the opposition, but nonetheless severely constrained the party's capacities on the ground. Some commentators focus narrowly on leadership politics within the MDC and highlight significant dangers for popular constituencies in the MDC's apparent confusion over whether to advocate social democracy or neoliberalism, as well as internal divisions between competing blocs. Optimists rebut by reminding us of the amorphous nature of the party membership, institutional structures, and leadership, and the continuing open-ended debates on these issues throughout the party. Most important may be the comparatively large influence of union structures and members within lower and middle ranks of the party, although many leading MDC politicians are professionals, especially lawyers.

Mainstream observers also tend to focus inordinate attention upon the unfolding ZANU-PF leadership scuffle, often reducing political processes to ethnic loyalties. For some, the problem of "governance" can allegedly be solved by a transition to a more moderate ruling-party leadership and perhaps augmented by the integration of opposition forces into government. This is the solution long sought by the South African government, which in turn gives MDC leaders periodic (false) hope that Mbeki will put substantial pressure on Mugabe to cut a deal. But in the process, fundamental aspects of restructuring in state and civil society that have occurred since 2000 mostly fell off the radar screen. The political and institutional restructuring of the state, the continuing realignments in the domestic economy, and the impact of both on the array of social forces in civil society pose extreme challenges to the labor movement and to any politically progressive project for the medium term.

The old semi-developmental/welfarist state of the 1980s, undermined by 1990s structural adjustment, has since been transfigured by irregular militarization. This has involved the removal or marginalization of professional state functionaries in key command posts and the placement of personnel from the state security agencies and informal paramilitaries into positions of effective public authority. Evidence is found in the rebirth of the land-invading war veterans as a paramilitary grouping

patronized by the ruling party; the restructuring of local commands within the Zimbabwe Republic Police to bring into positions of authority personnel linked to ZANU-PF; the increasing role of the Zimbabwe National Army in “policing” and suppressing opposition voices inside Zimbabwe; and the creation of a second paramilitary organization in the form of the national youth brigades. Through these instruments the opposition been attacked and in many areas physically decimated. In addition, they reflect the subordination of state institutions to the short-term political needs of the ZANU-PF leadership.

The new wave of militarization facilitated the entrenchment of more direct partisan control over public administration, and it deprofessionalized Zimbabwe’s once-impressive state bureaucracy. Physical assaults, threats, and intimidation against senior and junior civil servants, public sector professionals (including teachers, doctors, and nurses), magistrates and High Court judges, defense attorneys, and public prosecutors, among others, have been widely reported. In many instances—for example, the expulsion from their posts of senior government administrators by war veterans, and attacks on legal professionals by ruling-party supporters in the presence of the police—it appears that one aim of this violence has been to profile the irregular powers enjoyed by the ruling party and exercised with impunity, as a warning signal to potential opponents. In addition, Mugabe has introduced a series of extremely regressive laws regulating media and information institutions, rights to public assembly, modes of political party financing and organization, and, more recently, non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Highly partisan forms of selective and strategic “justice” have been deployed in attacking the opposition, its perceived supporters in civil society, and the wider terrain of local communities.

Aside from ubiquitous militarization, state capacity has been weak and uneven. State-directed experiments have been tried without adequate administrative competence. Key institutional elements in ZANU-PF’s early and modest developmental project—the local health-care system, educational institutions, local consulting structures, etc.—were financially and administratively undermined during the era of structural adjustment. Subsequently, the widespread “cleansing” of large sections of the education sector of perceived government opponents—since many teachers support the MDC—reduced school access and quality.

In the face of the deepening crisis, favored ZANU-PF elements have gained new power in the domestic economy. High level state corruption dates to the 1980s, but since 2000 has worsened because the “fast-track”

land redistribution program entails reallocation of large-scale agricultural capital assets in a climate of low transparency and high partisanship under ZANU-PF's direction. Major political and economic benefits have accrued to ZANU-PF clients. These benefits range from the former white-owned commercial farms (nearly 90 percent of white and corporate-owned farms turned over since 2000) to sections of the once substantial collection of state corporations and public infrastructure, including the national power grid, public telephone and telecommunications network, national radio and television monopoly, national railway, and commercial plantations and forestry holdings. Several dozen of the major state corporations were slated for privatization during the early 1990s by structural adjustment planners, but only a few were sold off at the time, in a more or less public fashion. Currently, in contrast, key assets—energy, telecoms, and transport among them—are being quietly acquired by interests associated with the ruling party, through direct means and through other avenues such as special-access licensing, leasing, and insider trading.

The opaque character of the reshaped ZANU-PF state leaves details about the full extent of asset stripping mostly unaccounted for. ZANU-PF's private fire sale has compounded continuing disinvestment by the state in institutions servicing the social sector—and moreover, the increasing diversion of public resources away from social spending towards the security sector. In the process, elements of a parasitical “briefcase businessmen” elite have emerged through renewed deepening primitive accumulation which will pose a major barrier to labor's agenda in coming years.

New Popular Responses

Many in the political and civic opposition have failed to take full cognizance of the implications of the state's structural transformation, and some would say, for good reason: the key challenges posed by the state transformation involve the opposition's very survival. However, the labor movement has, arguably, better positioned itself to resist the implications of the ongoing state restructuring, thanks to its resistance to privatization and support of popular demands for the restitution of social and economic rights. This occurs both through daily practice within the labor movement and in the ZCTU's role in broader social-civil-society-coalitions. Hence the labor movement is mapping out policy terrain and strategies that are independent of, and on occasion at odds with, those of the MDC—notably on issues of eco-

conomic policy, where factions of the MDC continue still to advocate neoliberal policies.

At the same time, the ZCTU has shown a willingness to defend its positions through periodic mass action, despite continuing state attacks. Notwithstanding a failure of nerve immediately after the 2002 presidential election theft, the ZCTU subsequently led or participated in a series of strikes and demonstrations, especially in 2003–04. Alone and in conjunction with civic allies and the left flank of the MDC, the ZCTU continues to represent a problem for ZANU-PF's reconfigured elitist nationalist project, challenging the regime's claims of having delivered "national justice" through the economically disastrous and politically chaotic land redistribution program. Labor also influences MDC and wider civil-society debates by insisting on redistribution, arguing for state rebuilding, and pressing demands for social and economic rights of a more tangible, popular kind than those propagated by the ruling party.

In reply, the state has been uncompromising, meting out repeated detentions, beatings, and threats against (and in some instance, the torture of) senior ZCTU officials, trade union leaders, and activists. At the same time, the state is undermining the ZCTU from within labor, through attempts (mostly unsuccessful) to establish a ZANU-PF-linked counter-labor center, the so-called Zimbabwe Federation of Trade Unions (ZFTU). For a time headed by prominent Harare war veteran Joseph Chinotimba, the ZFTU developed few structures on the ground and instead relied upon violence, threats, and state support to sustain its presence financially and organizationally. Preying on more vulnerable sectors of workers—in rural plantation agriculture and mining, for example—the ZFTU leveraged irregular access to workers (and revenue) by means of press-gang tactics. Their cadres include war veterans and other ZANU-PF-linked paramilitaries. It seems clear that without support from the state and paramilitaries, the ZFTU would disappear.

The medium and long-term consequences of restructuring, de-democratization, and in some instances gutting of the state during the current period are profound. While mainstream commentators have focused on the need for a leadership transition in ZANU-PF, the more substantial issue of state/society form is left largely unaddressed. Although ZCTU leaders have sometimes sought relief in corporatist institutions, these have systematically failed to deliver.

Indeed, the more likely outcome of the current political trajectory is a deal which leaves out labor. Other forces in civil society, lacking accountability to (and representation of) an identifiable popular con-

stituency, will more readily entertain an elite transition acceptable to the dominant faction of the ruling-party leadership, recently-empowered security apparatuses, black business circles, and regional power brokers like Mbeki. Therein lies a critical role for regional and international trade union organizations: shoring up both the institutional integrity and political-economic agenda of the ZCTU. Can the Johannesburg-based COSATU begin a meaningful program of solidarity, given the federation's formal Alliance partnership with Mbeki's ANC?

Factoring in South Africa

Beyond conjunctural moments such as the March 2005 election, the highest-profile way in which South Africa's influence is brought to bear on Zimbabwe may be via a bilateral lending relationship—to force economic liberalization and political “normalization” (as Pretoria put it)—and diplomatically through the African Union. That body's neoliberal political-economic strategy, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), was endorsed by the Bush administration as “philosophically spot-on.” It was launched by Mbeki and his closest ally, Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, in October 2001. Mugabe initially opposed NEPAD as an extension of the imperialist project into Africa. But within a year, Mugabe and his foreign minister Stan Mudenge were visited by Pretoria's foreign minister, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, and a few days later, finance minister Herbert Murerwa proclaimed in his budget speech that it was “critical that Zimbabwe remains part of this [NEPAD] process.”

As a reward, in February 2003, Dlamini-Zuma stated, “We will never criticize Zimbabwe.” The NEPAD secretariat's Dave Malcomson, responsible for international liaison and coordination, then admitted to a reporter, “Wherever we go, Zimbabwe is thrown at us as the reason why NEPAD's a joke.”

To illustrate, Mbeki failed in his March 2003 attempt to have Zimbabwe readmitted to the Commonwealth group of former British colonies, following the March 2002 election-related suspension. He then tried to ensure Mugabe would be invited to the December 2003 meeting of the Commonwealth in Abuja, but lost more ground even among his standard African allies. Indeed, Zimbabwe was suspended indefinitely, leaving Mugabe immediately to announce at a ZANU-PF congress that Zimbabwe would quit the organization. Mbeki, clearly bitter upon his return home, helped craft a statement issued by the Southern African Development Community plus Uganda, complaining that unnamed

Commonwealth members were “dismissive, intolerant and rigid.” Throughout 2004, similar displays of Mbeki-Mugabe solidarity occurred, culminating in the November veto by South Africa’s United Nations representative of a Human Rights Commission condemnation of Zimbabwe’s repressive regime.

The most striking case of Pretoria’s support for Harare was the offer of a \$500 million loan last August, apparently at the urging of the World Bank. A large amount was meant to repay the International Monetary Fund, to which Zimbabwe’s arrears reached \$200 million by mid-2005. Mugabe initially rejected Mbeki’s offer and instead scrounged \$135 million in hard currency from internal sources—by depriving most Zimbabweans of gasoline and food imports—so as to make a down payment on the arrears.

Aside from the futile top-down financial power politics, the most significant recent bottom-up development in South African–Zimbabwe relations was labor solidarity. When several COSATU leaders arrived in Harare in October 2004 to meet the ZCTU and other activists, they were quickly arrested, driven 600 kilometers to the South African border, and dumped there in the middle of the night. The ANC responded by criticizing *the South African union leaders*. The ANC’s leading official, Kgalema Motlanthe (himself formerly a mineworker leader), said: “They go there with the intention of defying a country’s laws and they make it known. This has value for the newspapers but it has very little to do with familiarizing yourself with the situation.” One of Mbeki’s chief aides, Joel Netshitenzhe, dismissed with ridicule the eviction of the COSATU fact-finding mission: “If we allowed ourselves to be diverted by sideshows we might lose sight of the ball.”

Refusing to be intimidated, COSATU sent a high-profile delegation in February 2005 which was evicted immediately. “The Zimbabwean government’s action confirms reports that it is contemptuous of human rights and civil liberties,” COSATU stated in a follow-up session with the ZCTU in a border town: “We will not abandon our colleagues in Zimbabwe in their hour of need.” The result, notwithstanding hysterical opposition from the ANC Youth League—on this issue, loyal to Mbeki, and in turn to Mugabe—was COSATU’s threat to barricade the Zimbabwe–South Africa border during the run-up to the election. The threat was downgraded to a picket during the run-up to the March 2005 election.

There was similar ambiguity within South Africa’s independent left. At the opening of a mass demonstration of nearly 20,000 against the

Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, a leader of the Landless People's Movement (LPM) called out from the stage, "Viva Robert Mugabe, Viva! Viva ZANU-PF, Viva!" to applause from a large rural delegation. In response, Trevor Ngwane (nephew of the assassinated Zimbabwean liberation leader Herbert Chitepo), who is a key figure in the country's main radical urban social movement, the Anti-Privatization Forum (APF), took the microphone: "While we are happy to have unity with the landless, we respectfully disagree on the matter of Mugabe. He is a dictator and he has killed many Zimbabweans." In early 2005, the LPM, APF, and Jubilee South Africa engaged in a joint fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe on the shared premise that Mugabe was a repressive dictator. Even though they did not have a consensus statement on the election, South Africa's leftist movements agree that both urban and rural social movement solidarity must be established for the long haul.

Time will tell whether short-term border pickets and other contentious acts of labor solidarity, in the context of ongoing structural adjustment in South Africa, might drive a wedge between the ANC and COSATU, not dissimilar to that of ZANU-PF and the ZCTU during the late 1990s. Mugabe's tainted victory at the March 31 parliamentary poll only fueled a growing South African-Zimbabwe solidarity movement, one which has gathered widespread support through a South African left that is otherwise divided on most strategic issues.

Whose Internationalism?

ZANU-PF is itself in crisis over Mugabe's successor, as reflected in a spectacular February 2005 purge of former information minister Jonathan Moyo and a dozen high-ranking politicians in his orbit. The main tension concerned whether parliamentary speaker Emmerson Mnangagwa or long-time minister Joyce Mujuru—wife of Mugabe's most trusted military chief—would gain a vice-presidency; the latter won in spite of a conspiratorial effort led by Moyo. But ZANU-PF's internal chaos does not derail Mugabe's desperate search for legitimacy, according to socialist commentator Briggs Bomba: "The party is doing everything to regain the confidence of international capital, and to reintegrate with the 'international community.' Reserve Bank Governor Gideon Gono is leading efforts to liberalize not just the monetary system but the whole economy and to re-engage international institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. Politically the party is softening its attack on western powers, as by the recent IMF debt repayments."

In this confusing context, certainly the biggest challenge for Zimbabwean labor is to survive so it can fight another day and in the process to strengthen links to left-leaning allies in community organizations and social movements. The society's dangerous drift may only be reversed once labor and its progressive civic allies set the opposition's agenda firmly *to the left*.

In the midst of the brief threat that Zimbabwe might be expelled from the IMF, a leading MDC figure saw fit publicly to ask the IMF to impose on Zimbabwe "a wide range of reforms designed to strengthen the private sector and the market mechanism." The MDC division is, at surface level, over whether or not to participate in electoral politics. But the split also reflects the incoherent coalition of ZCTU and civil-society leftists with political elites and neoliberals who are unabashed in seeking support from the Bretton Woods Institutions and the Blair and Bush regimes. The goal of the imperial powers is the creation of a "corporatist" coalition between the MDC and "reasonable" ZANU-PF figures based on an "elite-transition" program that reintegrates Zimbabwe into the U.S.-UK world order. Mbeki prefers to let ZANU-PF retain power, with a post-Mugabe regime guided by the business bloc around the neoliberal central banker Gono and potentially led by former finance minister Simba Makoni.

In late October 2005, the ZCTU held a workshop of its leadership. The ZCTU leadership resolved that "[m]arket-based economic strategies, which have caused untold problems for the working people of Zimbabwe and elsewhere, especially women and children, should be discontinued..." that "[t]he current pro-globalisation regional integration should be replaced by a solidarity-based regional integration which promotes industrial development and protects national economies from the adverse impacts of globalisation", and that "[e]fforts to liberalise economies through negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements, World Trade Organisation and especially the Doha Development Round of negotiations and the forthcoming 6th WTO Ministerial scheduled for Hong Kong in December 2005 should be resisted."

This stand is the basis for renewed social leadership by the ZCTU. The union structures will have to transcend their current ability to call periodic but generally containable mass stay-aways, and target more surgical parts of the regime's capacity without risking decapitation by ZANU-PF and its paramilitaries. And while increasing its technical inputs into programmatic work by civil society, the ZCTU will need to

avoid the temptation of potential corporatist deals associated with an Mbeki-style elite transition.

Still ahead on the immediate horizon are major socio-political upheavals, ranging from renewed fights for control over both the ruling party and opposition, to intensified austerity once the inflationary era subsides, in the context of potentially voracious South African subimperial accumulation.

International solidarity, of the sort COSATU has begun, will enhance the survival capacity of Zimbabwean labor (and its left civil-society allies) in the face of legal and extralegal repression. The eventual success of a mass-based and labor-led movement at one and the same time *for* democracy and *against* neoliberalism and imperialism would have the most significant consequences for all of Southern Africa.

Notes for Further Reading

Amid a barrage of largely shallow, mainstream-oriented publications about Zimbabwe and especially Robert Mugabe over the past five years, there emerged a diverse and largely progressive set of book-length studies on contemporary politics and political economy, including D. Moore & T. Leddy, eds., *Zimbabwe: Crisis and Transition* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, forthcoming); B. Raftopoulos & T. Savage, *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation* (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2005); P. Bond & M. Manyanya, *Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice* (London: Merlin Press; Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press; and Harare: Weaver Press, 2003); H. Campbell, *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation* (Cape Town: David Philip; and Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003); A. Hammer, B. Raftopoulos & S. Jensen, eds., *Zimbabwe's Unfinished Business: Rethinking Land, State and Nation in the Context of Crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2003); M. Manyanya, ed., *NEPAD's Zimbabwe Test: Why the New Partnership for Africa's Development is Already Failing* (Harare: Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development, 2003); S. Dansereu, ed., special issue of *Labor, Capital and Society* 33, no. 2 (2001); B. Rutherford *Working on the Margins: Black Workers, White Farmers in Post-Colonial Zimbabwe* (Harare: Weaver Press, 2001); J. Alexander et al, *Violence and Memory: One Hundred Years in the "Dark Forests" of Matabeleland* (Oxford: James Currey, 2001); and T. Bowyer-Bower & C. Stoneman, *Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Constraints and Prospects* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003);

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