

A Journal of Southern African Revolutionary Anarchism
ZABALAZA



"From each according to ability, to each according to need!" ★ No. 14 ★ August 2015



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ZACF CONTACT DETAILS

Post: Postnet Suite 47, Private Bag X1, Fordsburg, South Africa, 2033

Email: zacf@riseup.net | **Website:** www.zabalaza.net | **PHONE:** +27 72 399 0912

Editorial: Where to, South Africa?

Anarchist-Communist Reflections

Tina Sizovuka

In 2013, Zabalaza/ ZACF took a decision to redirect our energies into certain aspects of our work that we felt were more urgent and immediately important at the time, given the challenges and conditions we were facing. The bad news is that this decision took its toll on our publishing work, which partly explains the long gap (over two years) between issues of our journal. The good news is that this reorientation has paid off elsewhere: hiccups notwithstanding, over the past two years our militants have participated in various new initiatives in and around Johannesburg, where we have witnessed a renewed and growing interest in anarchism. The inclusion of several new names in this issue is a much-welcomed reflection of these changes.

Over the past two years, there have been many important developments that deserve special consideration. We have tried to include our own, anarchist, appraisals of these where possible, although in some respects we have fallen unavoidably short. It is precisely because South Africa's burning social and national issues remain unresolved (in fact they cannot be resolved within the existing capitalist and political party systems established in 1910 and 1994), that the country continues to undergo social turbulence, seen in strikes, union splits, struggles over symbols, and sadly, anti-immigrant attacks.

The expulsion in November 2014 of the metalworkers union (NUMSA) from the federation (COSATU), and the consequent formation of a new NUMSA-driven "United Front" (UF) is an interesting turn of events in South Africa. On the one hand this is a major setback for trade union unity, but on the other, NUMSA's pledge to work for the type of "social movement unionism" that once distinguished it, could also mean a victory for working class unity broadly speaking. In this, NUMSA has cut ties with the ruling ANC, and – in its defence of former general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi – has been at the forefront of a struggle against that powerful ANC-SACP group within the federation's leadership, which, in NUMSA's words, is attempting to turn COSATU into a "labour desk" of the ruling party. However, it is yet to be seen whether the UF will signal a new phase in our politics; with the launch being postponed several times, with influential groups pushing for it to stand independent candidates in next year's local elections, and with a programme that at times seems more concerned about uniting the left under a NUMSA programme than about unity of the working class in struggle, the future is uncertain. How anarchists should relate to this is the subject of an entry in the "Open Correspondence Column" by Jakes Factoria and Tina Sizovuka, which argues for participation, where possible, in the unions and the UF, to build revolutionary counter-power and promote revolutionary ideas.

It is significant that it is NUMSA driving these new developments; its predecessor, MAWU, in the 1980s, was one of the most vehement voices against alliances to political parties – warning of the dangers of embroiling unions in party-political factional battles. However, we should also not forget that it was Vavi that led the campaign to back one faction of the ANC (around Zuma) over the other (around Mbeki) in the 2007 elections, the aftermath of which was the political assassination of the then COSATU president Willie Madisha, who opposed it. This decision was a watershed moment for COSATU's independence: as predicted by MAWU, COSATU would soon become infected by the ANC's factional battles – battles of which Vavi himself was later made victim. It was also a watershed moment for COSATU's culture of consensus building and debate, which was increasingly replaced by the culture of "disciplining" and malicious elimination of political opponents. Vavi's recent birthday present to Mbeki – an apology for 2007 – is a welcome admission of guilt, although the apology would best be directed at COSATU's millions of members who suffered the real consequences of the union leadership's embrace of political parties.

Pitso Mompe's article takes lessons from syndicalism, focussing on disunity within the trade unions – which not only occurs horizontally (along the lines of nationality, race, ethnicity, language and so on) but also vertically, between workers and the trade union bureaucracy – arguing for a return to the type of syndicalist-leaning bottom-up, worker controlled trade unionism of the 1970s and 1980s. This is precisely what is missing in many COSATU unions, wracked by internal turmoil, with bureaucracies enmeshed into the patronage networks of the nationalist ANC state. Thabang Sefalafala and Lucien van der Walt revisit the Spanish CNT in search of lessons for building a mass anarchist organisation and union revitalisation. On this important example, we also include here a review of Jose Peirat's account of the Spanish revolution, *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution*, a three volume study by a militant – written in exile – of the inspiring events of 1936-9.

The formation of the UF by NUMSA is an important rupture with the status quo, although its future is uncertain. Activists and leftists from a wide range of political orientations have pinned their hopes on it, a beacon of light in a sea of darkness, and much ink has already flowed in attempting to understand its significance. Unfortunately a serious ZACF anarchist analysis of the UF is still outstanding, but one is surely necessary. The lessons and insights of anarchism would add a valuable voice of apprehension that could stand up against those (many of whom are influential leadership figures) pushing the fledgling structure in the direction of a workers' party.¹ Nonetheless the rise of the UF also poses several questions to us as anarchists

about how we relate to mass movements, addressed in the “Open Correspondence Column”. A related article by Bongani Maponyane takes a theoretical look at the role and importance of having an organised active anarchist minority within mass movements, focusing on the role of the specific anarchist political organisation.

Alongside the UF, since our last issue we have seen the rise of a new, so-called “revolutionary” political party – the “Economic Freedom Fighters” (EFF). The EFF exploded onto the political scene in mid-2013 as a splinter from the ruling ANC by the faction surrounding Youth Leaguer Julius Malema, grabbing far more media attention than its weight warranted (it received only 6.35% of the votes in the 2014 national elections). Despite its flirtations with shady business figures like Kenny Kunene (who has now also launched a new party, the Patriotic Alliance), authoritarian structure (initially around an unelected “Central Command”), factional infighting for access to lucrative state positions, undisclosed funding by powerful interests, and a long string of broken promises, the EFF’s provocative – if sometimes ultra-nationalist – rhetoric has provided a pole of attraction, especially for poor youth, who are largely excluded from the system (youth unemployment is roughly 36%, and youth account for 90% of the unemployed who have never had a job).²

In the midst of all this activity, the families of the 41 Marikana miners who were brutally gunned down in August 2012 while on strike, in the aftermath of major splits in the mining unions, have been shunted into the background. The “Farlam Commission” set up to investigate the incident (commissions are the typical SA state response (delay tactic?) to popular anger) has finally, after years of proceedings, come up with nothing more than to institute another inquiry, this time into the capability of the National Police Commissioner and Provincial Commissioner to hold office after deliberately misleading the Commission. No one has been named responsible for the actual massacre, and no compensation has been forthcoming. Rather than seek to address the problems, major parties like ANC and EFF have instead sought votes from the miners’ communities, seeking to ride people’s pain into lucrative state office with promises.

With the “Nkandlagate” scandal fresh in memory – during which President Zuma refused for months to make public this inquiry into the misuse of billions of public funds for his Nkandla homestead – we are left with little hope. However, we would be wrong to single out the ANC (or the EFF) for exploiting its access to state resources as a means to entrench its power (by rewarding the loyal, building patronage networks and so on); the National Party, just like the ANC, used the state to reward voters, and built the state into an ethnic and racial fiefdom, appointed their cronies and allies to all key positions, and, more specifically, used and expanded state companies, funds, legislation and pressure for a process of either Afrikaner or black economic empowerment. This will be the topic of an upcoming Zabalaza journal *supplement*, soon to be published by the collective.

While the elites gorge themselves at our expense, and in doing so, continue to fan national divisions, the working class and poor, faced with desperate conditions, have turned on themselves. Another wave of brutal xenophobic attacks broke out in early 2015. Hundreds of foreign-owned shops were looted, and (as some policemen joined in the looting) the army

was deployed to various areas of Johannesburg and KwaZulu Natal, which had turned into battlegrounds. The latest wave of anti-immigrant violence was triggered by the xenophobic statements of the Zulu King, King Zwelithini (although he later retracted his suggestion that foreigners “pack their bags”). Public condemnations and meaningless romantic talk of African unity aside, the South African state bears responsibility for these attacks both directly and indirectly: by deliberately turning a blind eye, by the fact that its policy for dealing with the “problem” of “illegal” migration is one of clampdown and internment, and because its imperialist incursions into the rest of Africa cannot be separated from the contempt that South Africans hold towards residents of dominated countries.

This is the focus of another group of articles in this issue. Shawn Hattingh analyses South African political interference in the DRC (including backing the Kabila regime), exposing how troops stationed in the DRC (as part of “Operation Mistral”) are being used to clear rebel groups so that SA big business, state-owned enterprises, and ANC-linked interests (including of the President’s nephew) can take advantage of mineral and oil concessions in North Kivu. Philip Nyalungu also focusses on the state’s role in the recent xenophobic attacks (by deliberately weakening immigrant solidarity networks through arrests, and silencing movements critical of the ANC); at the same time, however, the article takes a tough look at the pervasiveness of xenophobic attitudes amongst ordinary people in South Africa, calling for open and honest discussion as a starting point for dealing with such rampant xenophobia.

Lucien van der Walt argues against the thesis of a Western “labour aristocracy”, showing that there is no basis for the claims that Western imperialism – through wars, colonial conquest and so on – benefits the Western working class. South Africa is itself a small imperial power, and plays an important role in popular anti-immigrant sentiment, state military actions and regional politics. The argument against “labour aristocracy” also applies: the South African working class has no stake in its ruling class’s expansionism.

The issue of the legacy of imperialism – the older, “Western,” colonial variety – has come to the fore again in South Africa, a country deeply shaped by the British Empire. Students from the University of Cape Town sparked a series of symbolic actions across the country, when they attacked a statue of Cecil John Rhodes, arch-symbol of British imperialism and the former namesake of Zimbabwe (“Rhodesia”), by covering it in human faeces.

Our colonial past deeply shapes the lives of working class South Africans. In South Africa the colour of your skin still strongly determines your life chances and social positions, and thus this anger is justified. However, Leroy Maisiri, a student at Rhodes University in South Africa, questions the overly racialised slogans (e.g. “Rhodes so white”) that have come out of the initiative, arguing that symbolic, cosmetic actions like removing statues fail to take account of deeper structural problems that link race and class, and cannot be a meaningful solution to the continued legacy of racism and colonialism in South Africa. Instead of erasing painful history, the article calls for more symbolism and more iconography – that celebrates the working class, and its heritage and history (which is also a key focus of a Heritage Day speech, reproduced here, by Lucien van der Walt). Nationalism, a politics of cross-class unity and the affirmation of narrow identities, has failed throughout

the twentieth century to solve South Africa's problems: its resurgence in some of these protests, and through the EFF, does not take us forward, as Maisiri stresses here, and van der Walt elsewhere. Real university transformation means creating, not an "African university" or a "world-class university," but a "workers and people's scientific university" and free education.

Turning to the international front, the recent uprisings by the predominantly black – but also working class – community of Baltimore in the United States, sparked by the murder of Freddie Gray while in police custody, raise many similar questions about the race-class connection in the US. While the international press has drawn historical comparisons (e.g. to the Civil Rights Movement, slavery), too often these have failed to go beyond simplistic references to "white supremacy." As in South Africa, class-based exploitation, slavery and conquest are central to the *origins* of racism, and capitalist and statist social relations play a key role in entrenching racial and national oppression today.

In terms of national liberation struggles, very little has raised more international interest (not only amongst anarchists) than the impressive fight by the People's Protection Units (YPG) and the Women's Protection Units (YPJ) in the region of Rojava in Western Kurdistan, against the Islamic State. Linked to the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), the YPG/YPJ, like the PKK, have increasingly and explicitly adopted ideas with roots in the anarchist tradition, in place of their older Marxism-Leninism: this includes efforts at an anarchist-influenced programme of self-government and direct democracy in Rojava in Syria, which is linked to a struggle for both gender equality and environmentalism. On the latter theme, Bongani Maponyane's article on climate change takes issue with the false solutions to climate change being promoted by the bureaucrats; the fact that elite-driven processes like the Kyoto Protocol, COP and others have thus far failed to meaningfully address the crisis, makes the type of class-driven environmentalism being undertaken by the YPG/YPJ all the more relevant. Shawn Hattingh's article takes a bit of a longer look at the Islamic State (IS) phenomenon, analysing the role that the US ruling class has played in the Middle East, and the reasons for its refusal to support the only forces in the region (the PKK and YPG) which have been persistently and effectively pushing back its expansion. ISIS, like radical Islamism and religious and national fundamentalisms more generally, is a reactionary movement that poses – as the YPG/YPJ battles against ISIS show – a direct, deadly threat to the left and popular classes.

The question of national sovereignty has also come up within Western Europe, after the victory of the OXI in the Greek referendum – which many

Greeks and many on the left hoped would end Greece's long nightmare of imposed austerity. The complete capitulation of Syriza (to an agreement worse in many ways than the one rejected by the referendum!) is not that surprising, but it has been interpreted by many angry leftists either as betrayal, or as evidence that Tspiras and Syriza were never really "on the left" in the first place. This totally avoids a serious analysis of the state – placing responsibility on the genuineness or loyalty of individual leaders. At best the referendum could have led to Syriza exiting the Eurozone, and implementing a friendlier version of capitalism – but it was never going to end it, nor bring about real social equality in Greece. Again this has exposed the limits of strategies focused on the state for genuine socialist change. Although this is not featured here, an analysis of the Greek events is on the cards for the next issue (or, more realistically, our website).

Shifting our focus further south, our regular Black Stars of Anarchism series features the life of Domingos Passos, in an article written by Renato Ramos and Alexandre Samis, two Brazilian comrades. Passos was a black Brazilian carpenter, unionist and anarchist, and an active leader in the Civil Construction Workers' Union (UOCC), Rio de Janeiro Workers' Federation (FORJ) and the Workers' Federation of Sao Paulo (FOSP). Passos travelled extensively, and his tireless organising and propaganda work was a crucial contribution to the spread of trade unionism, and anarchist ideas and counterculture in the region. In our other regular Counterculture section, we include here a presentation by Warren McGregor about anarchism to the travelling Afrikan HipHop Caravan – a radical underground HipHop initiative linking collectives in six African countries – held in Johannesburg in 2013.

We conclude on a positive note. Despite facing deepening austerity, desperate poverty, grinding exploitation, frightening elite-sponsored terror attacks and more, the working class has not responded by lying down in submission. Also, importantly, the fight back has not only been defensive, but has produced exciting constructive initiatives that are noteworthy not only for their effectiveness, but for their form and content. The picture of militant, largely female, popular militias determined to protect their communities effectively repelling forces like Boko Haram in Nigeria and ISIS in Kurdistan and elsewhere is illustrative.

There are struggles everywhere that we could note with pride – even if space has prevented fuller explorations here. But we also know that much work lies ahead. "The passion for destruction is a creative passion, too!"³

1. <http://zabalaza.net/2015/03/12/the-party-is-haunting-us-again/>

2. <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=2746>

3. Mikhail Bakunin, 1842. *The Reaction in Germany*.

South Africa and the DRC:

Has Rhodes passed on the baton?

Shawn Hattingh (ZACF)

In the heat of the struggle for statues like that of Rhodes – the arch-symbol of British imperialism – to be pulled down, and in the midst of the horror of the recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa, few people seemed to notice an announcement by Jacob Zuma that South African troops will remain at war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) for another year.

Of course, Zuma made this announcement on behalf the South African ruling class – comprised today of white capitalists and a black elite mainly centred around the state, Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and ‘traditional’ royal families. In this there was a real irony that while Rhodes’s likeness was falling from its perch at the University of Cape Town, and immigrants from other parts of Africa and Asia were being attacked because of sentiments stoked up by a rehabilitated relic of apartheid (the Zulu king, Zwelithini), the South African ruling class felt brash enough to say they will be continuing their own imperialist war in the DRC.

Like in all wars, including those promoted by the likes of Rhodes, it is not the ruling class that are actually doing the fighting in the DRC, but the sons and daughters of the working class. Reflecting on the First World War, Alexander Berkman noted that the working class are not really sent to war to save the poor or workers, but to protect and further the interests of the rulers, governors and capitalists of their countries.¹ This applies equally so today in the case of South African troops’ involvement in the DRC. Indeed,

what South Africa’s war in the DRC shows is that the South African ruling class don’t just exploit and oppress the working class in South Africa, but the working class in many other areas in the rest of Africa. It also shows that both at home and abroad they will use violence to do so, including trying to turn different sections of the working class on one another, by amongst of things tapping into nationalism, racism, ethnic chauvinism and xenophobia.

SOUTH AFRICA’S WAR IN THE DRC

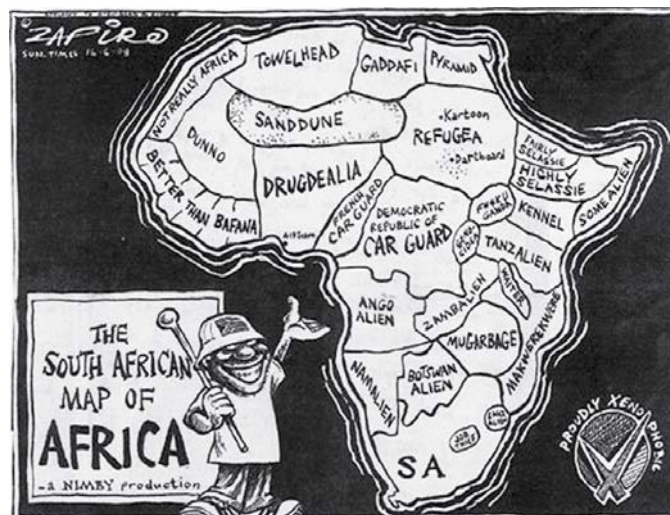
South African troops have been stationed, in one capacity or another, for more than a decade in the DRC. They have stood guard over elections, they

Almost 1400 new troops joined the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB). South African troops in fact make up the bulk of the FIB, with support from Malawi and Tanzania. The FIB’s task, including the South African troops that make up its rump, is to hunt down and kill members of guerrilla organisations in the Kivu region. To do so they have been launching operations with the DRC military against such groups.

At times the combat in this war has been fierce. In one day alone during the Battle of Kibati, in August 2013, South African troops – along with South African Air Force Rooivalk attack helicopters – killed over 500 members of the M23 rebel group. Such actions have seen the M23 effectively destroyed as a force. South African troops, along with their allies in the form of Tanzanian and DRC troops, are now beginning to make plans to strike at other rebel groups in the area.

The deployment of South African troops has not come cheap. Hundreds of millions of Rands has been spent on this by the South African state. Most of this has gone on state-of-the-art military equipment such as Rooivalk helicopters, while at the same time the troops themselves were denied tents for months when they were first deployed to North Kivu. This oversight perhaps also provides an insight into

the nature of South Africa’s ruling class – the health and comfort of the working class troops they were sending to do their fighting in the DRC mattered little as long as they had the equipment to kill the enemy and stabilise the Kivu region, and North Kivu in particular.



have been involved in ‘peacekeeping’, and at times they have also been involved in directly protecting the interests of the South African state’s ally, Joseph Kabila.

In 2013, the role of South African troops in the DRC, however, officially escalated.

One of the saddest parts of this – and there are many – is that most of the South African troops are proud of the role that they feel they are playing in the DRC. In interviews many believe that their mission to the DRC is humanitarian. Some feel they are protecting the local population from guerrilla groups.

Certainly these guerrilla groups, like the M23, are no angels. Leaders of the M23 clearly stoke up nationalist sentiments amongst the foot soldiers with the goal of getting their hands on the resources of North Kivu. War is brutal and brutalising as the M23 have been accused of multiple abuses including mass rape and murder. The M23, however, is not the most brutal group in North Kivu: another rebel group that South African troops are now making plans to move against includes members that were allegedly involved in perpetrating the genocide that took place in Rwanda 21 years ago.

Unfortunately the allies of the South African troops also do not have clean hands. Generals from the DRC military, alongside whom South African troops have been fighting, have also been accused of being the architects of war crimes. Likewise, there have been a few incidents in which South African troops have been accused of criminalities in North Kivu, including rape. Indeed, war is a messy business and it almost never based on humanitarian ideals or on ethical considerations: there are usually more unsavoury reasons behind wars mainly centred around the political and economic interests of ruling classes. In the DRC the South African troops fighting there are indeed pawns that are being used by the South African ruling class and their local allies for their own political and economic interests – they are in fact, as will be discussed later, being used to clear rebel groups so that sections of the South African ruling class can take advantage of mineral and oil concession that they own in North Kivu. In the process, working class soldiers are being brutalised and turned into killers.

WHAT ARE THE INTERESTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN RULING CLASS IN THE DRC?

The South African ruling class view the DRC as a strategic country that has the potential

to produce vast profits not only for privately owned South African companies, but also state owned ones. Already there are many South African linked companies that have interests in and/or have invested in the DRC, including MTN, Barloworld, Nandos, Shoprite, AECI, African Rainbow Minerals, Famous Brands, Aveng, Standard Bank, Group Five, Metorex, PPC Cement, Raubex, Grindrod, and Super Group. As part of these operations, South African linked companies are not only involved in extracting the DRC's natural resources, but also exploiting the



South African troops in the DRC

DRC's working class as a source of cheap labour and a market for their goods.

Over and above private interests in the DRC, the South African state too has economic and strategic interests in the DRC. The state owned oil and

gas company, PetroSA, has operations in the DRC. The South African state too views the Congo River as a potential source of electricity that could at one stroke deal with the short fall of electricity that South Africa is facing. As part of this, and for or over a decade, the South African state along with the state owned electricity company, Eskom, have been negotiating with the DRC state to build a series of hydro-electric dams on the Congo River that would supply South African industry with up to 40 000 MW of electricity a day. In 2013 a treaty was finally signed between the two states to concretely go ahead with the project and immediately the South African state put aside R 200 billion for the project.

THE EMBRACE OF IMPERIALISTS AND THE LOCAL RULING CLASS

Due to the fact that the South African ruling class views the DRC as so strategic it has used various means to try and get a foothold in the country, and subsequently expand that foothold. In doing so the South African ruling class has been competing with other imperialist powers such as the United States, Britain, Canada and China.

The South African ruling class's initial attempts to get a foothold into the DRC were linked to its bid to bring about peace talks between warring parties in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The aim of this was to try and bring adversaries together to end the conflict so that a stable environment could be achieved for investors.

[T]he South African ruling class views the DRC as so strategic it has used various means to try and get a foothold in the country, and ... expand that foothold. In doing so t[they have] been competing with other imperialist powers such as the United States, Britain, Canada and China

Relations between the Kabila regime and their backers in ... (Pretoria) have become so close that there are regular visits by... Zuma and his ministers, accompanied by CEOs of private and state owned South African companies, to the DRC.

Form the point of the South African ruling class that meant South African investors. Through such talks the Second Congolese War was ended by the Sun City deal in 2003, although not all groups laid down their weapons. An outcome of the Sun City deal was that it did indeed become easier for corporations, including South African ones, to operate in the DRC.

During the first term Presidency of Jacob Zuma, the Minister of Defence, Lindiwe Sisulu, was blatant about the interests of South Africa in promoting peace agreements such the Sun City peace deal. She said:

"Business investments began flooding into the DRC after the attainment of peace, helping the country to start rebuilding itself. South African mobile telecommunications network companies, Vodacom and MTN, mining companies, Standard Bank and state-owned electricity provider Eskom have invested in the DRC. Some South African farmers are also growing crops in the DRC".²

In the aftermath of the Sun City deal there have been further South African sponsored talks between the DRC state and the rebel groups that refused to demobilise and new one which arose. These talks have been stop-start affairs and the South African state has often been accused by parties opposed to Joseph Kabila's regime of only being interested in promoting the interests of South African companies in the DRC through such talks. At times power sharing deals have been struck, but Kabila has always come out of these with his position at the top of the state assured. Recently the latest round of talks with rebel groups, such as M23, collapsed with the South African state openly backing Kabila. Indeed, since the early 2000s a close relationship has developed between the Kabila regime and the South African state.

The South African state has, in fact, become a firm backer of Kabila. It has spent money and sent advisors in order to build state institutions and capacity in the DRC, and even spent R 123 million on the DRC elections in 2011 (much of which went to pay companies with links to the African National Congress (ANC) and old apartheid state to print ballot papers). During these elections South African troops were deployed to also ensure stability. When accusations surfaced that the elections had been fraudulent, the South African state immediately backed Kabila.

This earned the ire of sections of the population – when then Minister of Defence Lindiwe Sisulu visited the DRC in the run up to the elections her cavalcade was stoned by people angry at the imperialist role South Africa's ruling class plays in the DRC and their backing of Kabila.

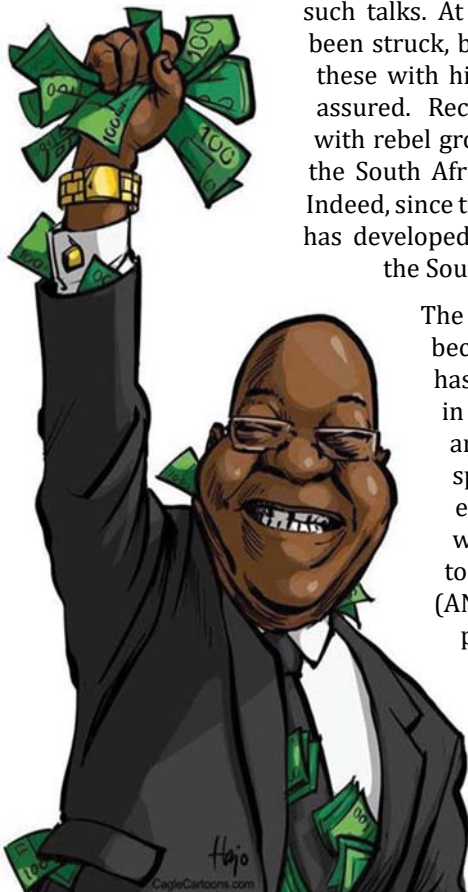
Relations between the Kabila regime and their backers in Tshwane (Pretoria) have become so close that there are regular visits by President Jacob Zuma and his ministers, accompanied by CEOs of private and state owned South African companies, to the DRC. During these visits numerous trade and investment deals have been brokered. These have been very lucrative for the South African ruling class. Along with gaining mining rights, construction deals, tax breaks etc; 21% of all imports into the DRC now come from South Africa. In return, Kabila gets backing from the South African state – although like all ruling classes in countries that face imperialism, Kabila will often play one imperialist power off against another in order to get the best possible deal for himself and the local elite that surround him.

Perhaps the most lucrative deal that was fostered during one of these visits was in 2010. Shortly after Zuma had visited Kabila in 2010, where Zuma and the ANC had been offered oil concessions, the Kabila regime revoked the oil concessions of a British oil company, Tullow Oil, and handed them over to two companies owned by Zuma's nephew, Khulubuse Zuma, and lawyer, Michael Hulley. These concessions are in North Kivu – the same area South African troops have been deployed to end rebel activity.

There are in fact a number of South African companies, besides the ones owned by Zuma's nephew and lawyer that have mineral rights and oil concessions in North Kivu. Another oil company with top ANC officials as board members – SACoil – has also been given oil concessions by the Kabila regime in North Kivu. The threat that these concessions would never be exploited starkly arose in 2012 when M23 captured the largest city in the Kivu region, Goma. It was after this that the South African state committed combat troops to the FIB to clear this threat, and other threats posed by other groups. South African troops are, therefore, in reality fighting in North Kivu to try and wipe out all of the rebel groups in the area so that the oil concessions and mineral rights that the South African ruling class have can be taken advantage of.

PERHAPS RHODES WOULD BE PROUD

Perhaps Rhodes, and those that ran in his circles, would actually be proud of the contemporary South African ruling class. The ruling class in Rhodes' day set up the system whereby



capitalism in South Africa became defined and based on extremely cheap black labour. To create a source of cheap black labour, Rhodes and the rest of the ruling class sent working class soldiers – in the name of nationalism – to wage wars against the remaining independent black societies across southern Africa. Indeed, Rhodes personally financed the invasion of what now is known as Zimbabwe in order to secure a pool of cheap labour, but also the resources of the area. To keep all of this in place, the black population was racially oppressed in southern Africa. At the same time, to prevent the working class from uniting, racial, ethnic and nationalist tensions were stoked up by the ruling class. Black workers on the mines, drawn from right across southern Africa after conquest, were separated from one another on ethnic lines and encouraged to attack one another on the mines after hours. Likewise, if black workers went on strike, white workers were encouraged to scab and attack them and vice versa.

Some of this system remains in place today. The difference, when compared to Rhodes's day, is that a black elite centred around the ANC



Kabila and Zuma

has joined white capitalists in the ruling class. However, this ruling class still relies on extremely cheap black labour, along with the national oppression of the black working class to ensure the system remains in place, as the main source of their wealth. They too sometimes play into racist, nationalist and xenophobic sentiments to try and keep the working class divided. Indeed, during the recent Xenophobic attacks it was two members of the ruling class, king Zwelithini, and Edward Zuma (Jacob Zuma's son who has business interests across southern Africa)

that called for the attacks. But Rhodes, despite being a British imperialist, would perhaps be most proud that the contemporary South African ruling class kept up and furthered the tradition South Africa being an imperialist power in the rest of Africa. Indeed, not even Rhodes, despite being the architect of genocidal wars in southern Africa, managed to wage a war in far off DRC, by sending foot soldiers to kill and die, to get its wealth.

1. Alexander Berkman. 1929. *War*. Zabalaza Books: South Africa, p 3.

2. <http://www.dod.mil.za/operations/international/Mistral.htm>



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Class Rule Must Fall!

More Statues, More Working Class

Leroy Maisiri *

Slogans like “Erase Rhodes”, “Rhodes so White,” and “Rhodes must Fall,” emerging from student groups at South Africa’s elite universities, recently monopolised social media. These have taken off, because South Africa is in need of great structural change; 20 years after the important 1994 transition, many black people remain trapped in oppressive conditions.

No one would deny that during apartheid blacks, Coloureds and Indians were racially oppressed, abused, and as workers, exploited. If removing statues and changing place names can help solve the problems, and form part of a meaningful redress of past and present injustices, then such actions must be supported.

But can such demands really do so?

SYMBOLS AND SUBSTANCE

At a symbolic level, statue and name changes might provide some measure of comfort to those who have suffered. But it also appears that very few in these movements want to address the deeper problems, the oppression of the largely black working class – the majority, whose cheap labour lays the foundation for the wealth and power of the few. (By working class, I mean the group of people who do not have ownership or command over the means of “administration, coercion or production,” in line with the anarchist definition).

The exclusion of most (working class) blacks, Coloured and Indians from expensive, elitist universities cannot be tackled without tackling the hostile

class structure, which is propped up by a dismal township schooling system, massive poverty and unemployment, low wages and rising prices, and the long shadow of the apartheid past.

This situation cannot be removed with cosmetic and symbolic changes.



Renaming varsities and changing curricula in a few social science and philosophy areas would not address this mass exclusion, and it would not change the basically elitist nature of the system.

BLACK WORKING CLASS

It is easy to assert that, for example, Rhodes University, in Grahamstown, is “so white”, or a bastion of “white privilege,” focussing exclusively on racial inequality.

Of course, racial prejudice and discrimination and the apartheid legacy are real and must be tackled. But when the problem is reduced to the attitudes of a few whites in the universities, or to curricula or to symbols, we end up ignoring the larger class gulf in the society. Partly this is a factor of the class nature of these movements, which are

built largely on the tiny layers of students at elite universities – white and black – often from upper class backgrounds and schools. As a result, a blind eye has been turned to the neo-liberal policy model aiming to cut spending and to make universities profitable.

Arguing for stressing class does not mean ignoring race, as some claim. It is very evident that the race and class you are born in still matters in South Africa: being black and working class opens you up, undefended, to a world of pain, as you are forced to withstand both class and racial oppression, only to simply reproduce yourself in that same exact position. How can the best-paid black rock-face miner, earning R12 500 monthly after bitter

strikes, send his children to university education costing R150 000 for fees alone?

EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902) was a late 19th century imperialist and mining capitalist, whose policies translated directly into the British wars in the areas now called Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe (formerly “Rhodesia”) and South Africa.

The British Empire was racist, but its actions were shaped by the capitalist and state drive for profit and power – not an abstract drive to racial power. It crushed anyone in its way, including whites like the Irish, using whatever forces were available, including large numbers of black troops.

Colonel Graham (namesake of “Grahamstown”) used such troops in the frontier wars, just as the British Empire actively used African chiefs and kings for its rule. The same men, Rhodes and LS Jameson, who drove the wars in “Rhodesia,” drove the wars on the Boer republics; the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) saw more than 26 000 white Afrikaner women and children, and around 12 000 blacks, die in British concentration camps.

If Rhodes’ statue at the University of Cape Town (UCT), or his name at Rhodes University, must go, it is surely not simply because it is a statue of a white man; but that of an imperial master and symbol of the capitalist system. That, I argue, is the real enemy – in Rhodes’ time and still today.

This system thrives on exploited black workers, then and now. The new South African black political elite works actively, in complicit partnership with white capitalists, to perpetuate the same system.

COLOUR AND CLASS

In 2015 the enemy isn’t remotely “everything white;” not in South Africa. Certainly, the colonial and apartheid hangover still shapes much of our reality, in which many white people still benefit from the apartheid legacy, not least in terms of apartheid investments in white education. And it cannot be denied that poverty and inequality in the new South Africa to an important extent follows old apartheid lines, in that the majority of the poor and unemployed and low-waged are black and Coloured and Indian.

But in 2015, the enemy is not some white university kids. It is a system of class rule, where the “white master” – more correctly, the “minority in the minority,” the small capitalist sector of the white population – is joined by the equally vicious black master – an equally small minority in the black majority.

BLACK MASTERS

In today’s South Africa, the black elite is directly part of the system of oppression, and involved in corrupt deals with white capitalists. It is the black-led state that, through its police and municipalities and departments, sees to it that South African working class and poor black people are mistreated and killed – mainly by other black people. Today, South Africa has become a hostile environment for working class black foreigners, whose life span is determined by how fast they can run.

South Africa should not narrowly fight against only racial inequalities, but broaden this into a fight for true transformation that confronts class privilege, which cuts across race and puts

a (multi-racial) ruling class in charge. This is the complicated reality that a stress on the historical differences between blacks and whites can’t really explain.

Without this working class perspective – working class first! – campaigns of vandalising statues and changing institution names to black names becomes a well-crafted distraction to the real problem, hiding the black elite and its guilt from view.

MORE WORKING CLASS

Indeed, talking of name changes, why even replace those of white political and economic elites, with those of black political and economic elites? Sol T. Plaatje, whose name is now given to the new Northern Cape university, was a great intellectual and ANC leader – but he was also a strong supporter of the British Empire and the British in the Anglo-Boer War, and had close relations with De Beers, the company Rhodes founded.

More broadly, why should nationalists – like Plaatje – whose pro-capitalist, pro-statist political agenda, which took South Africa into its dead-end, whose agenda derailed the struggle for a radical socialist outcome in the country, keep being suggested as namesakes for universities and other institutions?

A true symbolism that represents the majority should be leftist, and represent the working class – that is multi-racial. Why are revolutionary working class giants like Josie Mpama, Elijah Baraji, Clements Kadalie, Albert Nzula, Bill Andrews, T.W. Thibedi, S.P. Bunting, Andrew Dunbar, B.L.E. Sigamoney etc. forgotten, in favour the leaders of the heroes of the failed nationalist currents, not just the ANC, but its Africanist and BC rivals?

We need a left/ working class iconography. Statues are part of our shared heritage – good and bad. They are also reminders of past evils. History can’t be erased. Rather than removing the old ones, we need to build new ones: but ones that are more working class, which recall a history worth celebrating. Let us rather have working class figures tower over the monuments of past horrors, balancing the score, as part of the struggle for working class power.

UNIVERSITY ELITISM

Universities themselves serve as factory lines for the perpetuation of class systems; those privileged enough to study further use this to maintain the class position that they have, or use it to break into a higher class through acquiring rare skills and higher income.

Universities as currently constituted are elite institutions... They are funded by the state and by fees, pushed by the state, corporations and capitalist foundations... to adopt certain priorities. Ever rising fees... close the doors of learning and culture to the great majority

Universities as currently constituted are elite institutions, regardless of the names. They are funded by the state and by fees, pushed by the state, corporations and capitalist foundations (including that of Rhodes), to adopt certain priorities. Ever rising fees, including fees that openly discriminate against non-South Africans, and close the doors of learning and culture to the great majority, are part of neo-liberal cuts. Labour relations and wages for most campus workers are shocking.

Really changing this situation, winning a victory for the working class, means transforming institutions like universities, and the larger society, into uplifting pillars for the working class. This requires working class struggle, which requires unity. The issues may seem simply a race issue, but at the core, it's both race and class. Hence, I ask, "what about the working class"?

Capital and the state win immediately when there is division, and so true transformation cannot be birthed from something dipped in hatred. This is unfortunately a key element within the "Rhodes Must Fall" campaigning, with people from all sides engaging in the most vicious and racially-charged attack. No substantial transformation can come out of this if the intention is not pure.

* writing in his personal capacity.



The moment you add a drop of intolerance to any movement, you have corrupted its very roots, and begun a long journey towards failure and destruction.

DEEP TRANSFORMATION

The means and tools to bring about real social transformation must be carefully thought about. What I am arguing here is that the system is the problem. Transformation involves a fight for: free and equal education (including university education), a massive expansion and upgrading of education, ending outsourcing on campuses, promoting genuinely scientific including social scientific work, and fighting for larger social change.

So, let us think of a "workers and peoples scientific university" rather than in terms of an "African university" or a "world-class university" as part of a larger struggle for anarchist transformation – a radical change of society towards self-management, democracy from below, participatory planning and an end to class rule, and social and economic equality.

For How Long can South African Elites Keep Misleading the People?

Philip Nyalungu *

Those in power don't want to confront the status quo of hatred against immigrants, or South Africa's imperialist role in the region. They have a narrow set of interests: getting votes, accumulating wealth and power. However, the recent wave of attacks on immigrants and the ruptures of relations with other African countries – especially where South African corporations are operating – have touched the most delicate nerves of the established political powers, who have

vowed to advance corporate interests in making profits.

Regardless of who you vote for, these corporations reign above people, along with big politicians and state officials. Whether you are a South African or a "foreign" member of the working class, you remain a threat to these elites. And if you unite, as the masses, against the elites, they get deeply worried. This is not surprising as today South Africa is the most unequal country in the world. When Abahlali baseMjondolo (AbM)

activists together with foreign nationals marched against xenophobia in Durban, the police blocked them, telling AbM activists to "stay away from things that do not concern them." The recent actions by the South African National Defence Force, in occupying areas where the anti-foreigner attacks took place, but targeting foreigners in these raids, is also a tactic to weaken those showing solidarity with victims of xenophobia and those who are critical of ANC government.

Likewise, government officials warning people not to share their views on the attacks and the SANDF response through social media, on the absurd grounds that this inflames attacks, is not simply mediocrity, but deeply disturbing. As when former President Thabo Mbeki said HIV did not cause AIDS, this is another sad day for South Africa.

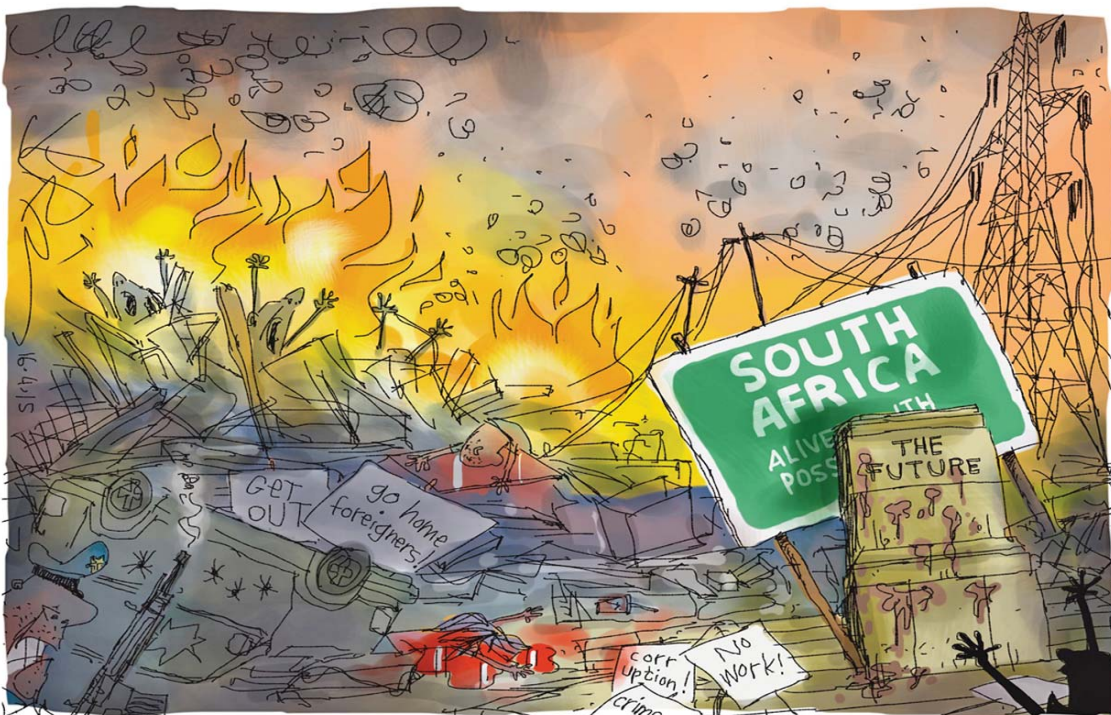
There needs to be an open process and discussion. The challenge of xenophobia in South Africa is so serious that we need something like a "Truth Commission" where everyone can be given an opportunity to reflect and speak out without fear or favour. Let us be honest about how widespread this hatred is; let us not pretend, like state officials, that the attacks are simply examples of criminal violence. We, as the working class, have to tackle this demon.

I don't know of any South African who has never come across vicious xenophobic sentiments by fellow South Africans, white and black. These can be heard from parents, relatives, friends, community members, work colleagues, government officials and the public at large. It is not a matter of a few bad apples, but a problem we need to confront as the working class. The politicians will not do this – they blame the problems on criminal elements and secret agendas; not one major politician from the ruling party has even spoken out against the venomous words of the Zulu king, Goodwill Zwelithini, who helped spark the latest attacks with his utterances. They have instead shamelessly and readily gone all out to defend this man – who, since his infamous "pack their bags" speech, has gone on, with the police minister and their fellow brutes, to walk with self-importance and rub salt on the wounds.

But are we as the working class doing any better? The fact is that the same is happening amongst us ordinary South Africans: we don't confront those who utter such vicious and venomous words, which is a daily occurrence. There are many unreported xenophobic incidents, not just the big outbreaks, but do we act? Not often. About five or six years ago, my Xhosa neighbour in his early 20s, got stabbed and killed in front of his gate by fellow Xhosa young men merely because he was protecting Shangaans! The local ANC leadership didn't do anything to condemn this cruel act. I can also tell you it was never reported as xenophobia and such incidents are voluminous.

It is like in apartheid, when whites were taught from an early age that blacks are inferior to them: today, black South Africans are taught that foreigners with dark skins, especially those who are poor and from Africa are inferior humans to them. The attacks, in this situation, target black Africans from elsewhere. I am also aware that Pakistanis and other related foreign nationals are being attacked.

The violence and hate must also be seen as deeply shaped by the current economic and political situation in the country. As long as the current grossly evasive ANC-led government, and party politics in general, are not successfully challenged by something serious – a big working class movement and rebellion for real change – South Africa is heading towards disaster. Small movements on university campuses like the "#Cecil John Rhodes statue must fall" initiative fail to address these massive tasks.



* Writing in his personal capacity

SPEECH: Working Class Struggle, Blazing a Path to Freedom

Talk by Lucien van der Walt at 24 Sept 2012, Heritage Day event, Joza Township, Grahamstown

NOTE: Heritage Day is a post-apartheid South African national holiday; unlike most, it has no clear link to major struggles in the past, although there are efforts to position it as a more "political" day. The talk below was given by Lucien van der Walt at an event organised by Sakhaluntu Cultural Group in Grahamstown, for black youth.

Thank you all for coming. Thank you, chair, for the invitation. Thank you, organisers, for the event today. Today looks like a great day, a great day to look forward.

But before we look forward, we must look back as well. Unless you know where you come from, you will never know where you can go.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

This sort of reflection is extremely important to the working class struggle. Heritage Day provides a space to think back, to look back at where we have come from, and to think about where we need to go in future. It's an opportunity to reflect on what we have achieved so far, but also on what we still need to achieve in order to secure emancipation.

If we look at that past from the perspective of the working class masses, it's clear that the past is bittersweet.

It's bitter: there are many injustices and horrors that we cannot avoid seeing. It's bitter: there is a long dark night of suffering, dispossession and exploitation that casts its shadow over today. It's bitter: the past is the time of massacres of the working class, of the repression of unions, of the pass laws, of the Land Act of 1913, of the Bantu Education system, of the imperialist wars against Africans and Afrikaners.

STRUGGLES AND VICTORIES

It's sweet also: the past saw ordinary people, the people on the ground – the working class – rise up and fight for justice, for equality, for our rights: to dignity, to decency, to decide how to run the basics of our lives.

It's sweet: the time of the mass strikes and uprisings, such as those of 1913, 1918, 1922, 1946, 1960, 1973, 1976, 1983, and 1993. These brought light into the darkness, into the long, dark night of suffering and oppression, where bitter battles were waged for freedom.



Mine workers strike, 1946

It's sweet: when ordinary people stood together, when the working class united, when the sleeping armies of the exploited, the oppressed, the workers, the poor, woke up, the ground shook. The darkness was driven back.

It's sweet: every small victory fed the campfires of hope, fanned the flames

of resistance and rebellion, moved the people into more action.

1913 saw massive struggles by white as well as black workers for basic rights. 1918 saw the first attempt at a general strike by black workers. 1922 saw an armed rebellion by workers, which led to the first laws that gave trade unions some legal standing. 1946 shook the mining industry. 1960 shook the pass laws. 1973 revived the unions. 1976 rocked the townships. 1983-1984 started the final dismantling of apartheid. Massive struggles in 1993 saw the tide finally turn, opening the door to the 1994 transition.

A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

The struggles of the working class in South Africa do not stand alone. They are part of the larger struggle of ordinary people, the oppressed and exploited masses, worldwide. A struggle that has taken place as long as society has been divided between rich and poor, rulers and ruled, masters and servants, kings and commoners.

The working class is a class forged in the crucible of class struggle, hammered in the fires and flames of class battles, hardened into a force that can change the world.

TAKEN, NOT GIVEN

It was the working and poor masses of the people that broke slavery, that made slavery illegal worldwide. When unions were illegal everywhere in the world, the masses made them legal, fighting factory by factory, mine by mine, ship by ship, farm by farm, and office by office.

There was a time when no commoner anywhere could even vote, but the masses of ordinary people fought. They took that right – just as every single right and claim by the working classes has been won from below, by struggle.

As the anarchist Severino Digiovanni once said: “The right to life is not given. It is taken.”

Whatever our backgrounds, our culture, African or European or Asian or American, in each society it has been the masses, the working class, that has stood up and said,

“No. Enough is enough”

...and through struggles and battles, won its demands.

THE CHAINS THAT BIND

Now let us look to the present. How far do we need to go still?

Our struggles are not over. The chains of poverty still bind us. Second class education still binds – and yes, it also blinds – the masses of the people, the working class. Unemployment, hunger, racism still bind us.

The black working class of South Africa is still waiting for the dawn. The night is fading, but the new dawn has not yet come. We are still waiting for the sun of freedom to blaze out, burning away the long dark night of suffering and dispossession and exploitation.

Many victories have been won. Let us never forget this. Let us never forget this. The pass laws? Broken. The National Party government? Broken. The Land Act? Broken. The ban on permanent African homes in the cities? Broken.

But look around us. Poverty, ignorance, corruption. At the Marikana mine? The murder of men who wanted a better wage for their families.

THE POLITICIANS AND BOSSES

At the government level? Corruption and theft by men and women in office. The rich get richer. The politicians make and break promises. Large private corporations fix bread and milk prices, taking food from the mouths of children. State companies fail to keep the lights on, the water running.

Strong men and women spend their lives working for a boss, and find, at the end, when they are tired and broken, that they are fired, left aside like rubbish. The men and women who built this country are thrown away like rubbish.



THE SUN MUST RISE

The working class is better off now in many ways than it was under apartheid. Yes, a mighty victory has been won.

But the war is not over. The working class is far from free. The long dark night of suffering and dispossession and exploitation still needs to be blasted away by the red dawn of freedom. A mighty struggle is still needed. The armies of the exploited, the oppressed, the workers, the poor, which are the unions, the community groups, the student movements – these armies cannot rest.

What is needed? What is the task for now? It is to free our minds; to break the chains of mental slavery. To question a society where the rich and powerful few, black as well as white, rule like kings. Where the mighty stride the world like elephants, and the masses are trampled into the grass. To question and challenge a society that is a factory of crime and misery.

ARM YOURSELF WITH KNOWLEDGE

To understand these truths is the first step to lifting the darkness:

Only the mass of the people – the working class – can change society, but only by uniting, across race and language, and by struggling;

Only the mass of the people – the working class – can change society, but only by understanding that society can be changed, can be made better;

Only the mass of the people – the working class – can change society, but only for the better, when it is understood that society must be changed into a society based on social and economic equality;

Only the mass of the people – the working class – can change society, but only for the better, when it is understood that society must be changed into a society based on direct grassroots control of the economy, of daily life, of society as a whole.

MARCH TO THE DAWN

To find our way in the darkness now, to be free, means to arm ourselves with the light of knowledge, and to enlighten our class, the working class, to shine light across the battlefields of darkness.

Let us blaze out our light, blaze out in the long dark night of suffering and dispossession and exploitation. Let us march towards the sun.

For, when we are armed with the truth, we can organise and re-organise our forces.

And make the last marches to victory.

OPEN CORRESPONDENCE COLUMN

The General Approach of Anarchists/Syndicalists to the United Front and NUMSA

In this section we address questions that have been posed to ZACF militants. We are sharing these discussions because we think these are important and pertinent issues in Southern Africa. If you have questions you would us to address in our next issue, please get in touch!

In this column, comrade Themba Kotane, a union militant, asks:



Will the United Front (UF) address the crises we are currently facing in South Africa? I am concerned about how the UF works and who leads it. In my own view we don't need a leader, we need to all have equal voice. How can we build the UF as a basis for a stateless, socialist, South Africa?

Jakes Factoria and Tina Sizovuka respond:

What the UF will do, will depend on which perspectives win out in it. Our general anarchist/syndicalist perspective is that the UF (as well as the unions, like the National union of Metalworkers of SA, NUMSA) should be (re) built, as far as possible, into a movement of *counter-power*, outside and against the state and capital.

This means UF structures and affiliates should be developed into radical, democratic structures (in the workplaces and in communities) that can fight now against the ruling class, and that can eventually take power, *directly*. The UF should be (re)built into a direct action-based, direct democratic-structured movement for anarchist revolution. That means building structures in communities (street and ward committees and assemblies)

that can replace municipalities, and developing the unions in the workplaces (through shopstewards committees and assemblies) into structures that can take over and run workplaces. This is not such a foreign concept in recent South African history: NUMSA's predecessor, MAWU, was involved in the movement for "people's power", which took many steps in this direction during the anti-apartheid struggle in the 1980s.



For this to happen, a second step is needed: mass movements like UF and unions must be infused with a revolutionary *counter-culture*. This means the masses are won over through anarchist political education, which is partly about building up the confidence and ability of workers and poor people to run society, including the understanding amongst the majority, that the tasks ahead are bigger than simply voting in

elections or campaigning for reforms to the system. When we talk about the masses, we mean the broad working class, including the unemployed and poor, and working class people of all races, South African and immigrant.

The tasks are to build for anarchist revolution, using the strategic perspectives of counter-power and counter-culture. This means fighting for a self-managed society from below, won through revolution. The corrupt and oppressive political system (the state) and the exploiting and authoritarian economic system (capitalism) are completely and obviously unable to create a decent society, real democracy or eradicate the apartheid legacy. Radical change is needed, involving the overthrow of the (multi-racial) ruling class by the broad working class, collectivization, self-management and participatory planning, and a reign of economic and social equality and direct democracy.

Therefore, all our activities must ultimately be structured around the goals of winning larger mass movements like the UF and the unions to these revolutionary, anti-party, anarchist perspectives. We, as the working class, have to stop making the same mistakes, of putting power in elite hands, of misleading people into electoral

participation, and of limiting ourselves to reformism (i.e. to small, legal changes).

We, frankly, do not have the forces to win the UF over at this stage. A discussion of the best *tactics* to use in this situation belongs to another discussion. However, we must by all means at least raise the anarchist/ syndicalist perspectives of anarchism/ syndicalism in the UF and NUMSA where possible, as a basis of building a larger red-and-black anarchist/ syndicalist *network*.

SOME LIMITS OF THE NUMSA PROJECT

We do think, however, that it is just not enough to see the problem as lying solely in neo-liberalism or the ANC, as NUMSA seems to do. Neo-liberalism is the latest phase of capitalism; it does not arise from bad policy advisors or undue World Bank influence, but from the deep structure of the global political economy. Therefore it is absurd to think neo-liberalism can be gotten rid of simply by getting rid of the ANC. Any party in office would be under huge pressure to adopt much of the neo-liberal programme.

Since reformed forms of capitalism like the Keynesian Welfare State are no longer feasible (if they ever were in South Africa, but that is another story), it is problematic to pose the solution as keeping capitalism, but dumping neo-liberalism. This, however, is the direction in which both COSATU and NUMSA lean: despite their Marxist-Leninist rhetoric, their actual policy proposals – active industrial policy, protectionism, demand stimulation etc. – really amount to a programme of social democratic reform that is impossible to implement.

Second, while the ANC is *part* of the problem, it is not the *whole* problem. The whole political system is rotten. Parliament is a place where elites connive against the poor: the state itself is an apparatus of ruling class power, as bad as any capitalist corporation, which means that *any party* would end up as disappointing as the ANC. Both of these points mean that it is completely pointless to blame the ANC.

Given the power of the ANC in the minds of large parts of the working class, steps to discredit it

are welcome. However, the idea that the solution is to replace the ANC with a better party should be firmly opposed. These ideas are very current in a sector of the NUMSA leadership, as well as in a certain sector of the UF, particularly amongst the Marxists. We oppose them, because we have no faith in the project of forming a “mass workers party” (MWP).

ANOTHER ERROR: THE PROTEST POLITICS OF “DOING STUFF”

We also disagree with the many activists in SA who see the task in movements like APF and UF as simply building protests and fighting around immediate campaigns. From this perspective, the main aim of these comrades is to get as many people involved in actions as possible.



A key problem with this approach is that it is very short-term in outlook. There is no real discussion of how the protests can lay the basis for radical change; in fact, the aims are quite modest, and involve mostly fighting around

some of the most immediate evils in our society, like electricity cut-offs. Politics becomes a matter of running from one event to the next; there is no real plan to build and expand mass movements; political debate and education is always kept at the level of issues like the problems of privatization; bigger issues like the ANC, the need to abolish the state and capitalism, and so on, are left out.

The problems people face have deep roots: while it is vital to fight around problems like cut-offs, these are rooted in major problems in the power industry, in the way the state runs, in the crisis of the capitalist economy. Therefore, to really solve the problem, you need radical changes, including a massive reallocation of resources to abolish poverty and inequality – and this means, *revolution*.

But for the protest politics people, this does not matter. So long as there is a big demonstration, these comrades are satisfied. This means that politics becomes reduced to the problem of getting the maximum turn-out at events. This often translates into recruiting “leaders,” each claiming to represent a “community,” who can

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the MWP strategy cannot work... there is little doubt that any radical party going into parliament will be corrupted, paralyzed or co-opted. As experiences like Cuba and the Soviet Union show, putting a party in charge of a new "revolutionary" state creates a situation at least as bad as what we have – where an elite runs the show while the masses are left outside.

then deliver masses on the days of action. No real care is taken to build multiple layers of activists to ensure the construction of strong democratic structures based on mandates and delegates. The protest agenda is also normally set here, by a small group, which also writes the press statements and discussion documents, and sets the slogans. Mass participation often involves little more than the masses being bussed to events, where it's really rent-a-crowd.

From the anarchist / syndicalist perspective, that does not take us anywhere, since our aim is to build working class movements that can resist today... but also take control in the future.

AGAIN, AGAINST THE PARTY BUILDING AGENDA

It is precisely because of the short-sighted nature of the politics of "doing stuff" that many comrades argue for an MWP as a means of breaking people from the ANC, of deepening political education, of uniting people. The idea is also that the MWP can somehow get control of the state, and use it to undertake massive reforms, perhaps even revolution.

In this sense, the MWP approach is a step forward from the protest politics approach, in that it recognizes that a focus on short-term issues and low levels of political education, are serious *problems* – that imply that real change is needed.

But the problem is that the MWP strategy cannot work. The existing situation does not allow a radical shift from neo-liberal policies via the state: there is little doubt that any radical party going into parliament will be corrupted, paralyzed or co-opted. As experiences like Cuba and the Soviet Union show, putting a party in charge of a new "revolutionary" state creates a situation at least as bad as what we have – where an elite runs the show while the masses are left outside.

A further problem is that the "party builders" see mass movements as a way of achieving something else, a *means* to an end. They do not see these movements as *themselves* the potential basis of a new society. The political perspective here is to get movements to endorse a party. The party is seen as the real and best way of struggle – and this almost

always translates into running in elections. "Party builders" are often less concerned with building educated, bottom-up and democratic movements, than with pushing the party idea through. Often this programme is pushed through the unions and community structures by all sorts of questionable, top-down methods that are unable to bring the masses along. This is completely pointless, even damaging.

OUR LINE OF MARCH

Where do we differ? The difference is that anarchists/ syndicalists want to build a free society *through class struggle*. Concretely, the perspective is to build movements – including unions, community organizations, UF-type structures – in a way that leads to this goal. Form and method become central: leader-dominated, uneducated, "stepping-stone" movements that do not transcend protest, cannot generate a free society.

Counter-power requires more than a few leaders calling protests according to their own whims, and then arranging transport for everyone else to attend; it means active participation in decision-making, masses that run the organisations and set the agenda, clued-up, critical and questioning members that can avoid the trap of elections and control by parties or by a few leaders.

Mass movements like the UF need to be transformed in two ways in order to make them capable of such a task. They need to become organs of counter-power, and they need to be infused with revolutionary counter-culture. The CNT in 1930s Spain is a good example, where in some areas of Spain, the trade union itself took over the running of industry, transport, and distribution of goods – under direct control of union members.

WORKING WITHIN, ORGANISING

How can we go about this? Clearly anarchist ideas won't spontaneously appear out of thin air. Although its insights have been derived through struggle, it has taken years of debate, discussion and active involvement by millions of people for anarchism to crystalize into a coherent ideology. Within that, we argue that a specific political organisation is necessary in order to fight for anarchism within the battle of ideas, to work within and alongside mass movements like the UF for democratic structures, participatory practices, and an anti-party, anti-state (anarchist) consciousness. The purpose is not to rally the masses under our "leadership" (like political parties, including so-called workers' parties do), but to rally the



But why the UF?

Of course, this begs the question of why should aim to work in the UF. First, consider the roots: the UF is an initiative of the recently expelled Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) affiliate, NUMSA. It is meant to unite unions, social and township movements, and student, women and youth organisations.

Although the UF programme is a bit vague (it is not clear how it is meant to align to NUMSA's project of a "movement for socialism"), the UF is openly against neo-liberalism and the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The ANC is a capitalist party, rotten with corruption, in bed with chiefs, heading an imperialist government and committed to neo-liberal policies like privatisation.

Therefore, the UF is at least identifying openly *some* – but not all – the problems and coming up with some good – but incomplete – solutions. The UF is also part of NUMSA's fight for an end to the Tripartite Alliance between COSATU unions, the ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP). This Alliance has crippled the working class, putting it under the ANC/ SACP thumb.

This is linked to the UF aim of uniting the working class and poor, by returning to the politics of linking the unions – which are still by far the biggest, strategically most powerful, and best funded working class movements – and the daily struggles in the townships. This politics really died out from 1994: since most township fights were against ANC-run municipalities, the ANC, hostile to these struggles, used its control of the Alliance to keep COSATU out them – a major reason why COSATU unions withdrew from the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) formed in 2000. But, having rejected the Alliance in 2013, NUMSA has no such constraints.

Bringing the biggest union into open alignment with other working class sectors, on an openly anti-ANC platform, and by raising the political temperature of the activist layers, the UF represents a qualitative step forward from earlier coalitions like the APF. The APF did not involve unions, the UF does; the APF was short of funds, the UF can draw on deep NUMSA pockets; the APF was mainly in Gauteng, the UF is countrywide; the APF had loose local structures, whereas the UF can draw on NUMSA's proven record of worker-controlled mass organizing. Further, the UF has also been closer to the non-racial politics of the 1980s, bringing together radicals from a range of backgrounds, and avoiding the crude nationalism of the ANC and other parties – this, too, is to be welcomed.

None of these points require us to place false hopes in the NUMSA leadership, or adopt a naïve and starry-eyed view of the situation of the other unions, which are crippled by inept and sometimes crooked leaders, failing to mount an adequate defense; they are simply to point out the objective possibilities that the "NUMSA Moment" raises.

masses around the leadership of a specific set of ideas and practices (counter-power and counter-culture).

"Boring-from-within" mass movements requires non-sectarianism, and we do not object to working with other organisations of the left in committees or on campaigns where necessary. But we are not convinced by the calls for building unity within the left, since that is not our goal. Our orientation is not towards the left, but towards the masses – in their organisations in workplaces and communities – and our projects are often vastly different and require very different strategies that are often incompatible with much of the left's. By working in movements, we aim to retain our political independence, and operate by a clear plan, which means avoiding *both* "do-stuffism" (actions which do not tie into a clearly thought-through programme), and "liquidationism" (dissolving your own politics into that of another group).

We would also argue for raising specific slogans and ideas, like anti-electionism, collectivisation (over nationalisation/privatization), self-management. The UF would also need to focus its work at the base, and not on committee work, while opposing the culture of demagoguery that has affected many movements in SA. Related to this, there is a strong need to combat the tradition of political manipulation that currently grips much of the labour movement, and return it to a politics of openness, debate and political pluralism.



In the Rubble of US Imperialism:

The PKK, YPG and the Islamic State

Shawn Hattingh (ZACF)

The mainstream news has been filled with stories about the horrors being committed by the Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq, and how the United States (US) ruling class and their state supposedly want to stop this for humanitarian reasons. What has not been widely covered in the corporate and state controlled media, however, is why the IS came to exist; the real reasons for the US state's new round of intervention in the Middle East; and how the US state wants to isolate and likely destroy the only two forces that have been effective in fighting against the IS: the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) and the People's Protection Units (YPG).

This article highlights how the US state created the conditions in the Middle East in which a right-wing reactionary force like the Islamic State (formerly known as the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham) could emerge. Along with this – and central to the article – it discusses how the US state is refusing to back the only two effective forces that are fighting the Islamic State: the Kurdish Workers' Party and the People's Protection Units. Indeed, this article is also written to express solidarity with the People's Protection Units that are currently fighting a key battle against the Islamic State to hold onto the city of Kobani in Syria.



*Women fighters of the YPJ (Women's Protection Units)
(Kurdish: Yekîneyên Parastina Jin)*

HOW THE ISLAMIC STATE AROSE

The IS's rise from an obscure group to a force within the Middle East can be traced back to the US military's invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003. During

the invasion the US military killed 1.4 million people and as an occupying force it brutalised the population. This naturally fuelled anti-US sentiments throughout the country.

In fact, the US occupation of Iraq was based on the tactics of divide and rule. To weaken the possibility of united resistance to its occupation, the US state supported autonomy for sections of the Kurdish people in northern Iraq under the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), which is headed by a corrupt pro-US ruling class. It also promoted sectarian violence in Iraq to make it hard for people to unify against the occupation. This included backing a puppet regime – despite the fact it came to be led by hard-line Shia politicians that were close to the Iranian regime – that suppressed large sections of the Sunni population.

It is in this context that the IS (formerly known by various other names including Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham) began to grow as a force under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Many people,

especially from the Sunni population, joined the IS because it looked like the only organisation that was capable of defending Sunni people and resisting the US's occupation and its puppet regime. Thus, the IS gained a support base despite being a brutal authoritarian organisation.

Indeed, the IS is an anti-imperialist and anti-US organisation, but from the basis of an extremely reactionary right-wing stance. It has long had the goal of establishing a totalitarian state under its dictatorship that incorporates large parts of the Middle East. To further its political aims and ambitions throughout its history it has committed atrocities, such as mass murder against opponents, including Muslims and even members of rival jihadist groups. To be sure, anyone identified as an opponent has been harshly dealt with especially those identified as waivers or non-believers in terms of its extremist ideology. Central to its policies too has been the entrenchment of the systemic oppression of women. Such misogynistic views have even translated into the IS using captured women as sex-slaves.

Initially, when the IS was starting to become a force in Iraq, the US state deliberately turned a blind eye to it, even though it had already committed atrocities, because it wanted Iraq's population to remain divided. By the time the US withdrew from Iraq in 2011, the IS already controlled some parts of the country.

INTERVENTION IN SYRIA ADDS FUEL TO THE FIRE

Not content with destabilising Iraq, in 2011 the US state used the mass protests and ensuing civil war in Syria to try and destabilise and weaken the al-Assad regime. It was, however, not supporting these protests, and subsequently sections fighting the al-Assad regime in the civil war, because it wanted to support those people calling for democracy in Syria, but rather the US state was doing it for its own imperialist interests. It was clear the US felt that the Syrian regime was too close to the Russian and Iranian states. In fact, the US did not want to destabilise the Syrian regime because it was brutal – which it was and is – but because the ruling class that controlled it were not fully compliant (for their own reasons) with the agenda of US imperialism in the region.

When mass popular protests erupted against the Syrian regime in 2011, which were part of the spread of the Arab Spring and based on the real desire to end the al-Assad dictatorship in order to create a better society in Syria, the US state moved to turn events to its benefit. As such the mass protests in Syria were not fermented by the US state, but it used the circumstances to try and further its own agenda and that is why it rhetorically supported them.

When the al-Assad regime brutally repressed the protests, a civil war ensued. Various armed groups

emerged during the civil war. Some were jihadist, others were more secular. Some sections of the military, headed by corrupt generals, also split from the regime and as the civil war emerged they were also key in setting up the Free Syrian Army (FSA). The US state soon began supplying arms to the FSA.

The US state, however, also armed the various Islamic extremist and jihadist groups (despite their anti-US positions) who had entered the fight against the Syrian regime. Soon many members of these extremist groups began joining the IS (which at first was loosely affiliated to al-Qaeda, but later broke with it around political and tactical differences). Some of the most important fighting forces that joined

IS were experienced jihadist fighters from Chechnya who were supplied arms by the US when they joined the war in Syria. As an outcome of this in parts of Syria the IS became one of the most potent military forces – capturing massive amounts of weapons including T-55 and T-72 main battle tanks and Scud missiles from the other forces it had been engaging along with gaining supplies and equipment of US origin from other jihadists who joined it – and by 2013 it had taken over parts of Syria, notably the city of Raqqa.

In Syrian cities and areas it controls, like Raqqa, the IS established its harsh dictatorship. Anyone seen as being an opponent was dealt with, which included mass executions. But the IS's control is not only based on fear, it is also based on providing welfare. IS has effectively nationalised some industries, including the banking sector, while allowing other industries to remain in private hands. Central to its policies it has also imposed higher taxes on the rich. Using such funds it has rolled out greater welfare. Despite,

therefore, being an ultra-rightwing force, through such welfare measures it has gained support amongst sections of the population in the areas it has come to control in Syria.

In 2014 the IS used the platform they have in Syria to launch new military operations in Iraq. During this new phase of its war in Iraq it routed the Iraqi military in parts of

the country: capturing large amounts of the latest US weaponry that had been supplied to the Iraqi army. When the IS seized gas and oil-fields in Iraq that were important for the US ruling class, along with starting to militarily threaten key US allies in the form of the KRG and Iraqi state, the IS became a problem for the US state.

BACKING THE KRG AND THE IRAQI STATE

To ensure the gas and oil-fields captured by the IS are returned to its sphere and to try and stop the IS's territorial advance in Iraq, the US state has been supplying intelligence and weapons to the KRG and the Iraqi state to fight the IS. It has also conducted airstrikes against the IS in

IS is an anti-imperialist and anti-US organisation, but from the basis of an extremely reactionary right-wing stance. It has long had the goal of establishing a totalitarian state under its dictatorship that incorporates large parts of the Middle East.



Iraq and recently in areas such as Raqqa in Syria. The reality though is that the Iraqi military and the KRG have been ineffective against the IS. This has led the US state to deploy special forces to Iraq, supposedly in support of the KRG and Iraqi military, but in reality they have been engaging the IS directly too. Indeed, if the Iraqi state and KRG continue to prove ineffective against the IS going forward, the US may be forced to commit far greater numbers of its own combat troops to try and stop the IS.

PROGRESSIVE FORCES

There are, however, progressive forces – the PKK and YPG – in Iraq and Syria that have proved effective, despite being ill armed, in combating the IS. The US state, nonetheless, is refusing to back the PKK and YPG against the IS: based ultimately on the progressive politics of these two groups.

The PKK has a long history of fighting a national liberation struggle against the US's ally, Turkey, and is considered a terrorist organisation by the US. During this war, the PKK cadre gained vital military experience.

Recently, the PKK has been fighting the IS to stop it expanding into the northern parts of Iraq and committing atrocities against people in these areas. The PKK moved into Iraq from Turkey in August to stop the mass murder of Kurdish refugees by the IS. They have continued to hold key positions in northern Iraq

Despite initially being influenced by Maoism, the PKK, and especially its founder Abdullah Ocalan, have come to be heavily influenced by some of the ideas – although not all – of the libertarian socialist Murray Bookchin. Bookchin himself started out his political life as a Stalinist, but moved to anarchism before adopting a form of libertarian socialism based on communalism and libertarian municipalism. Hence, while the PKK was founded as a Marx-Leninist guerrilla outfit, by the early 2000s it was adopting left-leaning libertarian ideas inspired by key writings of Bookchin.

As part of its move towards a form of left-libertarianism, the PKK has become critical of the state as a structure, which it sees as oppressive, based on hierarchy, and as being the ultimate defender of minority class rule and capitalism. The

aim of PKK, and the goal of its struggles, is for a revolution in the Middle East, which is why the US state deeply mistrusts it. As part of this revolution, and in line with its left libertarian orientation, it has explicitly stated that it does not aim to create a state, but rather a system of direct democracy that would be defined by people setting up assemblies, councils and communes that are confederated together. It has called this “democratic confederalism”. Although it is anti-state and sees the state as a key barrier to freedom and equality, and has a vision of a system of self-governance based on direct democracy, it however remains tactically ambiguous on whether the state should be explicitly smashed as part of such a revolution (as advocated by anarchists) or whether the state could simply be rolled back as part of an expanding direct democracy without necessarily smashing it.

Along with a libertarian form of self-governance, the PKK is anti-capitalist and aims to try and build an economy that is run with the aim of meeting people's needs. Hence it aims to create a more egalitarian economy, but it has not stated whether such an economy would be based on worker self-management and the socialisation of the means of production and wealth. Thus, while heavily influenced by left-libertarian ideas and being a progressive movement (and having a very strong feminist current) it can't be seen as fully anarchist.

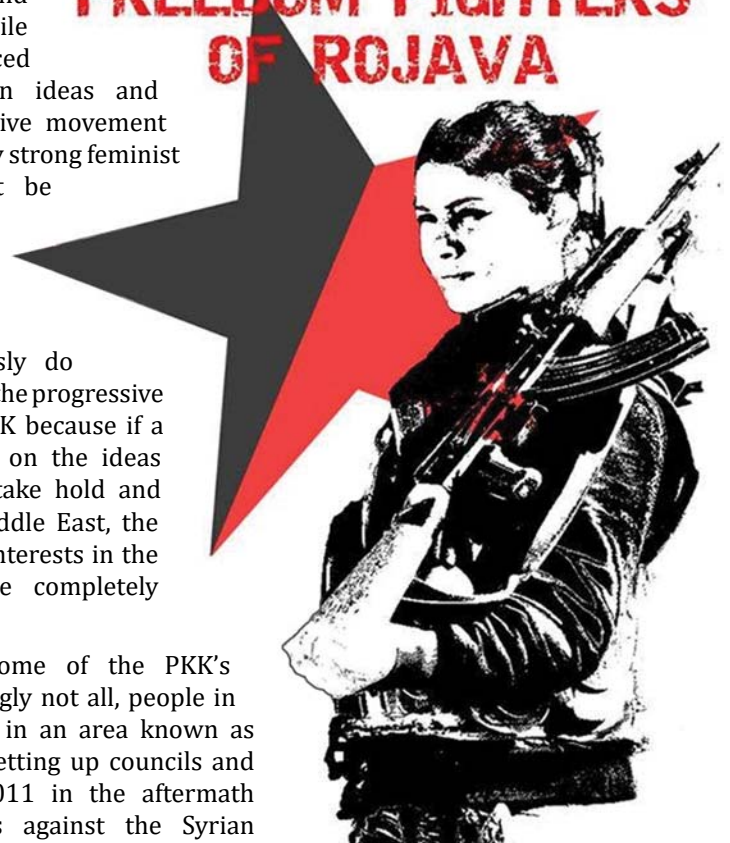
The US state and ruling class, however, obviously do not take kindly to the progressive politics of the PKK because if a revolution based on the ideas of the PKK did take hold and spread in the Middle East, the US's imperialist interests in the region would be completely undermined.

Influenced by some of the PKK's ideas, but seemingly not all, people in northern Syria – in an area known as Rojava – began setting up councils and assemblies in 2011 in the aftermath of the uprisings against the Syrian

regime. The assemblies and councils – sometimes referred to as communes – are confederated together with the Kurdish Supreme Committee acting as a co-ordinating body. While these structures are based on direct democracy, it is unclear whether the economy has been transformed in a more egalitarian direction. Indeed it is not clear whether or not the direct democracy in the political sphere has been extended to the economic sphere. Along with this, it is unclear – and not mentioned in reports – whether there has been any move to socialise or collectivise the means of production and wealth in Rojava (although there has reportedly been land redistribution). Nonetheless, the experiments with councils and assemblies in Rojava have been progressive (although also it seems under threat internally from the leadership of parties that wish to set up a state structure). What has also been progressive is that the liberation of women too has been at the forefront of initiatives in Rojava.

To defend the territory of Rojava a militia-based structure, the YPG, was established in 2011. Within the militia,

WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH
FREEDOM FIGHTERS
OF ROJAVA



women play a leading role. It has been the YPG that has been the most effective force in terms of engaging the IS in Syria. Indeed, the YPG militia have become experienced fighters within a short space of time as prior to defending the territory against the IS the YPG was engaged in defending it against elements of the FSA (although it now is in an alliance with the FSA against the IS), other jihadist groups and the Syrian state.

Throughout 2013 and early 2014, the YPG rolled back the IS and extended the territory of Rojava. In late September 2014, however, the IS launched another major offensive against the Rojava region. During the offensive the IS has unleashed as many as 40 main battle tanks against the YPG, who do not have significant numbers of heavy weapons. Currently the YPG is fighting a major battle against the IS to hold onto one of the key cities, Kobani, that is part of Rojava. With the recent US airstrikes

against the IS in Rojava, the IS has also shifted more of its forces to Kobani.

For the US state, however, the YPG along with the PKK are seen as much of a threat as the IS. The reason is that, despite some limitations, they demonstrate that society could be organised by people in a more democratic way and they show how it could be possible to end capitalism, the state, patriarchy and class rule through mass movements and struggle. Hence the US state has refused to supply assistance to the YPG and PKK. As a matter of fact, the US state and Turkey have been allowing IS fighters to freely cross the border from Turkey to engage the PKK and the YPG. Along with this, the Turkish state has forcefully blocked people, mainly Kurds, wanting to cross from Turkey to join the fight against IS, especially now that Kobani is threatened. Along with this the US state now appears to be beginning to push the KRG to launch a war against the PKK and possibly even the YPG, despite the threat of the IS.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that the IS is a reactionary force that holds little hope for a better future for the Middle East. It wants to establish a dictatorship and is completely intolerant to anyone that differs from its politics. From the actions of the US state, however, it is also clear that it cares little about democracy or the atrocities committed by the IS. It too is not interested in a peaceful, free and equal Middle East and the only thing it offers is more misery for the working class of the region. In fact, for the working class in the Middle East it is only the politics and initiatives taking place through the PKK and YPG that offers any prospect – for the moment – for a better future. Perversely, this is also why the US state wants to destroy them.

The State of Climate Change

Bongani Maponyane (ZACF)

The planet is warming. This is not new to the earth's history, which is billions of years old. But why the controversy regarding this fact? Does it lie in the association between climate change and the man-made



contributing factors to this change? Is it because of the reality of the impact of the industrial age; the very foundations on which modern capitalism and empire has been built? Many within these industries spend billions on promoting the idea that climate change is a naturally-occurring phenomenon. But scientists around the world show convincingly that man-made fossil-fuel economies (economies built on the use of oil and coal, which release massive amounts of pollution and carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, creating the greenhouse effect and global warming) have contributed, over a short period of time, to rapidly accelerating the usual naturally-occurring effect. The impact has been, amongst other things, rising sea levels, increased drought and destructive weather patterns. However, this knowledge has been met by a strong response from capitalists – and the politicians they fund – to throw doubt on the role

and culpability of the industries that are causing the most damage (and have made them very rich and powerful.) They continue to fund “alternative” research and media propaganda to do so.

MONITORING THE PROBLEM

In the early 1980s the international Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) created a scientific team to accumulate accurate geological and meteorological evidence on weather and air-quality patterns. Their studies showed that the oceans were warming, ice caps vital to regulating the earth's climate were shrinking and sea levels were rising as a result. In fact in the period 1961-2003 saw the average sea level rise of between 0.5-1.8m annually. In conjunction, they also reported the rapid deforestation of the Amazon rainforests in South America and a

Much of the facts of human-created global warming and the threats it poses to us all cannot be ignored forever. Sections of the international ruling class have opened their eyes and profit-making minds to it

dramatic increase in greenhouse gas emissions, particularly by highly industrialised and industrializing countries, causing accelerated and unnatural warming of the planet. Some of these hazardous materials include methane (CH₄), carbon dioxide (CO₂) and nitrous oxide (NO₂).

Thus, what was occurring was not natural, but caused human activity for the benefit of the wealthy and powerful who controlled these industries. However, these are not the people who experience the worst effects of global warming. Their sole focus is how to profit even more from the labour of others, and how to continue to exploit the earth's resources for their own, private benefit. They continue to do so through industries such as mining, oil, chemicals, timber and farming.

THE GLOBAL IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The IPCC's 5th assessment report detailing the extent of industrial impact paints a damning picture of how human-created industries have contributed to climate change. Much of the damage is traced to the biggest companies, e.g. Shell, BP, and the richest nations like (but not only) the US and China, all controlled by a very powerful ruling class in business and the state. South Africa, relative to the size of its



economies, is a serious polluter and contributor to the problems our ecology faces, in particular its nationalized industries like Eskom and its tremendous need for coal-burning to run its operations.

Melting ice caps and rising sea levels continue to endanger, or push certain land and aquatic species to extinction, e.g. the polar bear. Also, alterations to the global climate have seen increased occurrences of tropical cyclones since the 1970s. These will also cause, over

time, the migration of millions of people from many cities and islands affected by these rising levels and changing weather patterns. This will create crises of historical proportion, a problem exacerbated by negative and violent attitudes towards immigrants and economies not created to dealing with people's needs.

A NEWCLEAR SOLUTION, OR A NUCLEAR PROBLEM?

There is much debate about nuclear energy internationally, with those opposed to it pointing the tragedies of Chernobyl and the more recent Fukushima plant disaster, and the potentially cataclysmic effect on global ecology it could have. Proponents speak to nuclear's ability to allow the world's economy to shed fossil fuel dependence and the longevity of nuclear power provision to humankind.

We cannot divorce the debate from a class analysis, regardless of its good or bad points. Nuclear projects are facing the risk of lack of funding from international donors. Banks seem unwilling to bear the risk of financing such projects. As such, policy-makers are devising schemes to extract the necessary funds from tax-payers via "cost pass-through" or loans guarantees by offering nuclear vendors fixed price terms.¹ What this means today is that nuclear energy development is not a viable option for developing countries increasing the need for fossil fuels in these countries for their industrial projects.

CONCLUSION

Much of the facts of human-created global warming and the threats it poses to us all cannot be ignored forever. Sections of the international ruling class have opened their eyes and profit-making minds to it. However, their solutions amount to nothing more than a "green

capitalism" that will not fundamentally alter the conditions of poverty and oppression that most people face globally. It will also take a long time before the owners of fossil fuel industries (both private and state owners) steer away from these historic industries, particularly when these industries are cornerstones of economies around the world. It seems there is just too much money to be made now to worry about the future 50 years from now.

1. from a report by Professor Steven Thomas of the University of Greenwich in *The Economist*, July 2014.

Building a Mass Anarchist Movement:

The Example of Spain's CNT

Thabang Sefalafala * and Lucien van der Walt

The ideas of anarchism have often been misunderstood, or sidelined. A proliferation of studies, such as Knowles' *Political Economy from Below*, Peirats' *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*, and others, have aimed to address this problem – and also to show that anarchism can never be limited to an ideology merely to keep professors and students busy in debating societies.

Anarchists have been labeled “utopians” or regarded as catalysts of chaos and violence, as at the protests in Seattle, 1999, against the World Trade Organization. However, anarchism has a constructive core and an important history as a mass movement – including in its syndicalist (trade union) form. It rejects the authoritarianism and totalitarianism often associated with Marxist regimes, and seeks to present a living alternative to classical Marxism, social democracy and the current neo-liberal hegemonic order. It rejects both the versions of Marxism that have justified massive repression, and the more cautious versions, like that of Desai in his book *Marx's Revenge*, which claim that a prolonged capitalist stage – with all its horrors – remains essential before socialism can be attempted. It rejects the ideas that exploitation and oppression are “historical necessities” for historical progress.

The history of anarchism and syndicalism shows that the contrary is true. One of the crucial themes highlighted by recent works in this tradition is that the construction

of a mass anarchist and syndicalist movement based on anarchist principles of anti-authoritarianism, equality, freedom, liberty, justice, and democracy is possible – and is something of which ordinary working class and poor people are perfectly capable.

This is wonderfully demonstrated by the anarcho-syndicalist CNT (the National Confederation of Labour) of Spain. It was formed in 1910 in Barcelona, in the Catalonia province

of oppression, as did the state. The activities by the CNT were heavily repressed through armed force. State power was continually used to smash working class and peasant resistance; this was essential for the ruling class to maintain their privileges.

Despite these conditions – and in contradistinction to the notion that repression, authority, exploitation, crippling poverty, hunger and misery, as well as wealth and power for people

numbering no more than the fingers on one hand, are necessary evils – the CNT provided a practical example of ordinary human beings possessing profound capacities and intelligence. It built a mass union movement that defended and advanced workers' conditions, that educated millions of people in an alternative worldview, that worked alongside communities against evictions and for lower rents, and that allied with working

class, the peasant youth and women fighting for the anarchist cause.

Through its structures, its militancy, its education and its alliances, the CNT helped develop and nurture, on a mass scale, the capacities and innate intelligence of the masses – capacities and intelligence that nullified the need for mastery of the many by an elite. This was demonstrated most dramatically in the 1930s, when the CNT (and the allied Anarchist Federation of Iberia, the FAI, an anarchist political organization linked to it) launched or supported a



of Spain – the country's industrial hub. The CNT emerged out of difficult social, political and economic conditions that characterised Spain, and grew, despite severe repression, into the 1930s. Embodying the central anarchist principles of individual freedom, cooperation, and democracy, the CNT became the most powerful union – and mass – movement in the country.

Spain was marked by high level of inequality, and a social system that favored the elite; a rightwing Church often operated as an institution of

series of popular rebellions. In 1936, the CNT and FAI helped stop a military coup, unleashing a



massive and profound social revolution that saw millions of hectares of land, and vast parts of industry and services placed under worker and community control.

Often governed through CNT structures, the “collectives” were self-managed, highly efficient, and rejected the logic of production for profit; they moved towards the implementation of the

* Writing in his personal capacity

maximum programme of anarchist communism.

Unfortunately, failures by the CNT and FAI stalled this programme, and opened the door to its defeat.

That said, the CNT's experience from the 1910s to the 1930s highlights the reality that we are, at this current juncture, in fact settling for far less than human beings are capable of creating. It is in the hands of ordinary people to remake the world. This should be remembered in movement building: the CNT model that, following in the footsteps of anarchist luminary Mikhail Bakunin, insisted crisply that “Future social organization must be made solely from the bottom upwards, by the free association or federation of workers,” first local, then finally, “in a great federation, international and universal,” embracing all suffering humanity, and capable of re-making the world into one based on social justice, equality and freedom.

Imperial Wars, Imperialism and the Losers:

A Critique of Certain ‘Labour Aristocracy’ Theories

Lucien van der Walt

As the 100th anniversary of the outbreak in August 1914 of World War One fades, let us remember that imperialism harms all working class people – including those in imperialist and Western countries, and the white working class.

It is often said that Western workers benefit from imperialism, or imperialist profits, or that welfare in the West is funded by imperialism – but all of these claims fall in the face of realities like World War One (1914-1918). This war – between Germany and Britain and their respective allies – was, at least in part, fought for a re-division of the European-ruled colonies.

NOT THEIR CAUSES

The fighting, of course, was largely done by the working class – against

the working class. Those who insist that Western workers benefit from imperialism should remember the 37 million who died: the 10 million-plus soldiers, 7 million civilians, and 23 million wounded were heavily drawn from the Western working class; the others were drafted in from colonies like Senegal, South Africa and India. This followed a string of wars, including in Southern Africa, from the late 1800s, like the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, and the Anglo-Boer War (or South African War) of 1899-1902.

It was ordinary people who formed the armies and the victims in all these conflicts; they fought in wars they did not create, driven by mighty empires that ruling classes controlled. The conquered peoples, like the Zulu and Afrikaners, fought for national independence and lost. Their ruling elites, however,

made peace with the empires: the Zulu monarchy becoming part of the colonial apartheid system, the Afrikaner generals becoming local allies of British imperialism. The elites that controlled the early African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa were Empire loyalists, too, routinely supporting Britain's wars.

This is not to say such elites were mere collaborators or ‘compradors’: they acted in such ways in pursuit of their own class interests and agendas, changing allegiances as situations changed.

WARS AND WESTERN LABOUR

No one would deny that imperialism harms ordinary people in the colonial and postcolonial world. But what of the ordinary people in the imperialist

countries of the West? They never ruled, nor controlled, those countries. At the time of the three wars listed above, they did not even have universal voting rights, and were still battling for basic union rights.

'LABOUR ARISTOCRACY' MYTHS

Did they, and do they still, benefit from the imperial wars or imperialist economic activities, like Structural Adjustment or unfair terms of trade? No. The notion that Western workers benefit from imperialism – a version of 'labour aristocracy' and 'privilege' theories – remains a widespread myth. If the mass deaths in these wars – borne largely by the working class and poor – are not enough evidence, consider also the crippling injuries that hundreds of thousands faced, or the future they looked forward to after military demobilization – of low-wage jobs and unemployment.

BEYOND THE TV SCREEN

The image we see today on TV and in films of life in the West is a myth. Whereas on TV, even fast food workers and sex workers live in large flats, drive their own latest-model cars, and sit down to giant screen TVs, the reality is different. In Britain at the start of the 1980s – that is, before the neo-liberal offensive really got started – 10% of the population owned 80% of personal wealth, while the bottom 80% owned only 10%; 32% lived in poverty, even using the dubious measures of the time.¹

It was from these masses that the cannon fodder of the war was and are recruited; so appalling were their living conditions that the state found that hundreds of thousands fell below the required health standards for recruitment as soldiers in 1899 and 1914.

HISTORICAL CORRELATION

Of course, some sectors of the Western working class live relatively well, but there is no clear evidence that this is due to some sort of a transfer of wealth from the non-Western world, to Western workers by imperialism. Before the neo-liberal period starting in the 1970s, the best living conditions were in the Nordic countries,

none of which had much in the way of any imperial history. Living conditions in Western countries improved dramatically from the 1940s – after the ruin of World War Two – which coincided precisely the period in which empires that had lasted centuries *collapsed*.

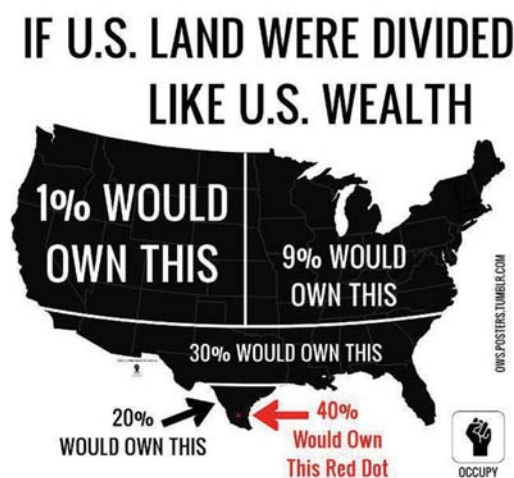
By contrast, the points of greatest direct Western imperial rule – like the 'Victorian' period of the late 19th and early 20th centuries – remain notorious as periods of massive repression and poverty in the West. The modern Keynesian welfare state (KWS) in the West, the basis of welfare, arose precisely when the European empires fell. Similarly, as imperialist wars increased from the late 1980s, working class conditions deteriorated severely, in large part due to neo-liberalism; again, the soldiers of the USA and other major powers were primarily recruited from workers looking for jobs.

WAGES AND CAPITAL STRUCTURE

Unequal wages exist within and between countries, including between and within those with a colonial history, but this reflects a range of factors. Western countries have more industrialised economies: by current figures, the GDP of Germany alone is almost twice that of the entire region of sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa included.² Such economies, which have moved decisively to the production of relative surplus value, involve much higher productivity per worker – this, in turn, allow much higher wages, as well as higher (!) rates of exploitation, inasmuch as the gap between output and income is proportionately worse.

To illustrate: in South Africa, an autoworker in a big foreign-owned plant, with a permanent and semi-skilled job, is paid far better than a worker on a labour-intensive wine farm. Her or his output is much higher, due to technical conditions. Let us say the output, measured in terms of value added to the commodity, is (to keep it simple) R50,000: then capital can pay a wage of R10,000 easily, and still pocket R40,000 'surplus' value. Let us say the farmworker adds (again, simplifying) R3,000 value and gets paid R2,000. In this case, the autoworker is actually more exploited than the farmworker, as R40,000 is extracted, as compared to R1,000.

The image we see today on TV ... of life in the West is a myth. Whereas on TV, even fast food workers and sex workers live in large flats, drive their own latest-model cars, and sit down to giant screen TVs, the reality is different. In Britain at the start of the 1980s ... 10% of the population owned 80% of personal wealth, while the bottom 80% owned only 10%; 32% lived in poverty...



SOUTH AFRICAN IMPERIALISM

This is the general principle allowing sectors of the Western working class to be both better paid than many workers elsewhere, yet at the same time, to be more 'exploited.' It is the same situation that allows South African workers to be paid far higher than workers in neighbouring countries: Regardless of South Africa's semi-

industrial character, with its higher productivity and capitalist development, SA workers are not beneficiaries of SA's regional imperialism³ in southern Africa.

There is no

real mechanism that supports of the idea that Western or South African workers benefit from 'imperialist' profits or wars: a simple wage disparity (higher relative wages) proves nothing of the sort, since the disparity lies elsewhere. It could, of course, be argued that the higher technological level seen in many Western countries was itself due to imperialism. But, while there is no doubt that major capitalists benefited from systems like the slave trade and colonialism abroad, it was a pre-existing level of advancement that allowed Western domination of such trades and territories in the first place. The cause and effect are getting mixed up.

POWER AND CLASS STRUGGLE

The potential for higher wages and more state welfare arising from a more technologically advanced, industrialised, economy is just that: a potential. What matters, above all, is the power and organization of the popular classes. The KWS was, in part, financed by the economic boom of the 'Golden Age' of capitalism from the 1940s-1970s, but would never have happened unless working class movements were able to terrify the upper classes into major reforms.

As World War One showed, it is actually more accurate to say that the interests of working class and poor people in the West are harmed by imperialism. The same military machines that are built for wars abroad, are unleashed at 'home' against unrest – classically, the use of the Army of Africa by General Franco against the Spanish anarchist revolution of 1936-

1939. The reactionary ideas and arrogance promoted by ruling classes in their imperial activities confuse and divide people, deflecting their struggles into dead-ends like racism and xenophobia. A simple example is provided by the on-going hatred of black and Asian foreigners in South Africa; the same can be seen across Western Europe.

THE CHINA SYNDROME

And we can also see, especially in the period of neo-liberalism, how the historic division of the world between the Great Powers (the big imperialists) and the colonial/ postcolonial world actively harms Western workers. Jobs and industries have been gutted across the West as factories are moved by the giant companies to poorer regions like China, where labour is cheap and unions are banned. Even the worst union represents a bulwark of working class resistance, which is why these repressive states crush unions and run fake 'official' unions.

The very existence of repressive regimes like China is in direct contradiction to the interests of Western workers, as this drive wages, welfare spending, unionization rates and job security through the floor. The syndromes of 'runaway industry' and 'give-back bargaining' which have crippled labour across the West are due to imperialism: workers are forced to accept worse conditions and/or de-unionise and/ or ever-higher productivity standards, under threat their jobs will move to cheap labour sites. In other words, a global market is created, where wages are levelled downwards, as investments threaten to move abroad. Meanwhile, low wage regimes, like that of China, fuel its elites' own wealth and drive for power – including a growing imperialism of their own.

CONCLUSION

Imperialism, on the grand-scale of the Western powers, or on the scale of rising powers like China or Russia, or even of small regional powers like South Africa, does not benefit the majority of their own people. It also, obviously, does not benefit the interests of the ordinary people subjected to imperialism – although local ruling classes often find ways to accommodate to the system. This means that the struggle against imperialism is not a battle between unified nations or regions, like the 'North' or the 'South', but a fight to be led by the popular classes, worldwide, against ruling elites, worldwide.



Concentration camp during the Anglo-Boer War

1. UK figures: Robert Lekachman and Borin van Loon, (1981), *Capitalism for Beginners*, Pantheon Books, New York, pp. 44-5, 67, 70; CWF, (1992), *Unfinished Business: The Politics Of Class War*, AK Press / CWF, p. 77. For the USA: M. Lind, cited in "Stringing up the Yuppies", 24 September 1995, *Sunday Times*, p14; *New York Times*, 25 September 1992.

2. Germany: 2014 GDP (current US\$) \$3.853 trillion, population 80.89 million; Sub-Saharan Africa (46 countries): 2014 GDP (current US\$) \$1.712 trillion, population 961.5 million. SOURCE: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/germany> and <http://data.worldbank.org/region/SSA>, accessed 15 June 2015.

3. Shawn Hattingh, 2012, "South Africa's role in Africa: An anarchist perspective," *South African Labour Bulletin*, volume 36, number 2, June/July 2012, pp. 51-53./



BLACK STARS OF ANARCHISM



Domingos Passos:

The Brazilian Bakunin

Renato Ramos and Alexandre Samis, Rio de Janeiro, 2001.

Translated by Paul Sharkey

'I woke at 5.00 am. Passos, who had been up and about for hours, was sitting on his bed reading Determinism and Responsibility by Hamon. I grabbed a towel and went downstairs to wash my face. When I came back from the yard, after drying off, I saw two individuals. It was a moment or two before I realised who they were. With revolvers drawn they spoke to me and asked me harshly: "Where's Domingos Passos?" Anticipating another of the attacks that our comrade had been through so often before, I was keen to cover for him and said that he was not around. I told them: "There's no Domingos Passos living here!"'

This brief extract from a 16 March 1923 declaration by the workman Orlando Simoneck, carried in the newspaper *A Patria*, clearly reflects a few features of the situation sampled by the black youngster, carpenter by trade, anarchist and active member of the Civil Construction Workers' Union (UOCC): by 1923 'Comrade Passos' had become a special target for the Rio police as well as one of the best loved and respected worker militants in the (then) Federal District. Another feature of this comrade, rightly identified by Simoneck, was his relentless self-educational drive, his thirst for learning and culture, which found him spending his mornings poring over books in the little collection belonging to Florentino de Carvalho who lived in the same house in the Rua Barão in São Félix, only a couple of paces from the union local.

We do not know the precise year of Passos's birth (it was probably towards the end of the 19th century), but, from the books of Edgar Rodrigues, we know that he was born in Rio de Janeiro state. We find his first appearance in social struggles of the time as a UOCC delegate at the 3rd Brazilian Workers' Congress (1920) at which he was elected as travel secretary for the Brazilian Workers' Confederation (COB). Passos had been selected for that post because he stood out in the ranks of the organised proletariat on account of his intellect and oratorical gifts which he had honed in the day to day struggles of his trade. In 1920 Passos worked with the Rio de Janeiro Workers' Federation (FORJ) which had a daily newspaper in *A Voz do Povo*. Under the Epitácio Pessoa government, there was a severe crackdown with countless anarchist

militants being jailed, tortured and murdered, trades unions shut down and labour newspapers pulped. In October 1920, the police dispersed a workers' parade down the Avenida Rio Branco with gunfire and, not content with that, stormed the UOCC headquarters, wounding 5 workers and rounding up a further 30.



Domingos Passos

The labour movement was reeling from the onslaught and went into a decline from 1921 on. The 'yellow' unions expanded rapidly and came to contest hegemony in several trades with the revolutionary unions. Among anarchists, the high hopes vested in the Russian revolution were evaporating as news percolated through of the Bolsheviks' repressiveness.

On 16 March 1922, nine days ahead of the launching of the Communist Party of Brazil, the UOCC carried a document entitled 'Refuting

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the False Claims of the Communist Group' and declaring its repudiation of the state communists, the 'Bolshevists'. It was assuredly written by Domingos Passos. Throughout the 1920s, Civil

Construction workers were the steeliest and least compromising opponents of the Bolshevik doctrine. They were the very embodiment of critical awareness and in a number of regards took their toll of the communist cadres.

In July 1922, in the wake of the failure of the revolt by the lieutenants from the Copacabana Fort, the repression slapped a ban on the UOCC paper *O Trabalho*, to which Passos was a regular contributor. A new anarchist bastion in the press was under

the charge of another UOCC militant, Marques da Costa, editor of the Labour Section with the newspaper *A Patria*.

In 1923, with the police crackdown hot on his heels, Domingos Passos stepped down from the UOCC Executive Commission and turned his attention to propaganda and union organising, travelling twice to Paraná to assist the local organisations. Like the intellectuals José Oiticica, Carlos Dias and Fabio Luz, Passos was frequently invited to give talks at union locals. He was also actively involved with workers' festivals, acting in plays, giving poetry-readings and talks on social themes. Such events certainly accounted for some of the few moments of pleasure that Passos enjoyed during his life as a labourer and political activist.

During the first half of 1923 he was one of the driving forces behind the relaunching of the Rio de Janeiro Workers' Federation (FORJ), the rival FTRJ organisation having been set up under communist control. When the FORJ resurfaced on 19 August 1923, Passos was elected on to its Federal Committee. Refloated by 6 unions (civil construction, the shoemakers, the coopers, the ships' carpenters, the 'gastronomics' and the Marechal Hermes General Trades Union) by mid-1924 the FORJ had recruited a further 5 significant trades: foundry-workers, brickworkers, ironworkers, steelworkers and stone-workers. In spite of state repression and underhanded communist tricks, revolutionary syndicalism grew in strength under the auspices of the FORJ which was at that time working on

the organisation of an inter-union conference in Rio and planning the 4th Brazilian Workers' Congress. In July 1924, all of this organisation effort was wiped out by the crackdown following a junior officers' revolt, in São Paulo this time. Union locals were attacked and shut down, and hundreds of anarchists were jailed. Domingos Passos was one of the first to be arrested and after 20 days of suffering at Police Headquarters he was held in the prison ship 'Campos' in Guanabara Bay. The months that he served on board were characterised by severe privation and restrictions. With other anarchists and hundreds of 'outlaws', he was to be moved to the 'Green Hell' of Oiapoque, the 'Siberia of the Tropics,' where ill-treatment and disease claimed over a thousand lives. Passos managed to escape to Saint-Georges in French Guyana. Meanwhile, fever drove him to seek medical treatment in Cayenne where he received a warm welcome from a Creole who helped him regain his strength. From Guyana he moved on to Belém where he remained for a time as a guest of the organised proletariat in the city.

Domingos Passos was one of those who returned to the Federal District after the state of siege enforced by the Artur Bernardes government for nearly four full years (1922-1926). On reaching Rio de Janeiro at the start of 1927, he returned to union activity, but he was dogged by the after-effects of malaria. That year he moved to São Paulo, where he helped reorganise the local Workers' Federation (FOSP). He took part in the 4th Rio Grande do Sul Workers' Congress held in Porto Alegre. He was to the fore in the organising of several pro-Sacco and Vanzetti meetings and rallies organised by the FOSP and its affiliates. In August he was jailed in the feared 'Cambuci Bastille' where he spent three months, subject to all manner of ill-treatment.

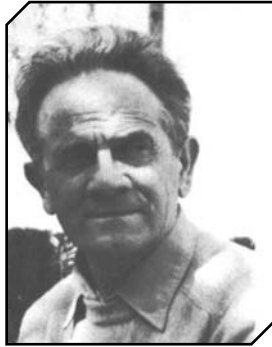
According to Pedro Catallo, his cell-mate, Passos left prison with his body covered in ulcers and half-naked and was sent to the jungles of Sengés in the still untamed interior of São Paulo state, to die. A short while later he managed to write to some comrades, asking for money, which he received through a go-between. So ended the career of a man who had been one of the most influential and respected of the anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist activists of his day. Nothing more was ever heard of him, aside from the occasional, unconfirmed rumour. Not for nothing was Domingos Passos known to his contemporaries as the 'Brazilian Bakunin.' Few were as committed as he was to his ideals and suffered so much as a result. He put his all into the fight to emancipate men and women. He spent nearly a decade in prison and in tropical jungle conditions. Passos became a great beacon for libertarian and social activists in his day and in our own!



Passos [was] selected ... because he stood out in the ranks of the organised proletariat on account of his intellect and oratorical gifts which he had honed in the day to day struggles of his trade.

REVIEW: Spanish Revolution Remembered:

Peirats' "The CNT in the Spanish Revolution"



José Peirats

Almost 80 years ago the peasantry and working class of Spain, inspired by anarchism and syndicalism, rose up to change the world. The Spanish Revolution of 1936-1939 involved millions creating, from below, a new society of freedom based upon equality and participatory democracy. Had the revolution succeeded and spread, the world would have changed forever. Rather than being trapped in decades of oppression and crisis and futility, humanity could have invested the last three generations into a universal human community of libertarian communism and scientific advance.

Remarkably, the Spanish Revolution has received very little attention. The republication in English of volume 1 of José Peirats' masterwork *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution* by Merlin Press and PM Press should go some way to addressing the problem. The book originally appeared in 1951 in Spanish, finally appeared in English in 2001 but soon went out of print, and is now, finally, readily available (see contact details at end). (A much-abridged version appeared in one volume in English in 1990, called the *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*).¹

REVOLUTION

Peirats, himself a militant, passed away in 1989. A man of the working class, he spent his last decades in exile, during

which he produced his three-volume study of the anarchist revolution. This trilogy is an indispensable chronicle of inspiring, astonishing events: popular militias, self-managed collectives in the cities and the countryside, the masses in power, and a desperate struggle against counter-revolution.

Peirats' account gives insights, from the inside, into the power of the CNT (*Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* or National Confederation of Labour) – the massive anarchist syndicalist trade union that was the centre of gravity for Spain's vast anarchist movement. He traces the accumulation of power by the CNT and its allied forces, including events such as the CNT's leading (but often ignored) role in the miners' revolt at Asturias in 1934.

The account is a passionate one, as might be expected of a man who participated directly in the Spanish Revolution, and who was at one stage the editor of the CNT's mass circulation daily, *Solidaridad Obrera* ("Workers Solidarity").

His study is also, however, a learned and rigorous account of these revolutionary events, using primary sources, many of which are quoted at great length – a real treasure. He chronicles the triumphs and tragedies of the Revolution, and its terrible defeat. The defeat was followed by a long midnight of terror under the semi-fascist regime of General Francisco Franco; hundreds of thousands fled the country, and the dictatorship lasted into the mid-1970s.

COUNTER-POWER, COUNTER-CULTURE

The Spanish anarchist/ syndicalist movement, centred on the CNT, built a revolutionary *counter-power* and

counter-culture in the forms of people's schools, of mass media, of women's and youth groups, of community activism, and of revolutionary trade unionism. It also included the anarchist political organisation, the FAI (*Federación Anarquista Ibérica*, or Anarchist Federation of Iberia), which was in the Bakuninist/ dual organisationalist tradition (mass movement complemented by specific anarchist-only political group, the latter to push anarchism), dating back to Bakunin's "Alliance" of the 1860s. These were all built through engagement with immediate issues: wages, rents, discrimination, and military conscription.

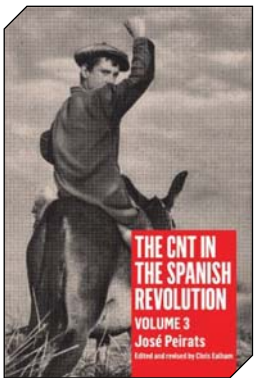
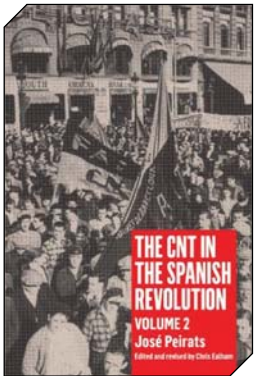
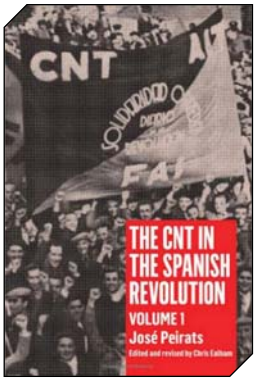
It was this mass movement that fostered the capacities, skills, structures and ideological understanding that made the Spanish Revolution possible. (Peirats was himself, for example, part of the FAI, and received much of his schooling from the anarchist people's schools.)

Decades of militant mass work, plus the development of proletarian and peasant anarchist cadre, were essential foundations for the events of 1936-1939. As Mikhail Bakunin, leading anarchist, always stressed: without a widespread popular embrace of a revolutionary theory and practice (a "new social philosophy"), a constructive social revolution from-the-bottom-up is not possible.²

LESSONS: DEFENCE, POWER

The reader may not agree with all of Peirats' positions, or draw the same lessons. However, he honestly catalogues the fierce debates within the CNT/ FAI over tactics and strategy, including issues like alliances with non-

Jakes Factoria



anarchists, and the best means to militarily defend revolution.

The CNT/ FAI made crucial mistakes in 1936, I would argue, not least of which was joining the Popular Front government in a common bloc against Franco – the man, backed by a section of the ruling class, who was behind a military coup attempt in 1936, and who subsequently led a counter-revolutionary invasion of Spain.

The idea of joining the Popular Front was to maximise the anti-Franco alliance. But joining the Popular Front effectively meant sharing power with a wing of the bourgeoisie – as well as working with hostile parties. The price of unity was a retreat from the revolution; the payment for the retreat was betrayal and treachery by the supposed allies in the Popular Front.

Joining the Popular Front meant, above all, a retreat from the CNT/ FAI programme of placing all power in the hands of the popular classes, as a counter-power that replaces ruling class power. The anarchism of the CNT/ FAI recognised *power*: it was not against power, but argued for placing power in the hands of all.

This was incompatible with the Popular Front, which required concession after concession, involved betrayal after betrayal, and meant containing the revolution within Spanish borders, until the Revolution unravelled. By the time Franco’s forces marched into Barcelona in 1939, ending the Revolution and inaugurating the semi-fascist dictatorship, the collectives, militias, land reforms and popular energies had been dissipated – although not completely destroyed – by the Popular Front.

Although the CNT/FAI withdrew from the Popular Front in November 1938, it was too late. The “internal” war against the Revolution by the Popular Front helped open the door to Franco’s “external” war for power. The organisational and political havoc wreaked on the CNT/ FAI, caused by a period of participation in the state, can also not be understated.

REAFFIRMATION: BAKUNIN’S ROAD

These mistakes were not inevitable. They did not arise from a *failure* to take military defence and co-ordination seriously,³ as some Marxists and others have claimed. Participation in the Popular Front did not arise from the *absence* of an anarchist/ syndicalist plan to make and defend and spread a social revolution internationally; it involved the conscious *suspension* of that plan, justified on the grounds of adverse circumstances.

The CNT/ FAI had repeatedly affirmed the *mainstream* anarchist position of defending

revolution *with force*, based on popular militias with a *co-ordinated military effort*, but subject always to direct popular control, notably in 1917, 1932, 1933 and twice in 1936. It is simply untrue that the CNT / FAI had “no idea what to do with power,” a “theoretical inability to face up to the problems posed by the war and the revolution,” or that they were “reformist” etc.⁴

Mistakes on the military question arose from contingent factors, like the decision to use *flawed tactics* (the Popular Front), rather than an inherent flaw in anarchist doctrine; from a tendency at times to *simplify issues* (notably, underestimating the resilience of counter-revolutionary forces, and to underestimate the challenges of transition); and, tragically, also from an *unprincipled revision* of existing positions by a wing of the CNT/ FAI.

They did not arise from a *lack* of a strategy, but from the effective *abandonment* of that strategy.

The classic CNT/ FAI position was subsequently *reaffirmed* by the Friends of Durruti (a dissident CNT faction), which called in 1937 for withdrawal from the Popular Front and for a Revolutionary Council (“*junta*”).⁵

However, the warning came too late.

CONCLUSIONS: DRAW LESSONS

The CNT/ FAI experience remains proof of the possibility of mass anarchism, based on building movements of, by, and for the popular classes to struggle today and change tomorrow. A new world is possible, but only through working class-peasant revolution, based on deep, strong counter-power and counter-culture.

The CNT/ FAI experience illustrates this, providing a rich reservoir of experiences from which lessons must be drawn, firmly and unflinchingly.

All too often, anarchist and syndicalist historiography is based on a chronicle of successes, and a silence on failures; far too many accounts of the defeat of the CNT blame Franco and the Popular Front, without explaining why Franco won, or how the Popular Front survived.

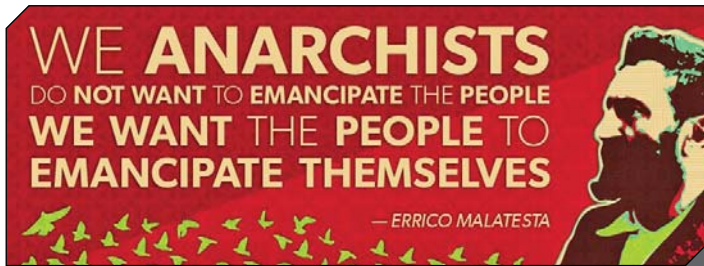
That will not do. Unless anarchists *learn hard lessons from the failures of the past*, as well as from the triumphs, the movement will not move forward.

** Copies may be obtained for a reasonable rate by contacting Tony Zurbrugg at globalbook@btconnect.com*

1. José Peirats, [1964] 1990, *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*, Freedom Press, London.
2. M. Bakunin, [1871] 1971, “The Programme of the Alliance,” in S. Dolgoff (ed.), *Bakunin on Anarchy*, George Allen & Unwin, pp. 249-251
3. For a Marxist example, P. Blackledge, 2010, “Marxism and Anarchism,” *International Socialism*, no. 125, p. 139
4. e.g. A. Guillamón, 1996, *The Friends of Durruti Group, 1937-1939*, AK Press, pp. 99, 108, 111
5. Friends of Durruti, 1938, 1978, *Towards a Fresh Revolution*, Zabalaza Books, p. 25

The Anarchist Road to Revolution

Bongani Maponyane (ZACF)



We, anarchists, are committed to building a society based on self-management and equality. We identify with the analyses and experiences of Mikhail Bakunin, who stated the need for freedom beyond the limited confines of “democracy” – where you are only free to vote on who is next to govern you. Bakunin argued that freedom comes responsibility: this included responsibility to others in the maintenance of this freedom. We need a society based on these principles; an anarchist society which expects from each according to their ability, and provides to each according to their needs.

How do we achieve this? The anarchist society is achieved through a revolutionary strategy based on mass organization to overthrow systems and relationships of hierarchical (or top-down) political, economic and social power. These organisations – trade unions and community movements – we refer to as counter-power. We need to build syndicalist trade unions – revolutionary anarchist trade unions – which fight alongside working class and poor community organisations. These syndicalist movements will be the battering ram which smashes down capitalism. In South Africa that would mean a specific focus on black organisation, but in time this would be broadened to the entire working class population regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, etc. Along with counter-power, we need to build a revolutionary working class consciousness – or counter-culture – based on emancipatory education.

However, these institutions of peoples’ power do not just arise out of nothing. People need to be presented with

the ideas of anarchism, and the influence of anarchism needs to be maintained within these organisations.

This is one of the primary responsibilities, we argue, of an anarchist political organization. This kind of organization does not seek power on behalf of, or over movements, but acts within these movements to influence opinions in an open, honest, democratic way.

We aim to build counter-power and counter-culture as the nucleus of the future society based on community and worker councils that control production, distribution, education and decision-making. Anarchism, therefore, is a prefigurative socialist political ideology and practice that seeks to build the new world of freedom within the shell of this decaying world of capitalist and state oppression and domination.

Many decisions will be based on scientific research and debate and their implementation coordinated by these future councils. Therefore, life will be organized by the very people who work and contribute to society for their own benefit and the benefit of others around them. When decisions affecting larger groups of people need to be coordinated, delegates can be chosen on specific mandates to represent the decisions of their councils. These delegates, however, will have no power to alter the decisions of their communities without the approval of those they are representing. This is the major difference between anarchist direct democracy and the current system of representative democracy – a system that centralizes the power of decision-making in the hands of a small group, the ruling class. We seek to make decisions with people, not over people! Grassroots decision-making and peoples’ power can only exist if the power of political and economic systems is situated in grassroots structures. We hold council

delegates to account through a system of mandates, report-backs and the principle of immediate recall: if a delegate does not fulfill a mandate and acts outside the wishes of the council, that individual is immediately replaced with someone who will.

Industry will be controlled by workers and land equitably shared for the benefit of all to meet social and individual need. To achieve this, our revolutionary counter-culture must also take into account the influence and impact of other, competing, ideas influencing the working class and poor, such as nationalism, patriotism and Marxism. We need to educate ourselves away from these authoritarian ideologies that, when put into practice, have only replicated hierarchical domination, despite the good intentions of some of those exclaiming their ideas. These ideologies promote the necessity of political parties and the need to capture the state for the implementation of programmes. But the state can never be used to create an equal and free society – as it is itself a hierarchical institution promoting power over people.

Building counter-power and counter-culture requires an new, alternative working class political education, one that assists to build peoples’ understandings of the world around them and that provides a way-forward for organization building. The anarchist political organization, then, must play a central role to this end. Unlike the Marxist “vanguard” party that claims to speak on behalf of all working class people, or the nationalist “Peoples” party that claims to speak for all the people of a particular nation, the anarchist organization acts as educators, agitators and organisers *within* the working and poor class, not above it. Insofar as we are leaders it is because we aim at a leadership of *ideas*, not individuals nor political parties, and not a leadership over the masses. With anarchism as the leading idea, we can build our strength towards victory against oppression and domination.

Putting Politics into Practice:

The Importance of Democracy and Education in Unions

Pitso Mompe (ZACF)

Trade unions have played a major role in defending workers' rights... This is why, even today, workers are still loyal to their unions. However, there are obstacles within the unions – one being the union bureaucracy, of paid and full-time officials. This can develop its own interests, undermining the unions.

This is a challenge faced by many unions. This bureaucracy is at times unable to represent workers' grievances effectively: they often spend more time fighting amongst themselves for certain positions within the union instead of for workers' rights. Due to this bureaucracy, which is structured hierarchically, higher positions hold more power, including in terms of decision-making. Those in leadership are often full-time and receive much higher salaries than those of the workers they represent. This means they often want to prevent union actions that threaten their own positions, like long strikes.

Another lurking danger is that of such leaderships' interests shifting towards protecting those of bosses. By spending more and more time in cosy offices in discussion with these bosses instead of in workplaces checking the working conditions of their union's members, officials can easily drift – becoming increasingly accommodating and conservative. Where they sell out completely, or become very corrupt, the union collapses or splits – to the harm of the workers. In South Africa, there is the further problem that the union bureaucrats also get involved in the state.

If this is so, why do workers not defend their own rights and advance their own interests themselves?

Trade unions have played a major role in defending workers' rights against the bosses and politicians, also in advancing workers' interests. This is why, even today, workers are still loyal to their unions. However, there are obstacles within the unions – one being the union bureaucracy, of paid and full-time officials. This can develop its own interests, undermining the unions.

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If this is so, why do workers not defend their own rights and advance their own interests themselves?

This is a challenge faced by workers. Workers tend to be disorganised and divided, for a number of reasons, such as job or sector, race, tribe, language, gender, area etc. As such, those from

the same area, those that share the same culture, race, language, or beliefs and so on, separate themselves from others, often feeling superior to others. This separates one worker from another and fosters division in the working class where unity needs to exist. History has taught us that trade unions are capable of organising those of different cultures and backgrounds as workers despite these and other differences – even if not all have historically achieved, or even attempted, this.

So what is the solution?

Looking at the question of what is to be done, clearly working class politics in the trade unions plays a major role. Not empty slogans and rhetoric, but a genuine politics of *practice*. Racial, ethnic, sectoral, geographical etc. divisions between workers can only be overcome in the process of building class-consciousness, which requires a central role for trade union education, based on clear politics.

Education can also help combat bureaucratisation – by providing workers with the confidence to trust themselves and challenge their leaders. However, education doesn't only mean classrooms (although this is crucial); class confidence is also built in practice, in the process of workers acting for themselves together. This fact carves out a central role for trade union democracy and participatory politics. Workers in South Africa, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, built a strong tradition of workers' democracy and workers' control in their trade unions. They also cultivated a strong



sense of working class identity and pride. It is this that we need to go back to.

We as anarchists, or syndicalists (anarchist trade unionists), say that workers' democracy is not the same as capitalist "democracy". The same applies to the notion of workers' politics – which is not the same as the politics of the state and government. Here we are talking about a democracy where unions will be restructured and rebuilt on a solid foundation of democratic discussion, consensus building (where possible), and decision-making through-out all its structures.

One where worker-members would elect shopstewards who are recallable and who only act on the basis of mandates from these workers at their workplaces and in the union – never on their own and never for the bosses. Those elected would also report back to workers after meetings to keep workers informed, and/ or to get fresh mandates. This model, of democratic discussion and decision-making, of mandates and report backs, should be applied to all union structures: from the workplace or local branch to national executive committees.

What we mean by workers' control is, firstly, workers directly controlling the union themselves

– not via union officials. Secondly, workers have to ensure their control by encouraging, nurturing and insisting on democratic involvement of the membership in the life of the union. Thirdly, workers should outnumber officials in the various union structures, to ensure that ordinary workers' voices remain dominant.

These are the basic principles of anarchist trade unionism – of syndicalism – and anarchist organisation. In these ways, workers could make their unions work for them, not for the interests of a handful of officials. Through workers democracy and workers control the rank-and-file membership develop a sense of control over their lives. This is done via a working class politics in the trade unions that allows the worker to develop a type of class consciousness that is needed in the struggle against capitalism, the state – against all forms of domination and oppression.

Using these practices and experiences, workers can also prepare themselves to take over, and run, the workplaces themselves, including mines, farms, factories and offices. Democratic union structures can play the key role in this new system of bottom-up control. That is syndicalism.

What we mean by workers' control is... workers directly controlling the union themselves – not via union officials.

Anarchism and Counter-Culture: The Centrality of Ideas

A Presentation at the Johannesburg leg of the Afrikan HipHop Caravan, Goethe Institute, 20 February 2013, by the ZACF's Warren McGregor

INTRODUCTION

One may ask what a presentation on anarchism has to do with hip-hop. I contend that within these two movements exist shared ideas and sentiments, building blocks of a deeply critical and self-conscious political culture. Both share a deep anti-establishment ethos; a mistrust of established institutions of social and political control. Both come from and are based amongst the oppressed.¹ At its core, hip-hop shares with anarchism its desire for political and social change via people's movements and expression. A fuller discussion and appreciation of anarchist culture, however, and its message of grassroots community and individual empowerment, can, I

think, serve to broaden the already rich tapestry of hip-hop culture and its impact on those it serves to educate.

DRAWING A SKETCH

All forms of society, or social organisation, have their own ideological cultural sets: the main ideas that build and maintain the structure of that society. In the modern age of neo-liberal capitalist and state control, some key ideas dominate; you might have heard these before:

- Margaret Thatcher's "there is no alternative" (as regards neo-liberal social spending cuts and privatisation)
- Francis Fukuyama's – "the end of history;" that with the collapse of the



We exist in a world that is fundamentally unjust and unequal. The dominant economic ideology is capitalism... and the dominant ideologies of social and political organisation in many parts of the world are the nation state and representative democracy respectively. These systems establish class rule of the few over the majority.

Soviet Union in the early 1990s, capitalism had defeated socialism

- That democracy equates to voting into power those who rule you
- Men bring home the bacon; boys will be boys; women look after the kids and clean the house
- Black people can't govern themselves
- All whites are oppressors
- God is forgiving and solves all problems if you pray
- The ANC's slogan "A Better Life For All"
- Africa Unite! (which presupposes a singular African identity)

I WANT TO TALK ABOUT THE ROLE OF IDEAS...

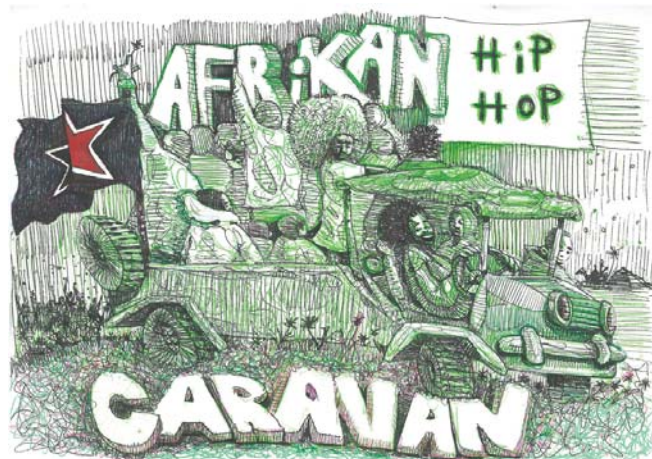
In a variety of areas and in many people's minds, these are some of the dominant social ideas. In fact, many people accept these not as ideas but social realities set in stone. However, they are just that: ideas that we make and remake. Ideas determine how we think and how we act. Ideas determine how we socialise and how we relate to societal organisation – political and economic.

THE WORLD TODAY

We exist in a world that is *fundamentally unjust and unequal*. The dominant economic ideology is capitalism in its neo-liberal form, and the dominant ideologies of social and political organisation in many parts of the world are the nation state and representative democracy respectively. These systems establish class rule of the few over the majority.

Class rule promotes competition, greed, individualism; only those with money and power are counted as people of value. If you're poor, well that's your fault – you're lazy. Get a job, contribute!

In southern Africa, our shared histories have also meant rampant racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia and other such forms of oppression.



HUMAN NATURE

Both ideologies of capitalism and the state are promoted as either inevitable, part of human nature, or the best we have. However, we exist in a world with massive poverty and huge disparities in terms of access to power and wealth. Rampant political and economic corruption, waste, inefficiency and ecological destruction are just some other terrible features of this particular global society. However, if the state and capitalism are inevitable and immovable, this then must mean that suffering, poverty and domination are natural to the human condition.

I DISAGREE!

Human nature (and the way we organise ourselves) is neither fixed nor inevitable. We are born into societies and all societies have dominant ideas. These ideas and the alternatives offered from within those societies are what determine who we are and how we think. If we are born into a society that valorises greed, surely we should expect many to be greedy. What about promoting social values that are entirely different?

PROTEST AND THE POVERTY OF ALTERNATIVES

These last few decades have seen tremendous upsurges of protest against inequality and powerlessness. All these have risen within

local contexts either of failed statist projects (Marxist Communism, the Keynesian Welfare State and Social Democracy, African Socialism, etc.) or in the context of post-independence structural adjustment programmes and neo-liberal

capitalism. From Latin American indigenous struggles, to the community struggles and uprisings in southern and northern Africa, to austerity protests in Europe and worker struggles in East Asia, many seek not only slow, piecemeal reform, but also substantial social change.

Many ideas influence these struggles, but do many of them actually question the dominant forms

of economic and social organisation: capitalism and the state?

Here, within a global context of perpetual protest with little reward, the ideas of anarchism and its culture of direct democracy, can exist as vital tools of analysis of past and current struggles. Anarchists *imagine* a new world – it's easy if you try – and seek to organise for that vision.

So, if ideas are central to the way the world is structured now, the only way to change the world is to mobilise others to do so using different ideas.

WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

It is often misunderstood – by opponents and by those claiming the title – as chaos, disorder, lawlessness, etc. Also many associate it with veganism, dumpster-diving, white punk-rockers, animal rights activists, etc.

Anarchism is *not a matter of self-identity* – although many claim the title, but have divergent ideas for understanding society and social change. It is a *clear, coherent political ideology* born out of the struggles of workers and their organisations and communities in the mid-to-late 1800s, even if many don't realise this. It is *revolutionary libertarian socialism* that seeks mass working class and peasant organisation to revolutionise social and economic control by dismantling the state and capitalism; to run society via federations of directly democratic work and community councils and the economy to meet people's needs.

Anarchism is against:

- economic exploitation, i.e. bosses and landlords
- domination between classes and between individuals (sex/gender oppression, ageism, racism, etc.)
- political subordination, particularly in the form of the state and other such hierarchical institutions which centralise power in the hands of a few by affording them control over the means of administration and coercion

Anarchism is for:

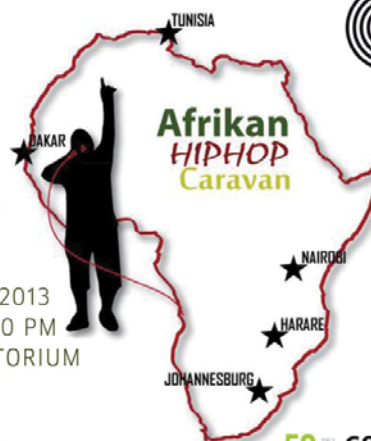
- a world of individual freedom – an organised emancipation from exploitation and domination
- societies and economies based on self-management by worker and community councils federated internationally.

This individual freedom can only be realised within a context of social freedom – this social freedom can only be realised through mass-based working class revolution. *We see mass organisations of counter-power* – revolutionary syndicalist trade unions linked to revolutionary community organisations – as the lever of revolution and reconstruction. Anarchists work with and in working class communities and organisations, spreading the ideas and principles of anarchism, to achieve a leadership of ideas, not individuals.

AFRIKAN HIP HOP CARAVAN

SYMPOSIUM & CONCERT

THURSDAY, 18TH APRIL 2013
2.00 PM - 5.00 PM & 8.00 PM
GOETHE-INSTITUT AUDITORIUM
FREE ENTRANCE



Anarchism insists on *building tomorrow today*. These organisations of counter-power, built within the shell of this rotten world, will function as the worker and community councils of the future society. Anarchism, thus, is a prefigurative politics. This politics determines anarchist practice today for tomorrow. It argues that the counter-power we build must reflect and have as its principles those of the future society.

ANARCHIST COUNTER-CULTURE

We seek to foster a counter-culture – a culture of ideas, debate and discussion – opposed to the dominant ideas of capitalism, the state and hierarchy. We

build a counter-culture that promotes working class pride and rejects the culture of the ruling class.

As such, these organisations of counter-power must be based on and continue to develop a counter-culture that meets emancipatory desires.

ANARCHIST PRINCIPLES²

► Direct democracy

Decisions in movements should be made to ensure everyone has an equal say and that power is located with all members, not a few officials. This empowers people; it enables them to have a voice and builds people's confidence; and only a confident working class can end all forms of oppression.

► Direct action

These include protests, strikes, occupations, etc. against capitalist and state bosses. The reforms won through such actions build counter-power and the working class's confidence – in itself and its organisations.

► Self-management

We fight for true worker control and people's power over their organisations. If based on direct democracy and with the confidence of direct action, workers and people control their own organisations and are not beholden to a middle class, more educated stratum that dominates people's struggles and determine their campaigns.

We aim for respect, mutual aid and solidarity as the basis of organisation.

We should also fight oppression within our organisations and in the working class to build relations of solidarity in our movements today.

HISTORY AND EXAMPLES OF ANARCHIST COUNTER-CULTURE

Anarchist working class organisations have used a variety of cultural tools such as music, poetry, art, self-education, organising and drama to

The 1970s and 80s... offer us clear lessons to be studied. Mass organisational counter-power to capitalism and apartheid was built and produced a mass working class counter-culture. This spread through not just protest, but pamphlets, newsletters, struggle songs, plays and magnificent posters.

build this counter-culture. These promoted not only anarchism and struggle, but important philosophical and social questions related to their communities. They used a variety of means, like radio stations, plays, spoken and written word, to build a revolutionary counter-culture amongst the working poor. They built cultural centres, schools and took over urban spaces that regularly hosted counter-cultural picnics, discussion sessions, parades, carnivals even! Counter-culture laid the basis for anarchist revolutions in Spain, Manchuria and Ukraine which were built over many decades of education, direct action and organisation. Anarchist slogans and songs persist even today: e.g. the popular Cosatu slogan, "An Injury To One Is An Injury To All" is the original slogan of the syndicalist (anarchist trade union) Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Migrant workers, exiles and publications helped spread anarchist and syndicalist ideas globally.

RECENT COUNTER-CULTURE IN SA

The 1970s and 80s particularly offer us clear lessons to be studied. Mass organisational counter-power to capitalism and apartheid was built and produced a mass working class counter-culture. This spread through not just protest, but pamphlets, newsletters, struggle songs, plays and magnificent posters.

ART, COUNTER-CULTURE AND CHANGE

Art continues to play a vital role in spreading ideas, whether progressive or not. A consumerist pop and rap culture exists as a strong pole of attraction to many young people globally. It influences the way we talk, what we wear, what

we want to do with our lives and how we view the world.

However, a revolutionary counter-culture *on its own* does not make revolution. Ideas must be applied and these ideas need to serve to empower people to contribute to creating change with others. If artists really want to change the world, this desire and their art *must be linked with and to working class struggles and organisations* (in SA this means the black and African working class in particular).

With that, we also need to move from *reflection* to *active contribution*.

Not only could our artists and the culture they promote reflect society, it could *contribute to an understanding of the issues that affect the majority of human kind and offer a coherent way forward out of misery and domination*.

We need a large scale working class counter-culture based on principles of direct democracy, self-management and revolution; history has shown this as the only ways to fight against the impact of dominant ideas on all our lives. Our art needs to inspire, reflect and direct. To show that not only is there an alternative and what that is, but also that we are building and mobilising, with song and dance, word and movement, towards creating that future now!

Anarchism has the tools for this.

Ideas can empower!

Ideas can emancipate!

Forward to the anarchist social revolution!



1. This is not to say that an uncritical, often sexist and racist Hip Hop culture has emerged and flourished within the mainstream media. It is merely to suggest that the roots of Hip Hop are far from this, in the lives of ordinary people struggling under sexist, racist oppression, exploitation and poverty.

2. Thanks to Shawn Hattingh and his PowerPoint presentation "Anarchism and a Revolutionary Counter-culture."

What does the ZACF stand for?

Zabalaza means struggle, the continual struggle of the working class to access real freedom. We mean freedom from the repression of the state, and oppression by multinational as well as local companies. Too long has a small elite been in control. Workers and their communities have risen up many times in the past but have always been crushed by the police forces of the state. In the past the working class – including the poor and unemployed – has protested but often lost: social movements have burnt out and trade union leaders have made bad deals with the bosses.

We advocate workers' self-management over the mines, factories – and all other workplaces. Also, self-management in our communities to make our own decisions on the

Anarchist ideas, made real through political education and mass organising, will confirm the power within the working class to organise and smash the state and company system. Anarchist ideas are not as widespread within southern Africa as in other parts of the world.

To build for anarchism, we all need to be in agreement about our strategic plan and our political ideas. So, we need to reflect on the past mistakes and successes in order to regroup. Mass movements will be stronger if we are all clear on one vision. Once we are all clear on the same position we can proceed to the revolution to overturn the state, and live in a true communist society not run by political or "worker" parties, or vanguards.

This new (anarchist) society will be self-controlled. It will be based on working class power from below, grassroots democracy, production for need not profit or elite power, and a democratic militia (army) under the control of the working class.

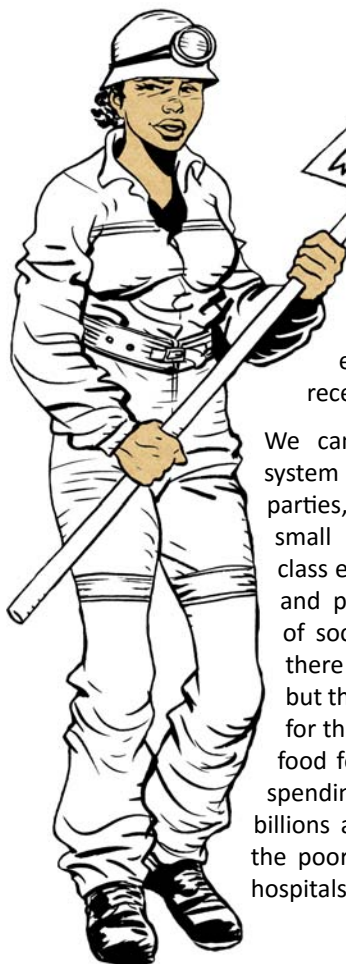
We want a revolutionary front of the oppressed classes. We want to organise in the southern part of Africa from South Africa to Zimbabwe, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Namibia, Mozambique, Malawi. In all these regions the vast majority of the working class is black. Most of these countries fought for liberation from imperialist powers and local colonialism, but today we, the working class, are still oppressed in our work environment, and still have to continually struggle for equal access to land, water and electricity. This can only end by revolution from below. It cannot change through elections, which betray the people, or politicians, who cheat the people, or capitalists, who exploit the people.

Anarchist specific organisations in Southern Africa and the rest of the world need to keep comrades in check to not be hijacked by political parties. Because ultimately the state is the enemy, it will not solve the class struggle – it serves the ruling class, not the people. So, we must organise outside of elections, outside of the system, from below, in mass organisations that are democratic and that have a clear political (anarchist) line.



resources we need to run our lives, to have access to water, electricity, jobs, housing and to receive decent education.

We cannot achieve this under the system of the state and political parties, because these only serve the small ruling class elite. This ruling class enjoys the lion's share of wealth and power, and uses the resources of society to benefit itself, first. So, there is not enough public transport, but there are factories making BMWs for the elite few; there is not enough food for the people, but rich people spending millions of Rands on parties, billions are spent on arms deals while the poor die in run-down government hospitals.

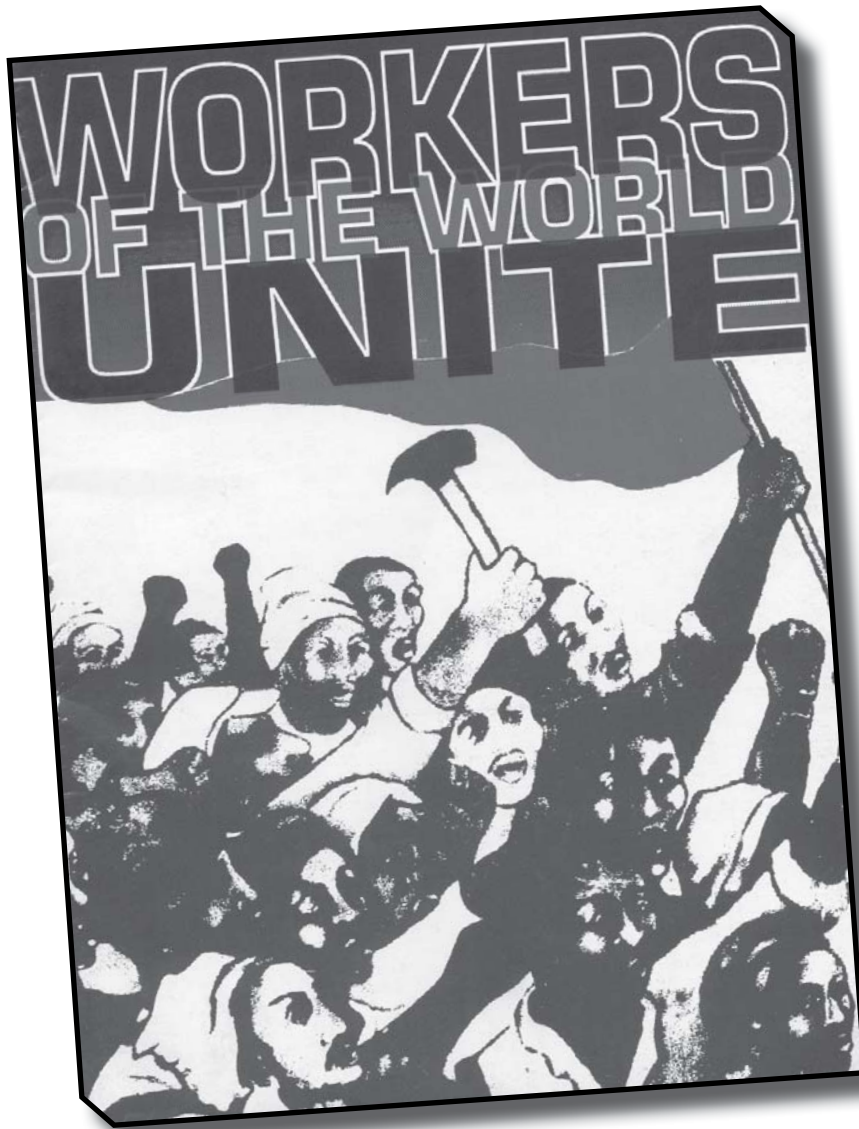


- Contact for more information -

Zabalaza Anarchist Communist Front

+27 72 442 1256 | www.zabalaza.net | zacf@riseup.net

Postnet Suite 47, Private Bag X1, Fordsburg, South Africa, 2033



WWW.ZABALAZA.NET