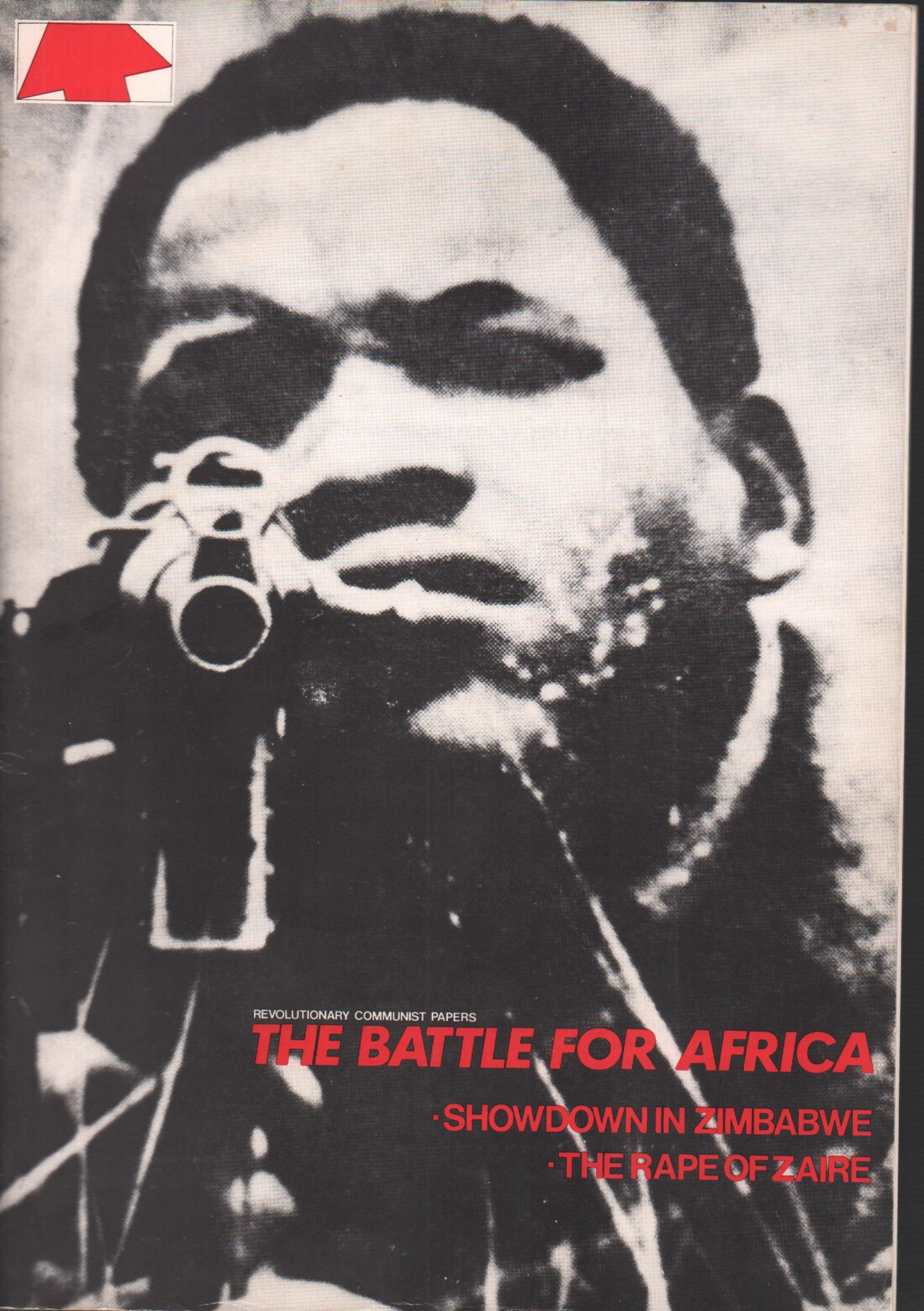




REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PAPERS

THE BATTLE FOR AFRICA

· SHOWDOWN IN ZIMBABWE

· THE RAPE OF ZAIRE

Theoretical Journal of the Revolutionary Communist Tendency

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PAPERS

Number Five September 1979

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Editorial

Unless the worldwide anti-imperialist movement grows in strength Africa will become the Balkans of the 'eighties. Today the intensification of imperialist rivalries has led to a scramble throughout the African continent for spheres of influence. Imperialism's drive towards a new redivision of the world has a particularly acute impact on Africa. In the past, capitalist relations in Africa were always guaranteed by Britain and France. Now in decline, these imperialist powers can no longer be relied upon to carry out this task. That is why the USA launched its diplomatic initiative in Southern Africa — because Britain cannot be depended upon to assure capitalist stability in Zimbabwe.

America's intervention is not a matter of friendly assistance to two senile imperialist nations. As the crisis deepens, each imperialist power is thrown into furious battles with its competitors. More than anywhere else Africa is wide open for a new phase of imperialist penetration — a phase in which Britain and France will be the losers.

African capitalism was unstable even in periods of economic expansion. In the 'sixties imperialism had to resort to military intervention to bolster up regimes sympathetic to its interests. The Nigerian civil war of 1967, in which opposing sides were supported and armed by different imperialist powers, prefigured the heightened imperialist tensions of today. Elsewhere in Africa, Britain and France kept order by force of arms. France was particularly aggressive in defending its position in Africa: in 1962 it dispatched soldiers to save President Senghor of Senegal, in 1964 it crushed a leftist coup in Gabon and in 1968 sent troops into Chad. More recently the French army has seen action in Mauritania and Zaire.

If the rule of imperialism is to be upheld the old methods of colonial annexation must be deployed once more. To this end the USA has just established a task force of 11 000 troops to protect its investments in oil. Last summer France raised the idea of a permanent all-African intervention force. Even a second-rate imperialist power like Britain has kept up a 'quick strike' capability; though more than 13 000 of its troops are tied down in the Six Counties of Ireland, Britain still managed to spare a few SAS men for West Germany's raid on Mogadishu.

Imperialism has more at stake in Africa than massive investments. Compelled by the crisis to take up the weapons of economic nationalism, each imperialist power tries both to exert direct control over sources of raw materials and to prevent competitors from challenging it in export markets.

The potentially explosive conflict between Belgium and France over the Shaba province of Zaire shows the direction in which imperialist antagonisms are heading.

In Africa the trend towards military intervention by imperialism is further reinforced by the instability that prevails in Southern Africa. One of the most profitable areas for capitalist investment in the world, South Africa depends for its existence on the continued subjugation of the black population. For the imperialist powers that dominate it, liberation struggles that have developed in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia represent a direct threat; imperialism must crush them to survive.

Liberal apologists try to obscure the real tendencies of imperialism by saying that the British state's policies are misguided. Two economists commissioned by Christian Concern for Southern Africa have concluded that support for apartheid is far from beneficial to the British economy. Britain would be better served by sanctions against apartheid.¹ Even some of those who profess to identify with the struggle against apartheid have declared that the problem is Tory policy and not British imperialism. Recently the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) noted: 'The Conservative party is the only one of the major national parties to advocate policies which are in direct conflict with the interests of the people of Southern Africa'.² For the AAM, Labour Party support for South Africa is best not talked about. It prefers the enlightened imperialism of Owen to the old-fashioned techniques of Carrington.³

The influence of apologists for imperialism extends into the labour movement. Such was the rise of pro-imperialist sentiment in the post-war period that reformist leaders could argue that Britain was no longer imperialist. As a group of left-wing Labour MPs put it:

'Everyone outside Britain recognises that Britain's financial supremacy has gone for good, and with it the basis of British Imperialism. Once we could afford all sorts of extravagances in our foreign policy. Now they are beyond our means.'⁴

As far as the Labour left was concerned, the ruthless war of oppression then fought by Britain against Malaya was just an 'extravagance'. In reality, however, left reformists were advocating an imperialist strategy appropriate for the period. They urged Britain to 'concentrate, in co-operation with France, on the development of our African colonies so as to create the conditions for African freedom and to decrease European dependence on America'.⁵ This strategy of transferring political power to an African government while preserving the dominant position of British imperialism was realistic enough to be pursued by successive Tory and Labour governments from the late 'fifties and throughout the 'sixties.

The trend towards decolonisation during this period confirmed the view that imperialism no longer existed. The notion of a new style capitalism, shorn of its oppressive and obnoxious features, was one of the illusions created by the post-war boom. Imperialist conflict appeared to be a

1 *The Guardian*, 4 September 1974.

2 *AAM News*, May 1979, p3.

3 It is not surprising that the AAM's pre-occupation with alternative imperialist policies leads it to support the more liberal forms of imperialist oppression. It greeted the 1977 Anglo-American initiative on Zimbabwe — which promised dictatorial powers for a British-appointed Resident Commissioner during a 'transitional period' prior to majority rule — as a 'significant and welcome advance'. AAM, *Rhodesia: what chances for a settlement?*, 1977, p2.

4 R H S Crossman, M Foot & I Mikardo, *Keep Left*, 1947, p30.

5 *Ibid*, p47.

phenomenon of the past. Even organisations on the radical left like the International Socialists (IS) – now the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) – were taken in by this. In a major article, one of IS's leading theoreticians summarised the group's abandonment of Leninism:

'It hardly seems necessary to sum up one's disagreement with Lenin on imperialism, as he defined it. It must be rejected on at least four counts: *finance capital* is not nearly as important for and within the system as it was; the *export of capital* is no longer of great importance to the system; *political control* in the direct sense meant by Lenin is rapidly becoming dated; and finally, resulting from these, we don't have imperialism but we still have capitalism.'⁶

The rejection of Lenin's theory of imperialism inevitably led the SWP in a reformist direction. Today the SWP's policy towards Ireland is testimony to this. Because imperialism is no longer at issue, the SWP treats Britain's oppression of Ireland as a harsh and unfair policy. In August of this year the SWP commemorated the tenth anniversary of the war in the Six Counties by uniting with the pro-imperialist Liberal Party on a demonstration intended to persuade the British state to adopt a more progressive line on Ireland.

As a current in the international working class, Leninism developed through a struggle against pro-imperialist trends in the labour movement. Lenin attacked those leaders of the working class who tried to separate oppressive policies from capitalism itself. He showed that as long as imperialism existed there was no alternative to the brutal domination of the colonial masses. By contrast, his opponent Kautsky suggested that, although imperialism was oppressive, there were other options open to capitalism. Kautsky argued that if the policies of war and colonial conquest were 'proscribed', 'the results would not be the collapse of capitalism, but only the necessity of using other methods to achieve its expansion'.⁷ Lenin demonstrated that Kautsky's prognosis of a peaceful capitalism was not only a denial of reality but also a plan for the reform of imperialism.

Whether in Africa, Asia or Ireland, political oppression is the necessary consequence of capitalist development in its imperialist stage. To be effective, therefore, solidarity with the struggles of the oppressed must be anti-imperialist in character. Support for the struggles of the oppressed was central to Lenin's programme:

'Imperialism means the progressively mounting oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of Great Powers; it means a period of wars between the latter to extend and consolidate the oppression of nations . . .

'That is why the focal point in the Social-Democratic programme must be that division of nations into oppressor and oppressed which forms the *essence* of imperialism, and is *deceitfully* evaded by the social-chauvinists and Kautsky.'⁸

Reformists will always evade the issue of imperialism because their whole approach is based on the premise that reformist policies are compatible with imperialism. For them capitalism is not necessarily oppressive and imperialism can be reformed.

Africa and pro-imperialist trends in the British labour movement

The reformist leadership of the British labour movement is committed to the defence of British industry and commerce. While it differs with the bosses on the question of wages and working conditions, the labour bureaucracy stands shoulder to shoulder with British capitalists against foreign competition. And it wants what is best for Britain in Africa, too. Every trade union bureaucrat follows his

statements against apartheid with a defence of the national interest. This has immediately reactionary results. Pleas about the need to accept 'economic realities' have prevented three of Britain's largest unions from putting pressure on Unilever to recognise trade unions at two of its South African plants.⁹

While the mainstream of the reformist leadership makes little pretence of opposing British strategy in Africa, the Labour left has strong feelings on the matter. It is critical of imperialist domination of Africa. However, the left reformists' commitment to economic nationalism forces them, too, to reconcile their concern for the African people with the interests of imperialism. Advancing a moral critique of imperialism, they join the ranks of those who contend that Britain would be better off if it broke its links with South Africa. *Tribune*, the paper of the Labour left, puts forward sound economic arguments why imperialism should change its tune:

'Today, however, the Tories take the line that Britain must continue to trade with South Africa and to invest there because "we cannot afford to do otherwise". And the Knights of the Foreign Office have had little difficulty in keeping Labour Governments close to this line. But the fact is that our trade with Nigeria alone is now larger than that with South Africa.'¹⁰

Likewise, the support *Tribune* gives to imperialism's victims boils down to the kind of advice a capitalist gets from his accountant. Warning of the effects of an African boycott on British exports, it remarks: 'Nigeria in particular could penalise Britain with the loss of oil and of trade'.¹¹

The interests of the British working class and of the African people are fundamentally opposed to those of imperialism. The preoccupation with trade figures shown by *Tribune* is an attempt to gloss over this fundamental antagonism in the hope of finding a workable imperialist solution. The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) has made an art of this chauvinist approach. It wants to win support for the liberation struggle on the grounds that it is in the best interests of British capitalism. Putting the case for banning trade with South Africa, it observes:

'Yet our exports to South Africa constitute only around 3 per cent of our total exports. Moreover, Britain's exports to our eight largest trading partners in the rest of Africa now stand at over £600 million – or nearly 4 per cent of total exports – and are thus more important for our future. This trade could be jeopardised if our exporters were to continue to cling to trade with South Africa.'¹²

These liberal appeals to economic good sense only reinforce pro-imperialist trends in the labour movement. The instinctive rejection of apartheid by sections of the working class is cynically channelled towards supporting British imperialism's export drive.

The politics of the Stalinists and the Labour left serve to liquidate the tendency towards proletarian internationalism in the British labour movement. What should workers do were it proved that South Africa is crucial for the survival of the British economy? Should they support the national liberation struggle in Africa regardless of its consequences for the health of British industry? Or should they consult reformist economists to see if, in this instance, internationalism is consistent with Britain's economic needs? The real interests of the British working class lie not with the defence of 'our' exports but with the national liberation struggle.

Lenin's theory of imperialism is a vital weapon in the struggle against the pro-imperialist trends in the labour movement. It shows that the survival of imperialism depends on the continued oppression of backward capitalist regions. Ignoring this, the reformists put British industry before the independent interests of the proletariat. The

CPGB calls for a ban on capital exports to South Africa as a means to assist the revival of the British economy: 'As far as investment is concerned, we will benefit since the flow of capital out of Britain to South Africa and the other countries is a major cause of our crisis at home'.¹³ In reality the opposite is true. The crisis-ridden capitalist system of Britain can only survive through profitable investments in South Africa and elsewhere. The victory of the national liberation struggle in Africa will be a major blow against British imperialism. British workers have every reason for supporting this struggle against their class enemy.

The British working class must prevent British imperialism from securing its survival at the expense of the peoples of Africa. This struggle is necessary for the liberation of the British labour movement itself. As long as its struggles are restricted to wages and working conditions the working class will be unable to act as a conscious force. Support for the bourgeoisie's foreign policy not only means support for imperialist oppression; it also undermines the class struggle at home. If the prosecution of the bourgeoisie's 'national interest' in Africa is left unchallenged, the working class will be unable to oppose 'sacrifices' in the interest of Britain at home.

The struggle for national liberation

This issue of *Revolutionary Communist Papers* does not only deal with the present day tendencies of imperialism. It also examines the liberation movement in Zimbabwe. The liberation movement in Africa faces considerable obstacles in addition to the diplomatic and military initiatives of imperialism. One of the most important of these obstacles is the strength of petit-bourgeois nationalism.

Marx analysed the role of the petit bourgeoisie in the struggle against oppression. He maintained that it sought only minimal change, and even that only insofar as it was consistent with its social position: 'Far from desiring to transform the whole of society for the revolutionary proletarians, the democratic petty bourgeois strive for a change in social conditions by means of which the existing society will be made as tolerable and comfortable as possible for them.'¹⁴ Because the petit-bourgeoisie can articulate the democratic aspirations of the masses it can take the leadership of the national liberation movement. However, it has no interest in the emancipation of all sections of society; it ultimately degrades the liberation struggle by making it serve its own narrow ends.

The analysis of Zimbabwe contained in this issue of *Revolutionary Communist Papers* shows that the petit-bourgeois leadership of the nationalist movement has consistently limited the objectives of the liberation struggle. Unable to fight imperialism consistently it has always sought to compromise. Nkomo's secret talks with Smith last year are only one example in the sordid record of the petit-bourgeois leadership.

The petit-bourgeois leaderships of the liberation struggles now being waged in Africa receive ideological support from world Stalinism. But, together with its African associates, the Soviet bureaucracy has continually used its influence to restrict the aims of the liberation movement to the bourgeois-democratic reform of capitalism. In this way it has tried to overcome the class contradictions separating the African proletariat and the bourgeoisie. According to the Communist Party of South Africa, socialism is not for the people of South Africa – not just yet.

'Today it is not the socialist but the national-democratic revolution that is on the agenda in most African countries . . . there is a

need to come out resolutely against ultra-leftish forestalling of developments, against the 'infantile disorder' of leaping across the historically vital stages, and against the neglect of immediate general democratic tasks, whose fulfilment constitutes the essence of the present African revolution . . .'¹⁵

The Stalinists want to reconcile the African working class to capitalist democracy to maintain harmony between all classes: 'Neglect for the common interests of the nation and accentuation of differences of opinion in ideological matters or problems related to the distant future can only harm the unity of the progressive forces.'¹⁶ In advocating class collaboration, the Stalinists betray the interests of the African masses.

As Marx and Engels defined it, 'The relation of the revolutionary workers' party to the petty-bourgeois democrats is this: it marches together with them against the faction which it aims at overthrowing, it opposes them in everything by which they seek to consolidate their position in their own interests.'¹⁷ The founders of scientific socialism explicitly warned against obscuring class differences in the interests of the 'nation':

'At the present moment, when the democratic petty bourgeois are everywhere oppressed, they preach in general unity and reconciliation to the proletariat, they offer it their hand and strive for the establishment of a large opposition party . . . that is, they strive to entangle the workers in the party organisation in which general social-democratic phrases predominate, and serve to conceal their special interests, and in which the definite demands of the proletariat must not be brought forward for the sake of beloved peace. Such a union would turn out solely to their advantage and altogether to the disadvantage of the proletariat.'¹⁸

Lenin restated this fundamental Marxist approach. He too was faced with calls for postponing class demands in the interests of 'the people'. In 1917, Lenin wrote: 'The line of the petty bourgeoisie must be separated from that of the wage-earning proletariat. Fine phrases about the revolutionary people are suitable to a man like Kerensky, but not to the revolutionary proletariat.'¹⁹

The Stalinist call for unity around democratic tasks means unity on the terms of the petit bourgeoisie. Capitalist social relations can only survive in Africa if the masses are politically oppressed. Backward capitalism cannot afford the luxury of bourgeois democracy. That is why all the independent 'democratic' governments in Africa have turned on the working class and continued the oppressive policies of the colonial regimes.

Revolutionaries in Zimbabwe have an obligation to ensure that the working class is organised as a class and not

- 6 M Kidron, 'International capitalism', *International Socialism*, No 61, p16.
- 7 Cited in M Salvadori, *Karl Kautsky and the socialist revolution 1880-1958*, New Left Books, 1979, p173.
- 8 V I Lenin, 'The revolutionary proletariat and the right of nations to self-determination', *Collected Works (CW)*, Vol 21, p409.
- 9 *Financial Times*, 23 May 1979.
- 10 *Tribune*, 17 March 1978.
- 11 *Ibid*, 10 March 1978.
- 12 Jack Woddis, *Southern Africa – which side is Britain on*, 1977, p5.
- 13 *Ibid*, p10.
- 14 K Marx & F Engels, 'Address of the Central Authority to the League', *Collected Works*, Vol 10, 1978, p281.
- 15 'A communist call to Africa', *The African Communist*, No 75, 1978, p24.
- 16 *Ibid*, p25.
- 17 Marx & Engels, *op cit*, p280.
- 18 *Ibid*, p281.
- 19 Lenin, 'The Petrograd City Conference of the RSDLP', *CW* 24, p149.

as an appendage to the petit-bourgeois leadership of the nationalist movement. This is the only way to ensure a consistent fight against imperialism. Revolutionaries cannot ignore the petit bourgeoisie; on the contrary, they must win sections of this stratum around the struggle for a working class programme. As Lenin noted: 'A petty bourgeoisie exists, and it cannot be dismissed'. But, he continued, 'it is in two parts. The poorer of the two is with the working class.'²⁰ The proletariat is the only class whose interests do not contradict the needs of society. That is why it is the one class that can fight imperialism consistently.

The fusion of Stalinism and petit-bourgeois nationalism that characterises the Patriotic Front (PF) has undermined the anti-imperialist movement in Zimbabwe. It has fragmented the liberation movement and dissipated the energies of the masses. It is not surprising that everyone, from imperialist politicians to Soviet bureaucrats, has good words for someone like Nkomo. The critique of the PF is necessary not only because of its shabby record of compromise but also to ensure that the interests of the Zimbabwean freedom fighters are clearly expressed.

The RCT unconditionally supports the struggle against imperialism in Southern Africa. The war of liberation waged by the African people is progressive no matter who leads it. The British proletariat has every interest in speeding up the defeat of its ruling class in Africa. At the same time revolutionaries, in Africa and Britain, face the attempts of Stalinism to undermine class independence. In Britain, the Stalinists want to unite the proletariat around the national interest of capital; in Zimbabwe they want workers to abandon their interests for all-class unity. Anti-imperialists must settle scores with these enemies of the independent interests of the working class.

This issue of *Revolutionary Communist Papers* is the product of discussion and debate within the RCT and with comrades from Africa. The goal of this journal is to further the struggle for proletarian internationalism. Over the past four months the RCT has extended its work in support of the Irish liberation struggle and begun to organise opposition to immigration controls in the British labour movement. This journal aims to extend this work. Discuss it with us and discuss it with your fellow workers. If you are sympathetic to the contents of this journal then join the fight against imperialism — make Africa an issue in the British working class.

15 August 1979

20 Ibid, p150.

Errata

Several errors in previous issues of *Revolutionary Communist Papers* have been brought to our attention.

Revolutionary Communist Papers No 3

p18, diagram 3. The curves giving the unemployment rates for Japan and West Germany (the bottom two curves) should be transposed from 1974 onwards: unemployment grew faster in West Germany in the period 1974-77.

p20, col 2, line 42. British Leyland came under the control of the National Enterprise Board in February 1976.

p40, col 2, line 14. Alan Sapper is a member of the film technicians' union.

Revolutionary Communist Papers No 4

p35, line 4. The quotation should read 'policed it competently', not 'completely'.

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The scramble for Africa

IMPERIALISM AND AFRICA

Africa was dragged into the capitalist world system during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The scramble for Africa led to the division of the continent among a small number of imperialist powers. The colonial system established by Britain, France, Portugal, Belgium and Germany assured their control over sources of raw materials, markets and spheres of investment. European settlement in areas such as Algeria, Kenya, South Africa and Rhodesia, which were rich in minerals and land suitable for agriculture, accelerated the process of imperialist penetration.

The extension of capitalist rule to Africa completed the formation of a division of labour on a world scale. The imperialist nations transformed the colonies to serve the needs of their domestic economies. The African countries were forced to play the role of producers of raw materials and foodstuffs. Later they became important as markets for the manufactured goods of the metropolitan countries. In the early days of imperialism local industry was actively discouraged by colonial powers determined to prevent the emergence of competition. European capital was channelled into mining and agriculture, and the development of the productive forces in Africa was subsequently concentrated around this restricted economic base. The rest of the economy was condemned to stagnation.

The restricted character of capitalist development in Africa made it particularly vulnerable to recession in the world economy. The initial period of imperialist expansion was succeeded in the twentieth century by recurrent capitalist crises. Fluctuations in the prices of raw materials had a devastating impact on their producers, who made up over 90 per cent of the African population. In the crisis years of 1929-32, for example, the value of Africa's commerce fell by 42 per cent.¹ Those sectors of the economy which had developed along capitalist lines now became the victims of recession, large plantations and mining firms cut back production or shut down altogether.

The crisis forced the imperialist powers to strengthen their colonial links as a defence against their competitors. Various protectionist measures were introduced in the 'thirties to safeguard the economic interests of the metropolitan countries. As a result France and Britain in particular were able to relieve the pressure on their balance of payments. However, these measures did little to overcome the stagnation in the development of the forces of production in Africa. In the ten years up to 1938 the only countries where commerce expanded beyond the 1929 level were South Africa, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Kenya and Sierra Leone.² In the case of Sierra Leone this was the result of increased production of iron ore and gold; the rest enjoyed the advantages of preferential access to British markets. With their rich natural resources and large numbers of European settlers eager to exploit them these countries became the growth points of capital accumulation in Africa. South Africa, with the special advantage of gold production, had a particularly high rate of accumulation.

During the Second World War demand for African primary products soared. Industries were established to process food and raw materials to fuel the war efforts of the imperialist countries. In Latin America the political independence of the backward capitalist countries allowed them to take advantage of the war to increase significantly

their rate of capital accumulation. By contrast, the development of the African countries was constrained by their colonial status. A series of war-time marketing controls ensured that the African colonies gained little in export earnings; they were mere appendages of the Allied war economy.

According to bourgeois economists Africa underwent a period of economic expansion between 1945 and 1960.³ Compared with the previous phase of capitalist development the tempo of accumulation did increase. The post-war reconstruction of Europe, followed by the Korean War, created a rising demand for raw materials and foodstuffs. The resulting boom in commodity prices on the world market stimulated the African economies. The volume of exports from West Africa quadrupled between 1945 and 1955 and there was a sixfold increase in imports.⁴ These developments were accompanied by increasing state investment in the infrastructure necessary to stimulate the export trade. As the African market expanded British and French capitalists began to invest in manufacturing industry. However, despite the boom in commodity prices there was little expansion in the forces of production.

Table 1 Comparative rates of growth of industry 1938-60⁵

Area	Annual compound rates of growth 1938-60
Africa	3.6
Mining	7.9
Total industry	6.0a
Africa, excluding Southern Africa	
Mining	5.1
Manufacture	8.6
Total industry	7.4a
World	
Mining	3.4
Manufacture	4.8
Total industry	4.6
Industrial countries	
Mining	3.3
Manufacture	4.8
Total industry	4.5

a up to 1957 only

- 1 J Forbes Munro, *Africa and the international economy*, J M Dent and Sons Ltd, London, 1976, p150. This phenomenon persists. According to the recent World Bank Report: 'Some of the poor countries in sub-Saharan Africa - where the difficulties in expanding manufactured exports are particularly great - depend heavily on exports of cocoa, copper, or sisal, whose prices have been among the most volatile in recent years.' World Bank, *Annual report 1978*, p13.
- 2 Forbes Munro, op cit, p164.
- 3 A G Hopkins, *An economic history of West Africa*, Longman, London, 1973, p267.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 See L Y Thomas, 'Industrialisation and the transformation of Africa: an alternative strategy to MNC expansion', in C Widstrand, ed, *Multinational firms in Africa*, Upsala, 1975, p332.

Table 2 The structure of African industry 1950-63
(percentage of value added)⁶

Sector	1950					1963				
	North Africa	West Africa	Central Africa	East Africa	Total	North Africa	West Africa	Central Africa	East Africa	Total
Mining and quarrying	20	33	36	34	29	27	27	30	26	27
Agro allied industries	31	41	28	30	31	24	45	28	31	29
Light industries	27	18	11	12	19	24	21	14	16	21
Heavy industries	22	8	25	24	21	25	8	28	27	23
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 1 indicates a very high rate of industrial growth in colonial Africa. But these high figures obscure the fact that these rapid growth rates are measured over a small base. In addition industry in Africa was virtually confined to the processing of primary commodities and the provision of consumer goods and services. Table 2 shows the structure of African industry. It illustrates that most industrial activity was in mining or in industry based on agriculture. But even these figures give a distorted picture because they fail to take into account the limited role played by manufacturing industry in the economy as a whole; on average manufacturing accounted for only 11 per cent of total African Gross Domestic Product (GDP).⁷

Although global statistics on productivity are not available, comparisons of per capita income give some indication of the limited character of capitalist development in Africa. Table 3 reveals the backwardness of the forces of production in both industry and agriculture. The low levels of per capita income demonstrate the subordinate position of the continent in the international division of labour. In Africa per capita income in industry was barely five per cent of that in the advanced capitalist countries.

Table 3 Comparative per capita income in Africa and developed countries 1960 (US \$)⁸

Area	Agriculture	Industry	Other sectors	All sectors
Developed countries	120	480	600	1200
Africa (total)	41	25	51	117
North Africa	48	22	62	132
West Africa	41	8	25	74
East Africa	31	12	29	72
Central Africa	37	28	38	103
Southern Africa	52	166	271	489

Capitalism in Africa was inefficient, restricted to particular sectors and unevenly developed. Expansion of the forces of production was restricted to areas with European settlers, mineral wealth and fertile land. Elsewhere capital was confined to small export enclaves and the majority of the population existed as cash crop or subsistence farmers. For imperialism South Africa became the main area of interest, its considerable natural wealth paving the way for industrialisation in the early post-war period. By the late 'fifties South Africa's manufacturing output represented more than half of all output south of the Sahara.⁹

The post-war boom and decolonisation

During the post-war boom the backward capitalist countries underwent a period of rapid growth. This expansion was the result of the high rate of accumulation in the advanced capitalist countries. The expansion of trade and new spheres of production together with increased export of capital stimulated industrialisation in the backward capitalist world. Table 4 shows the annual growth rates between 1961 and 1972. This development of capitalism was by no means universal. Capital was invested in countries such as Brazil, Mexico and South Korea which had particular advantages — oil, minerals or a developed infrastructure and industry. In addition assembly operations were established in low wage areas such as Hong Kong and Singapore. In most backward capitalist countries little changed; industry ticked over while agriculture remained stagnant.

Table 4 World production: annual growth rates, by country group, 1961-72¹⁰

Item and country group	Average annual rate of change 1961-70	Change from preceding year	
		1971	1972
<i>Gross Domestic Product</i>			
Sum of country groups	5.4	4.1	5.5
Developed market economies	5.0	3.3	5.6
Centrally planned economies	6.7	6.0	4.9
Developing countries	5.5	5.2	5.4
<i>Industrial production</i>			
Sum of country groups	6.7	4.4	6.6
Developed market economies	5.8	1.7	6.4
Centrally planned economies	8.3	7.7	7.0
Developing countries	7.1	7.0	7.2
<i>Agricultural production</i>			
Sum of country groups	2.6	3.2	-0.8
Developed market economies	2.5	5.7	0.7
Centrally planned economies	3.0	2.6	0.8
Developing countries	2.8	1.6	-1.6

The high growth rates indicated in Table 4 disguise the fact that in about a fifth of the backward capitalist countries total production lagged behind population growth.¹¹ The few countries which grew rapidly contained less than a quarter of the total population of the developing countries. Even in comparison with other developing countries, growth in Africa was slow: incomes grew at only 1.5 per cent per year between 1961 and 1970, compared with an average for backward capitalist countries of 5.2 per cent.¹² Black Africa experienced a very low rate of growth.¹³

The 'sixties are known as the era of African independence. Decolonisation was the response of the imperialist powers to the pressure of the African masses for national liberation. Anti-colonial unrest leading to sporadic armed insurrection showed that capitalism could no longer be maintained by direct oppression. The imperialist strategy guaranteed the maintenance of capitalist relations by handing over power to the African middle class. Selected bourgeois politicians were placed in control of newly constituted national governments. Through this charade of independence social stability was maintained. One observer pointed to the divergent interests of the African people and their new leaders: 'The goals of the leaders and the masses were never really the same — the leaders wished to Africanize the existing system, while the masses appeared to wish its destruction.'¹⁴

This concession of political independence modified but did not alter the nature of imperialist domination in Africa. The advanced capitalist countries continued to exercise control through the operation of the world market. Commodity prices ruled the African economy, continuously ratifying its inferior position in the international division of labour. The most important outcome of the end of direct colonialism was the erosion of French and British monopoly in Africa. The USA, West Germany and Japan were now able to penetrate former British and French spheres of influence. Although still modest in absolute terms, the total book value of American direct investments in Africa (excluding South Africa) increased from \$147 million in 1950 to \$2612 million in 1970.¹⁵ Similar movements can be traced for West German and Japanese capital.

The entry of this new foreign capital did not alter the structure of the African economy. Even as recently as 1967, 56.5 per cent of foreign investment went into raw material extraction.¹⁶ In the late 'sixties it was still the areas with valuable raw material deposits or thriving plantations that experienced higher growth rates — Nigeria (oil), Zambia and Zaire (copper), Ivory Coast and Kenya (valuable cash crops). Nigeria in particular attracted substantial foreign capital. Between 1967 and 1971, its stock of foreign investment almost doubled, making it the fifth most important investment area in the backward capitalist world.¹⁷

As a result of the world expansion of capital some industrialisation did take place around the export enclaves. However, most of the manufacturing industry introduced in the 'sixties was engaged in processing minerals and agricultural products for export. Virtually no progress was made in the production of consumer durables and means of production.¹⁸ Table 5 shows the backward character of African industry in 1972, its concentration in the production of food and clothing and its small-scale character.

Capitalist development in agriculture was more retarded and uneven than in industry. A small cash crop sector existed alongside a massive subsistence sector. Cyclical fluctuations in commodity prices had a debilitating effect on cash cropping and low levels of productivity prevailed in the subsistence sector. Problems of soil erosion and pests were compounded by the obsolete social structure of the rural areas. The forces of production in agriculture contin-

Table 5 The structure of African industry¹⁹

Groups	Percentage of total number of establishments	% of persons employed in manufacturing	% of value added in manufacturing	Number of employees per establishment
Food, beverages and tobacco	25.8	24.3	38.1	75
Textile and clothing	28.8	32.8	19.0	90
Wood and furniture	11.3	7.0	4.1	49
Paper, printing and publishing	7.4	4.4	3.4	79
Light industries	70.3	68.4	64.5	77
Chemicals, petroleum and plastics	6.1	10.5	13.4	135
Non-metallic mineral products	6.2	5.6	4.1	71
Basic metal industries	0.4	2.1	2.8	412
Fabricated metal products, machinery and equipment	13.8	12.3	12.4	71
Other manufactures	3.2	1.1	0.7	28
Heavy industries	29.7	31.6	33.4	84
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	79

ued to stagnate throughout the 'sixties. By 1973 food production could not keep up with the growth in population. Capitalism could not feed the rural population of Africa.

To the superficial observer, the deepening recession of the 'seventies has had little impact on Africa. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), 'the average rate of growth in output has been relatively well sustained in the non-oil developing countries'.²⁰ However, comparison of rates of growth in GDP in Africa and the advanced capitalist countries reveals little about the African economy. More significantly, United Nations statistics confirm the stagnation and decline in food production. During the years 1971 to 1976 food production in Africa increased by only 1.4 per

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Forbes Munro, op cit, p200.

10 United Nations (UN), *World Economic Survey 1972*, New York, 1973, p12.

11 Ibid, p78.

12 A B Spira, 'The world economy, external debt and prospects for development financing', in *World Development*, February 1979, p128.

13 In this article black Africa refers to sub-Saharan Africa other than the Republic of South Africa.

14 H F Weiss, *Political protest in the Congo*, Princeton, 1967, p291.

15 D Agodo, *The determinants of US private manufacturing investments in Africa*, Ph D thesis, Northwestern University, Illinois, 1946, p1. Figures on direct investments are of limited value as they include not only new capital flows but also reinvested profits.

16 H Hveem, 'The extent and type of direct foreign investment in Africa', in Widstrand, op cit, p70.

17 Ibid, p66.

18 R Bailey, *Africa's industrial future*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1977, p3.

19 From Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), *Survey of economic conditions in Africa*, 1972.

20 International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Annual Report 1978*, p11. According to this report real GDP in Africa grew by 2.2 per cent in 1977.

cent annually. In 1977, it actually fell by 0.8 per cent.²¹ For the 80 per cent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa whose survival depends directly on agriculture the agrarian problem transcends all concern with growth in GDP.

Recurrent shortages of domestic supplies have led to increasing reliance on imported foods. The result has been a net trade deficit in major food products of almost \$1300 million per year in the 'seventies.²² This deficit, part of a mounting trade imbalance with the imperialist countries, has been financed through borrowing. A massive influx of private and state loans from the advanced capitalist world has had the effect of cushioning Africa from the full impact of the crisis. To explain why the imperialist nations have been prepared to lend vast amounts to Africa we have to look at the effects of the crisis on the world economy.

THE CRISIS AND IMPERIALISM

The present world recession has thrown into sharp relief the main features of the imperialist epoch.²³ Attempting to overcome the crisis capitalists have tried to expand accumulation in the more profitable parts of the world, beyond the borders of the imperialist countries. While investment has been stagnant in the OECD²⁴ countries there has been a steady flow of capital to the backward capitalist world. Capital can secure higher profit rates in these countries because of the lower organic composition of capital: a given investment can exploit more living labour in proportion to the machinery employed. The existence of a large pool of unemployed workers and the maintenance of brutally oppressive living and working conditions also ensure lower wages than in the imperialist heartlands.

The crisis has stimulated economic nationalism. The capitalist class of each nation has sought to solve its prob-

lems at the expense of rival national capitals. Growing imperialist conflict is expressed in a fierce battle over export markets and sources of raw materials. Each national bourgeoisie relies on the state to strengthen its competitive position – to protect home markets, underwrite exports and finance foreign investment. Every imperialist power hopes to capture a larger share of the markets of Latin America, Asia and Africa.

Cheap raw materials are essential in order to limit the rise in the organic composition of capital and hence modify the effects of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.²⁵ This is why the imperialist nations are desperate to establish control over raw material sources. This year's *Strategic Survey* published by the International Institute for Strategic Studies noted that the most serious security challenge facing the West in the 'eighties is: 'How to ensure the supply, from an unstable Third World, of the raw materials on which its economic well-being, domestic stability and political cohesion have come to depend'.²⁶ This is only one of the reasons why the imperialist powers depend on the continued exploitation and oppression of the backward capitalist world. Another is that the export of capital has played a crucial role in delaying the descent into a slump.

Although the rate of profit was declining in the 'sixties, the mass of profits continued to rise. Thus the tendency of the rate of profit to fall was not apparent to individual capitalist enterprises. Table 6 illustrates this tendency during the period 1956 to 1976. But the massive increase in production during the 'sixties, which was stimulated by state intervention and the extension of credit, could only delay the full effects of the capitalist crisis. The drastic fall in profitability in the late 'sixties could no longer be offset by a further extension of credit. The full extent of the crisis of capitalism was brought to the surface by the 1974 oil crisis.

Table 6 Rate of return in manufacturing ²⁷

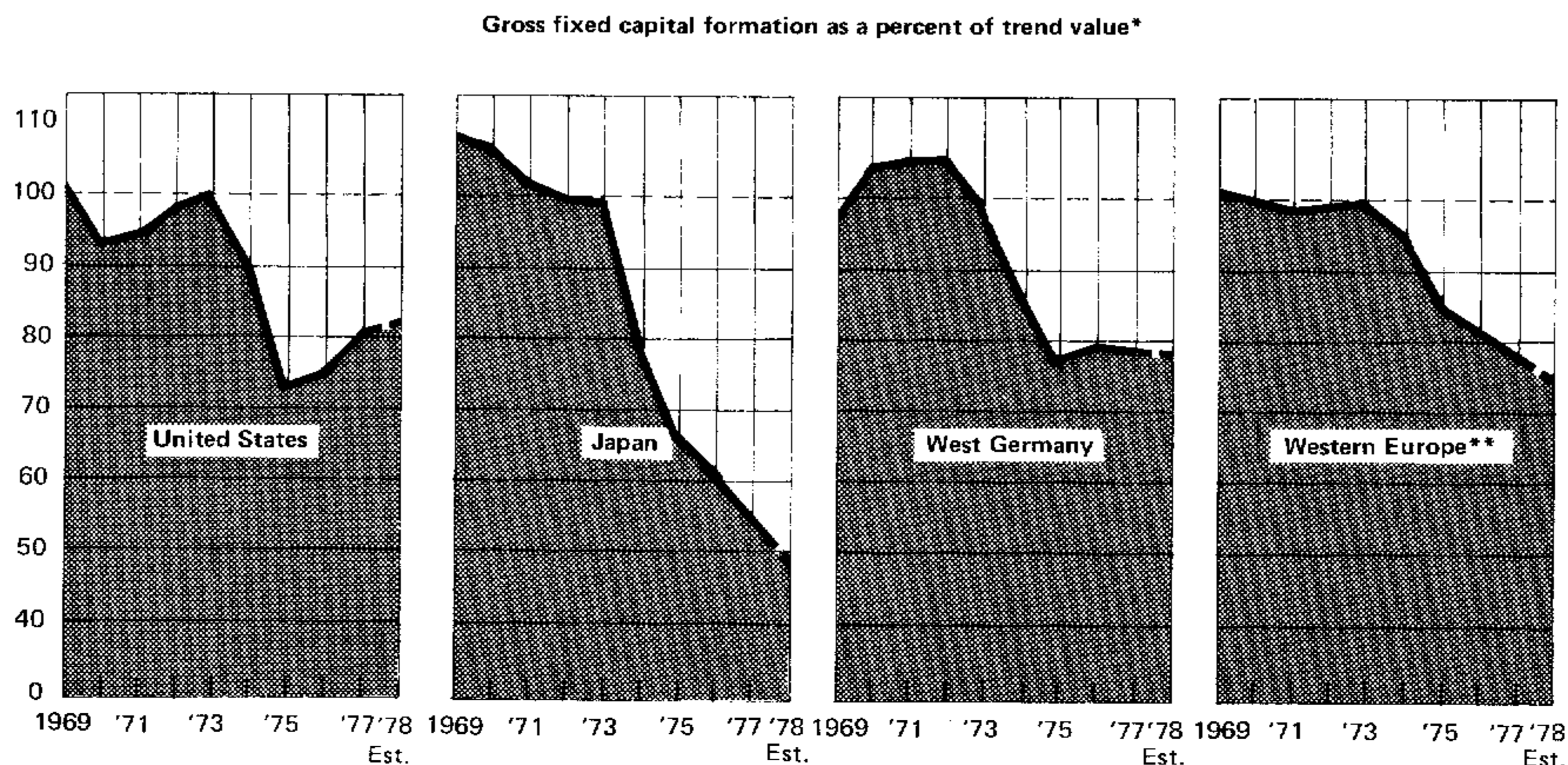
1955=100

	Canada		United States			Japan		Germany			Italy		United Kingdom	
	GR	NR	GR	NR	GR	NR	NR	GR	NR	GR	NR	NR	GR	NR
1956	103.6	103.2	88.4	84.5	106.5	108.4	95.0	91.6	94.5	94.5	91.9	88.8		
1957	89.6	86.9	82.2	75.5	131.7	118.1	92.1	86.5	89.8	89.6	91.2	85.2		
1958	83.4	75.9	68.5	58.3	122.1	112.8	90.1	84.2	85.2	86.9	89.7	81.6		
1959	85.0	78.3	84.6	80.2	130.2	119.2	92.1	85.2	90.6	95.9	94.1	85.7		
1960	79.3	71.9	90.9	88.3	164.8	137.8	91.3	82.6	93.8	101.4	100.7	92.3		
1961	77.2	69.9	86.7	84.5	165.3	135.1	85.4	75.2	93.0	98.6	89.0	77.5		
1962	82.9	77.5	92.9	93.3	146.9	124.9	76.3	64.3	85.9	87.6	81.6	68.4		
1963	85.0	80.2	97.1	99.7	145.5	123.7	71.3	58.5	75.8	71.8	85.3	71.9		
1964	88.1	83.8	102.5	106.7	146.7	122.1	76.7	63.7	65.6	57.2	89.0	76.5		
1965	80.0	73.1	112.4	119.2	130.7	113.9	79.2	65.6	71.1	66.9	86.8	73.5		
1966	75.6	67.2	114.1	118.9	133.7	115.8	70.8	56.3	79.7	80.7	77.9	63.8		
1967	69.9	60.5	101.7	100.3	148.7	125.5	70.4	56.3	79.7	80.0	76.5	62.2		
1968	75.6	67.2	102.1	99.7	159.3	132.2	80.4	68.5	80.5	81.4	76.5	62.2		
1969	74.6	66.4	90.9	85.1	157.8	130.0	78.3	66.6	82.0	84.1	74.3	59.2		
1970	64.8	54.5	74.7	64.1	155.3	120.7	71.3	58.5	79.7	79.3	64.7	49.0		
1971	66.3	56.5	77.2	68.2	138.7	109.5	64.2	50.2	68.8	64.8	63.2	47.4		
1972	71.5	63.2	84.6	78.4	126.1	100.5	57.9	43.1	70.3	68.3	63.2	47.4		
1973	79.3	73.5	85.9	80.5	112.6	86.6	56.7	41.5			54.4	38.8		
1974	80.3	73.9	75.1	64.7	90.5	81.5	55.8	40.8			41.2	24.5		
1975	69.9	61.3	80.5	74.1	91.5	82.9	48.8	32.2			33.1	14.8		
1976	65.8	55.7	91.3	89.8			52.9	36.7			32.4	14.3		

GR: Gross rate of return

NR: Net rate of return

Graph 1 Investment in the developed world has plunged far below recent trends²⁸



Index, 1963-73 trend = 100

*Trend values based on average 1963-73 capital formation growth rates: US 4.2%, Japan 13.4%, West Germany 4.5%, other West Europe 5.6%.

** Less West Germany

Since 1973, the tendency of capitalism to stagnate in the epoch of imperialism has become increasingly clear. Facing a crisis of profitability, the capitalist class cannot maintain industrial investment. Every new investment becomes a decision of strategic importance for the survival of the individual firm. Despite the availability of money-capital, the captains of industry have been reluctant to take up credit — there are few areas of investment that are profitable. The resulting fall in the level of investment can be seen in Graph 1.

The anti-crisis measures taken by the imperialist powers have failed to halt the tendency towards recession. Attacks launched on the living standards of the Western working class have been insufficient to restore the conditions for capital accumulation. Attempts to reflate the American, West German and Japanese economies have failed. Despite the US government pumping \$70-80 billion into the economy little restructuring of industry has taken place. The limited nature of the upturn of 1975-78 can be seen in Table 7. During the years 1974-78 there has been a decline in the rate of productivity growth and an increase in unemployment. By 1979 most bourgeois observers were predicting a deepening of the recession.

way: '(1) the concentration of production and capital has developed to such a high stage that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life; (2) the merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital", of a financial oligarchy; (3) the export of capital as distinguished from the export of commodities acquires exceptional importance; (4) the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, and (5) the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed'. V I Lenin, 'Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism', *Collected Works (CW)* 22, p266. All references are to V I Lenin, *CW*, Fourth Edition, Moscow, 1972.

24 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, which includes representatives of the advanced capitalist countries of Europe, North America, and the Far East.

25 The importance of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall in the genesis of the capitalist crisis is explored in 'The recession: capitalist offensive and the working class', *Revolutionary Communist Papers*, No 3, July 1978, pp8-10.

26 Cited in 'West's raw materials under threat', *Financial Times*, 16 May 1979.

27 Table 6 taken from 'The problem of industrial investment', *The OECD Observer*, No 97, March 1979, p18. The crisis of profitability in Britain is recognised by the *Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin*, Vol 19, No 2, June 1979. This report notes: 'Pre and post-tax measures of the real rate of return changed little between 1977 and 1978; and, as in the case of the share of profits in net domestic income, they are still very depressed in comparison with the years before 1977', *ibid*, p183.

28 Graph 1 taken from 'New world economic order', *Business Week*, 24 July 1978, p70.

21 UN, *World Economic Survey* 1977, 1978, Tables 1 and 2.

22 Cited in *New African*, February 1979, p90.

23 Lenin summarised the five basic features of imperialism in this

Table 7 The latest cycle²⁹

	UNEMPLOYMENT*			PRODUCTIVITY+		
	1973	1978†	Change 1973 to 1978	Average annual growth 1964 to 1973	Average annual growth 1974 to 1978	Average annual decline in growth between periods
UK	2.8	6.8	+4.0	3.2‡	0.8‡	-2.4‡
US	4.7	5.9	+1.2	1.8	0.1	-1.7
Germany	0.9	3.7	+2.8	4.7	3.2	-1.5
France	2.6	5.8	+3.2	4.5	3.0	-1.5
Japan	1.3	2.5	+1.2	8.9	3.4	-5.5
Canada	5.6	8.4	+2.8	2.4	0.6	-1.8
Italy	3.7	7.4	+3.7	5.4	1.1	-4.3
Sweden	2.5	2.6	+0.1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

*On common OECD definitions

+GNP divided by employment

‡Excluding North Sea oil

†Third quarter

n.a. not available

As a result of the interruption of capital investment a significant proportion of money-capital lay idle. Petrodollars, oil revenues deposited in the West by OPEC countries, further increased the available quantity of money-capital. These funds were exported on a large scale. There was a notable increase of direct investment in backward capitalist countries by the imperialist powers, particularly Japan and West Germany. These two relatively strong economies experienced the crisis of profitability later than their competitors: they only began to export capital in large amounts in the late 'sixties. In 1960 these countries accounted for only 10 per cent of the total foreign direct investment in backward countries – by 1976 this figure had risen to 24 per cent. This is shown in Table 8.

Table 8 Growth of private direct foreign investment flows to developing countries, 1960 and 1976³⁰

	1960		1976	
	\$million	% of total	\$million	% of total
United States	667	38	3119	41
Japan	65	4	1084	14
Germany	103	6	765	10
United Kingdom	226	15	723	10
France	279	16	246	3
Other countries	361	21	1656	22
Total countries	1741	100	7593	100

The spectacular flow of investment has been directed towards countries with an existing manufacturing base and infrastructure, or to energy producing areas. The lion's share of foreign investment went to countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Singapore and Taiwan.

However, foreign direct investment only accounts for around 35 per cent of the flow of capital to the backward capitalist countries. Since 1974 there has been an increasing number of loans.

Loans, both public and private, have slowed down the tendency towards stagnation. At a time when more

Table 9 Flow of capital to backward capitalist countries, 1975-76³¹

	\$billion	% of total
Direct investment*	9.0	35
Export credits	6.4	25
Bilateral financial flows	5.6	22
Multilateral financial flows	2.8	11
Other	1.8	7
Total	25.6	100

*includes flows to tax havens

money-capital was available, capitalists in the imperialist nations became less interested in borrowing.³² Western banks began to look for new outlets of loan capital. The surplus of money-capital in Western banks coincided with the increased need of developing countries for funds to cover their balance of payments deficits. This need became acute after 1974 when demand for primary goods fell sharply and raw material prices collapsed.

The increasing demand for loan capital was promptly met by the Western banks. They had a clear interest in lending large sums of money. Demand for domestic loans was stagnant and petrodollar holdings had to be profitably invested. The extension of credit also had a stimulating effect on exports.³³ Both public and private loans increased substantially between 1973 and 1978. The Western capital markets alone lent \$100 billion to developing countries.³⁴ International loans enabled backward capitalist countries to cover their deficits and stimulated exports from imperialist nations. The extension of credit helped to temper the tendency towards capitalist collapse. As one observer noted: 'Private commercial banks played an important role in recycling the OPEC surplus to developed and developing countries which incurred large deficits in the balance of payments since 1974, and thereby prevented an even deeper world recession'.³⁵

This recovery, stimulated by the export of capital, reinforced the bond between different parts of the world economy. Lenin's category *finance capital* is valuable in understanding this process.

Finance capital

For Lenin the development of finance capital was one of the distinguishing features of the imperialist epoch. Finance capital cannot be understood in its conventional usage of money or banking capital. Lenin wrote: 'The concentration of production; the monopolies arising therefrom; the merging or coalescence of the banks with industry — such is the history of the rise of finance capital and such is the content of that concept'.³⁶ The tendencies outlined by Lenin — the increasing concentration and centralisation of capital and the coalescence of banks with industry — have been considerably reinforced in the post-war period. Banks play a more active role in production and are often major shareholders in industry.³⁷ Table 10 shows the extent to which finance capital has developed in West Germany.

Table 10 Main bank holdings in West Germany's 350 largest companies³⁸

Company	Bank shareholding	Participation (per cent)
Daimler-Benz	Deutsche Bank	28
Metallgesellschaft	Dresdner Bank	over 25
Hochtief	Commerzbank	over 25
Philipp Holzmann	Deutsche Bank	over 25
	Westdeutsche Landesbank	over 25
Deutsche Babcock	BHF Bank	over 10
Preussag	West LB	over 25
Bifinger & Berger	Dresdner Bank	50
Sachs	Commerzbank	25.01
Orenstein & Koppel	BHF Bank	25
Suedzucker	Deutsche Bank	over 25
DUB Schultheiss	Dresdner Bank	over 25
	Bayernhypo Bank	over 25
Dlag	BHF Bank	3.96
	Berliner Bank	1.3
Bergmann Elektrizitaetswerke	Bayerische Vereinsbank	over 25
Nixdorf	Deutsche Bank	25
Nordsee	Dresdner Bank	over 25
Heidelberger Zement	Dresdner Bank	over 25
Eternit	Allgemeine Bank	19.6
Wayss & Freytag	Dresdner Bank	about 37
Karstadt	Commerzbank	over 25
	Deutsche Bank	over 25
Kaufhof	Commerzbank	over 25
	Dresdner Bank	over 25
Andreas-Noris-Zahn	Bayerische Vereinsbank	over 25
Hapag-Lloyd	Deutsche Bank	over 25
	Dresdner Bank	over 25

Note: The banks' participation in the top 350 companies is, in fact, very much larger. It takes the form, however, of participations in holding companies which own the shares. Ownership of the holding companies is split with other interests, although these are often other banks.

The growing coalescence of banks and industry has been paralleled by the growth of state investment in production. In relation to the backward capitalist world the growth of export credits, export insurance and what is called 'foreign aid' are important. The imperialist nation state provides credit for potential buyers of its exports. Weaker imperialist nations are especially dependent on low interest government credit to encourage export business. Export credits now form 25 per cent of the capital flow to backward countries. 'Foreign aid' and 'developmental assistance' are euphemisms for low interest loans. The imperialist country lends money, which is then used as payment for the commodities it sells. An American government report described how this system operates:

'United States exports to both Zaire and Zambia will be helped by the considerable increase in US developmental assistance to both countries in 1979. Zaire is stated to receive at least \$32 million in bilateral assistance this fiscal year, almost all of which will be tied to US sources of supply'.³⁹

With the intensification of the crisis the proportion of private bank loans has increased relative to public loans. The recent United Nations *World Economic Survey* noted this tendency:

'While external borrowing has played a major and effective role in . . . helping to cushion the economies of many deficit

29 Table 7 taken from *Financial Times*, 22 February 1979.

30 Cited in H Hughes, 'Debt and development: the role of foreign capital in economic growth', in *World Development*, Vol 7, No 2, February 1979, p104.

31 Ibid, p105.

32 According to Mandel there was a 12 per cent decline in the volume of credit in real terms taken up by American capitalists between September 1975 and September 1977. See E Mandel, *The second slump*, New Left Books, 1978, p95.

33 'The export of capital thus becomes a means of encouraging the export of commodities.' V I Lenin, op cit, p244.

34 Here it is worth noting that the extension of credit to the backward capitalist areas was paralleled by a similar flow of funds to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. These non-capitalist areas were able to raise \$50 billion on western capital markets during the years 1973-78. Hughes, op cit, p106.

35 C Hardy, 'Commercial bank lending to developing countries: supply constraints', *World Development*, Vol 7, No 2, February 1979, p190.

36 V I Lenin, op cit, p226. For a vulgar use of the category finance capital see D Yaffe, 'Imperialism, national oppression and the new petit bourgeoisie', in *Revolutionary Communist*, No 9, July 1979. In this journal the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG) attempts to reduce finance capital to banking capital. The flow of capital is explained as a phenomenon rising out of circulation: 'British banks have not grown out of nothing. They both foster and feed off the financial helplessness of the oppressed nations', *ibid*, p3. The flow of money capital which is an indication of the weakness of British imperialism is depicted as a sign of its strength. After noting the tremendous export of British capital, the RCG asks, 'can anyone now doubt the growing strength of British banking, and hence of British imperialism?', *ibid*, p2. The aim of this revisionist article is to obscure the fundamental antagonism between labour and capital in South Africa and to replace it with the populist anti-finance rhetoric of Stalinism. For a critique of this standpoint see 'Revisionism, imperialism and the state', *Revolutionary Communist Papers*, No 4, February 1979.

37 For a useful summary of the growing diversity of the activity of banks see 'Survey of world banking', Parts 1 and 2, *Financial Times*, 21 and 29 May 1979.

38 Table 10 taken from *Financial Times*, 9 April 1979.

39 Max Miles, 'Sub-Saharan African regions offer receptive markets', *Overseas Business Reports*, OBR-79-06, US Department of Commerce, March 1979, p3.

countries, its recent sharp growth has become a cause for concern. This has been aggravated by the rapid increase in the proportion of borrowing from private sources.⁴⁰

Since 1974 loans from private US banks to backward capitalist countries have increased by about 30 per cent each year. During the period 1970-75, profit from international loans accounted for 95 per cent of the increase in the total earnings of the 13 largest US banks. These banks now derive about half their total earnings from overseas lending.⁴¹ The same trend can be discerned among French banks. For example, during the last two years, foreign operations accounted for well over 50 per cent of the profits of the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas.⁴²

But this large-scale expansion in loans has also caused considerable concern to the banks. Their fear that debtors might default has increased since their recent experiences in Zaire, Peru and Turkey. To avoid precipitating a banking crash which would further destabilise the world monetary system, bankers have discreetly re-scheduled payments. Most 1978 credits to non-oil producing underdeveloped countries were no more than refinancing operations.⁴³ No wonder that more and more bankers are asking international institutions, such as the IMF, to guarantee 'bad risks'.

Despite the risks, bank loans continue to flow - even to the poorer backward capitalist countries. In the past five years these countries have received some \$120 billion from international banks.⁴⁴ The strengthening of imperialist rivalries has forced banks to continue to extend these loans, since none can afford to lose its share of the profits from overseas operations. As the head of the international department of a major bank put it, 'We are too competitive to forego profits in the interests of the health of a country'.⁴⁵

To many observers the main force behind the accelerating expansion of loans is the internal dynamic of the banking system. In the view of radical economist Ernest Mandel, 'inflation feeds the relative abundance of money-capital which the banks are able to provide. The scope of banking operations thus expands at an accelerated rate'.⁴⁶ It is true that an expansion in the volume of money-capital means more money for the banks to invest, just as it is true that banking capital strives to maximise its share of total surplus-value. However, the rapid expansion of credit in recent years cannot be explained by reference to the nature of the banking system. In the epoch of finance capital banks do not act merely as lenders of money-capital. Their fortunes are closely bound up in financing expansion in industries within which they have invested.

At a time of growing imperialist rivalry credit becomes an important means of concentrating the social power of one national capital against its competitors. In particular, credit is important in financing exports. Recently the *Financial Times* noted the role of export finance in opening up the Chinese market:

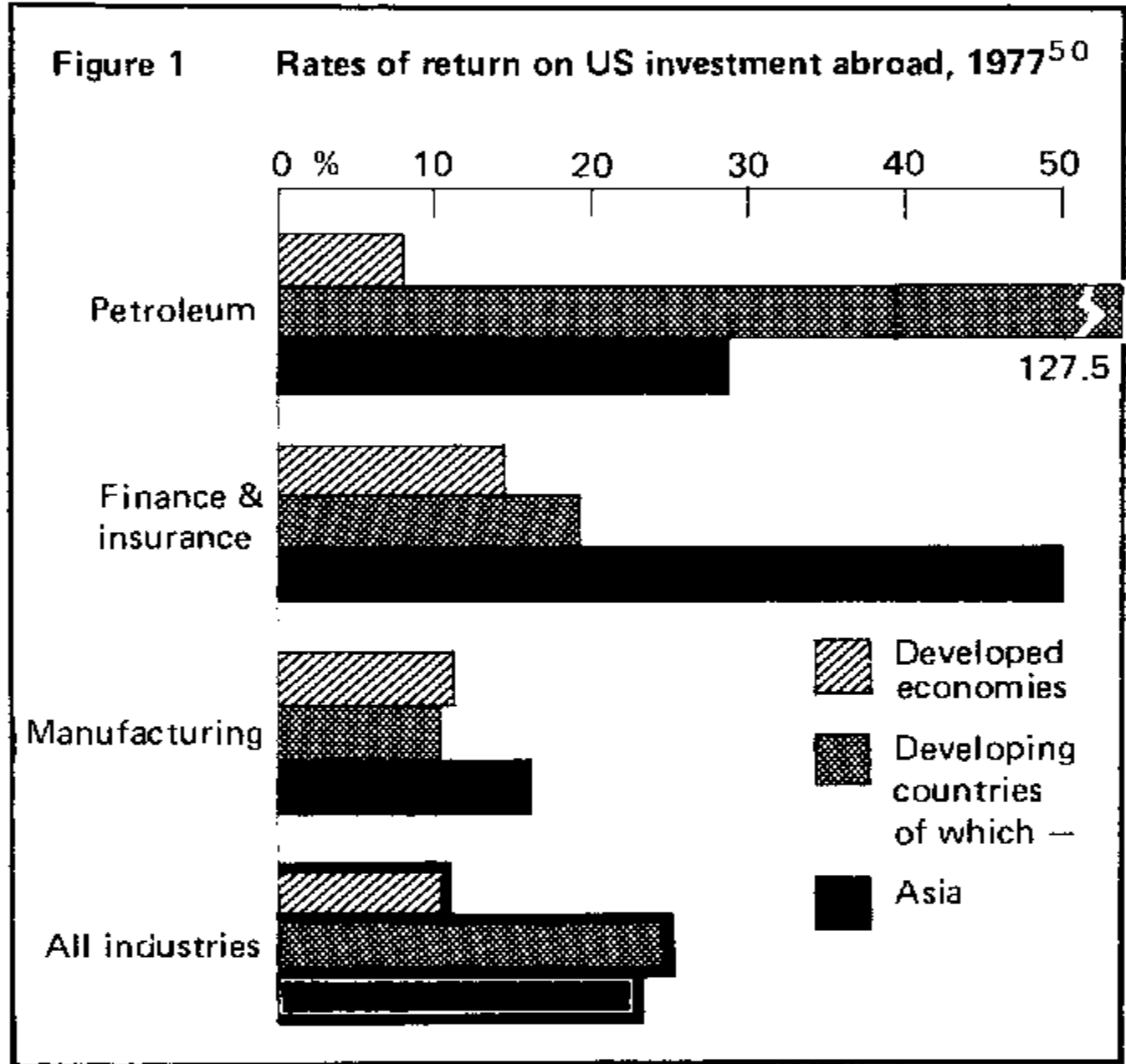
'For exporters everywhere the main event over the past year has been the opening up of a huge new market - China. The scramble to sign the first credit lines with China illustrated all too clearly how vital export finance is to the exporter trying to win new orders. At the same time it has confirmed how much international competition still exists on credit-terms despite the efforts to eliminate this self-defeating competition'.⁴⁷

This 'self-defeating competition' to provide credit at low interest rates is a process which capital cannot control. On the contrary this battle is a necessary response to the crisis. The survival of one capitalist depends on the destruction of others.

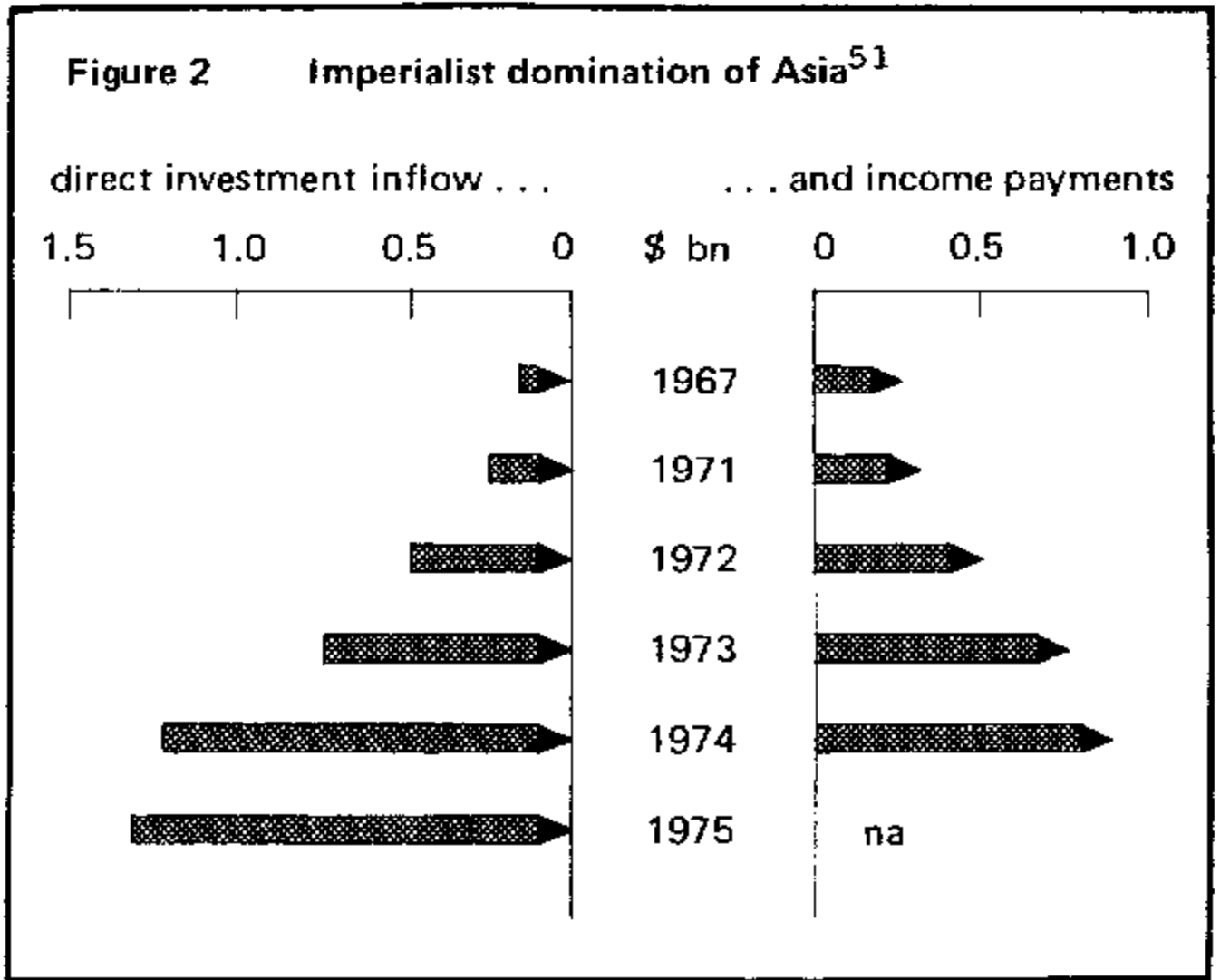
Today the intensity of the competitive struggle has forced even American capital to advance credit at low interest rates to boost its exports. Until recently American

capital had refused to offer export credit on the same attractive terms as its competitors. Indeed, it sharply criticised its fellow imperialists for virtually giving their loans away. Now all this has changed. Having failed to obtain a gentleman's agreement governing export credit competition, H K Allen, vice-chairman of the U S A Export-Import Bank, said in May 1979: 'It is time to take off the gloves, and we have done so'.⁴⁸ During the past six months the U S A has begun to offer export credit below its usual 7.25-8.25 per cent scale of interest rates.

The main effect of this expansion of finance capital has been to deepen the involvement of the imperialist powers in the economies of the backward capitalist countries. This involvement is fundamental to the continued expansion of capital. At a time when a further fall in exports would have disastrous consequences, credits to the backward capitalist countries serve as indirect subsidies to the exporters of the imperialist powers.⁴⁹ As profit rates fall the backward capitalist countries are vital outlets for profitable investment (see figure 1 for statistics on Asia).



Many investments in backward capitalist countries are highly profitable. In many cases repatriated earnings exceed the export of new capital. Recent figures for Asia are given in figure 2.



THE IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON AFRICA

Africa's growing debt

The flow of loan capital to the backward capitalist countries has been the major factor in the maintenance of their financial solvency. In 1978 the flow was sufficient to cover the \$25 billion balance of payments deficit of the

forced to default on its debt repayments on a number of occasions. By 1977 the financial problems of 20 of the African nations had become so acute that the IMF forced them to introduce harsh austerity measures.⁵⁷

The indebtedness of the African nations should not be seen as the result of a purely financial transaction reinforcing their inferior position in the world economy. The export of capital allows imperialism to influence the direction of the African economies and exercise an important measure of control over their wealth. While imperialism

Table 11 Developing countries in general and Africa: balance of payments summary⁵³

Country group and year	1974-77a (\$billion)				
	Balance of trade b	Balance of services and private transfers c	Balance on current account	Net capital flow d	Change in reserves
Developing countries					
1974	55.4	-16.3	37.9	-2.9	35.0
1975	12.4	-15.9	-3.5	11.5	8.0
1976	36.9	-21.7	15.2	4.1	19.3
1977	35.8	...	...	...	21.5
Africa					
1974	-1.9	-2.0	-3.9	4.2	0.3
1975	-7.4	-0.6	-8.0	7.7	-0.3
1976	-5.7	-1.2	-6.9	7.3	0.4
1977	-4.2	...	...	...	0.8

a Data for 1977 are preliminary.

b Exports, f.o.b. minus imports, c.i.f.

c The balance of services and private transfers is computed as the difference between the trade balance and the current account balance.

d Net capital inflow is computed residually as the difference between the balance financed by transaction in reserve assets and the current account balance. It includes government transfers, reported capital movement and errors and omissions.

world's poorer countries and, in addition, allowed them to increase their hard currency reserves by \$13 billion.⁵² Even Africa, the poorest among the backward capitalist regions, managed to obtain sufficient funds to cover the deficit on its trade and services account.

However, as the economic position of the backward capitalist countries continues to deteriorate, their ability ever to repay these vast debts becomes increasingly questionable. The recent rise in oil prices will add another \$5 billion to the annual fuel bill of the non-oil producing developing countries. As *The Economist* recently noted:

'The last rise in oil prices has increased the risk of losses in international lending by undermining the credit worthiness of existing borrowers.... Poor countries have been running to stand still. Their export earnings have roughly trebled over the past five years, but so has their external debt. While rising interest rates have pushed up the cost of servicing that debt.'⁵⁴

The debt problem of these countries demands that an increasing share of the surplus-value produced there be paid out as interest. The IMF estimates that in 1977 debt service payments were as much as 11.5 per cent of the total export revenue of the non-oil producing developing countries.⁵⁵

The debt servicing problem of the African nations is even more severe. In Ghana, for example, it is anticipated that 42 per cent of 1979 export earnings will either be repatriated as dividends or used to service the national debt.⁵⁶ Zaire, the most extreme African case, has been

40 UN, *World Economic Survey 1977*, pp1-3.

41 C Hardy, op cit, p190.

42 See 'Survey on France', *Financial Times*, 18 June 1979.

43 M S Wionczek, 'Editor's introduction', *World Development*, Vol 7, No 2, February 1979, p93.

44 See 'Home truths from Basle', *The Economist*, 16 June 1979, p83.

45 Cited in 'Bankers worried about loans to poorest countries', *Financial Times*, 20 December 1976.

46 E Mandel, op cit, p69.

47 See 'Export finance, the nations compete', *Financial Times*, 29 May 1979. The article continued: 'So intense is international credit competition that - with the exception until now of the US - exporters whatever their country of origin (despite their claims to the contrary) have generally been able to match each other's credit terms'.

48 'US get tough on export credits', *Financial Times*, 26 June 1979.

49 An estimated 28 per cent of total manufactured goods exports from industrialised countries go to developed countries. See World Bank, *Annual Report 1978*, p15.

50 'Survey of foreign investment in Asia', *The Economist*, 23 June 1979, p19.

51 Ibid.

52 See *The Economist*, 16 June 1979, p87.

53 UN, *World Economic Survey 1977*, op cit, pp1-47, 1-48.

54 *The Economist*, 16 June 1979, p83.

55 See Table 5 in A B Seira, 'The world economy, external debt and prospects for development financing', *World Development*, Vol 7, No 2, February 1979, p130.

56 'Report on Ghana', *New African*, June 1979, p85.

57 IMF, *Annual Report 1978*, p12.

extracts large profits from the export of capital, very little of these are used to develop the African economies: a considerable proportion is repatriated, while most of the rest is spent by the state on the import of foreign technology. Public sector investment, based largely on borrowed capital, accounted for a large share of African industrial investment in the 'seventies. However, most of this investment was in the infrastructure and the raw materials sector and thus did little to stimulate manufacturing industry.

The flow of capital to Africa encouraged imports but not capitalist development. Whereas the export of capital to the more developed backward capitalist countries in Latin America and Asia led to a considerable growth in the forces of production, African industry has stagnated. Light industry has been the only manufacturing sector to experience growth. According to the United Nations in 1977, 'Africa's growing output of food, beverages and tobacco (11.6 per cent) was the main springboard for the growth recorded by light manufacturing'.⁵⁸ The output of heavy industry in Africa has in fact declined — in 1977 production of basic metals, machinery and equipment was cut back; the chemical industry was stagnant.

Table 12 Selected economic indicators for developing and industrialised countries — regional summary⁵⁹

Region	'61-'65	'66-'73	'74	'75	'76	'77(P)
Developing countries						
Real rate of growth:						
Total GNP	5.9	6.6	5.5	5.0	6.4	5.4
Agricultural production	3.0	2.7	3.8	5.2	3.2	1.5
Manufacturing production	8.8	9.5	6.9	2.5	8.4	—
Population	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.3
GNP per capita	3.4	4.1	3.0	2.5	3.9	3.1
Gross investment	8.0	8.2	17.0	3.4	5.5	—
Share in GNP:						
Gross investment	19.9	21.4	23.9	24.6	24.6	—
Gross national saving	18.3	20.4	26.1	23.7	25.5	—
Africa South of the Sahara						
Real rate of growth:						
Total GNP	3.8	4.5	8.6	3.0	5.2	3.0
Agricultural production	3.0	0.9	6.9	2.0	1.0	3.2
Manufacturing production	9.4	8.5	8.6	-0.1	2.9	—
Population	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
GNP per capita	1.3	1.9	5.7	0.2	2.4	0.3
Gross investment	6.3	6.1	18.9	10.5	12.9	—
Share in GNP:						
Gross investment	15.9	17.1	19.0	23.0	24.0	—
Gross national saving	11.1	12.6	22.3	17.4	22.8	—

Until 1974 manufacturing output had been growing at around 9 per cent each year. In 1975, however, manufacturing production declined; the following year it increased by a mere 2.9 per cent. Gross National Product (GNP) per capita, on the other hand, had rarely grown at more

than 2 per cent per year; in 1975 and again in 1977 it grew scarcely at all.⁶⁰ The condition of agriculture is even worse. output and productivity are both declining. This has serious implications for the African economy as a whole because revenue from cash crops accounts for 60 per cent of Africa's total income, and much of African industry is engaged in the processing of locally produced raw materials.

Foreign investment in Africa

Because it receives a relatively small proportion of total foreign investment, Africa seems at first sight to be of little importance for imperialism. Although the quantity of direct investment in Africa has increased, its share of the capital exported to developing regions has decreased from 19 per cent in 1967 to 13 per cent in 1976.⁶¹ With the exception of oil-rich Nigeria, black Africa has not experienced the rapid accumulation of capital characteristic of Brazil, Mexico, South Korea and the Philippines.

However, foreign investment has been crucial for the imperialist domination of the profitable sectors of the African economy. Although only 20 per cent of capital exports go to manufacturing industry this has been sufficient to ensure that the imperialist powers retain the leading position in industry.⁶² This is not simply due to the small-scale and backward character of most African industry. Foreign investment is concentrated in the most dynamic and profitable sectors; its control of the production process is guaranteed by the provision of share capital by the African states. For example, in the Ivory Coast, French imperialism owns 53 per cent of capital in the commercial sector but only 30 per cent in the industrial sector. Nevertheless, this is adequate for French firms to control 45 per cent of business turnover and to secure 81 per cent of all profits.⁶³ The profitability of French capital is underwritten by huge state investments. During the years 1976-78, 80 per cent of all investment in the Ivory Coast was carried out by public corporations.⁶⁴

The plunder of raw materials

'Africa's potential is tied to our own... Africa's mineral and agricultural wealth already provides a substantial portion of our own imports of such commodities as copper, cobalt, and manganese for our industries, and cocoa and coffee for our homes. And Africa supplies 38 per cent of our crude petroleum imports.' (Cyrus Vance)⁶⁵

Africa's rich deposits of strategic minerals are crucial for the survival of imperialism. The imperialist powers depend on Africa for obtaining minerals such as chrome (Malagasy Republic, Sudan), cobalt (Zambia, Zaire, Morocco), manganese (Gabon, Ghana, Morocco, Zaire), tantalum/columbite (Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Zaire), tungsten (Rwanda, Zaire), and vanadium (Namibia). The importance of South Africa alone can be gauged by the fact that this country has rich deposits of chromium, manganese, platinum and vanadium.

Recently competition between the imperialist powers for access to these vital raw materials has intensified. In 33 African countries international consortia are searching for fresh deposits of oil.⁶⁶ The huge investments required for such exploration demand the participation of industrial and banking capital from a number of countries. A holding company, usually with majority or near majority participation by the African states, is established to undertake

the venture. The imperialist countries are thus able to obtain a large proportion of the capital they require from local sources. For example, the development of Niger's uranium reserves at Akoula mine was initiated by Japan's Overseas Uranium Resources Development Company (a combine of over 30 Japanese firms), the government of Niger and the French Atomic Energy Commission. Likewise, a consortium of Japanese, German and French capital is hunting for uranium deposits.

The imperialist powers have been able to secure control of other mineral deposits through minority financial participation. Although the nationalisation of the copper industry in 1969 gave the Zambian government a 51 per cent financial holding, Anglo-American was able to retain control over production through a management contract which left technology and marketing firmly in its hands. Indeed, nationalisation relieved Anglo-American of the burden of raising its own working capital; it continues to be a highly profitable venture. Increasingly, mining companies are looking to the African states to provide substantial investments before they commit their own capital. In many cases the African state must turn to Western capital markets to raise the necessary finance. Once this is secured, the Western companies set up joint ventures with a public corporation. A recent example involved a syndicated loan to the Zambian government for the purchase of mining equipment. This was arranged by five of the world's largest banks: Citicorp, Chase Manhattan, Standard Chartered, Barclays International and Grindlays International.⁶⁷

The purpose of capital exports, whether in the form of banking capital or direct investment, is to ensure greater control over industry and raw materials for the imperialist powers. Public sector investments subsidise foreign capital and leave the black African countries deeper in debt.

IMPERIALIST RIVALRY IN AFRICA

The world crisis of capitalism has undermined the equilibrium between the imperialist powers which, since the Second World War, has existed under the hegemony of the USA. The decline of US imperialism has unleashed a struggle for a new redivision of the world. Recently the imperialist powers have redoubled their efforts to secure new spheres of influence in Africa.

Imperialist expansion does not simply take the form of foreign direct investment. The indigenous state raises capital on the international money markets as a prelude to its collaboration with foreign capitalists. The co-operation of the local bourgeoisie in the exploitation of the working class reduces the need for imperialism to resort to political coercion. African capitalism's dependence on the export of raw materials ensures that the subordination of the local bourgeoisie to imperialism takes place largely through the movement of capital on the world market.

The African bourgeoisie cannot even use its own currency to purchase imports. It is forced to purchase the hard currencies of the imperialist powers over whose exchange rates it has no control. One observer noted that 'African economies have been known to incur foreign exchange losses running into millions in just one day's fluctuations on the international currency markets, with no recourse to compensation of any sort'.⁶⁸ In the past imperialism has been able to enforce its policies through international agencies like the IMF. The terms of loans granted by such bodies require African countries not only to repay

their debts but to carry out policies prescribed by foreign bankers. However, as imperialist rivalries intensify this form of pressure is not always sufficient to safeguard imperialist interests. The resuscitation of colonial methods of political control is increasingly required.

The tendency towards the re-imposition of direct political control has been particularly evident in the imperialist conflict over raw materials. Although mining companies often form international consortia to spread the risk involved in their investments, imperialist powers are nevertheless becoming extremely concerned about losing their sources of raw materials to competitors. This explains the trend towards military intervention in Africa. The return to gun-boat diplomacy was made clear recently when former American Energy Secretary Schlesinger warned that the USA would be prepared to intervene militarily if its Middle East oil supplies were disrupted.⁶⁹

Markets for imperialist exports

As inter-imperialist rivalries intensify, even a relatively small export market such as Africa becomes important. In fact, Africa has increased its role as an export market during the last five years of recession through state borrowing on the world money markets. The value of exports of commodities to black Africa increased from \$38.3 billion in 1975 to \$49.9 billion in 1977.⁷⁰

In the struggle for the African export market Britain, one of the most rapidly declining imperialist powers, has lost out to its more dynamic competitors. Although traditionally Britain was the main supplier of exports to Africa, by 1972 its market share had dropped to 14 per cent. Since then Britain has lost further ground to Japan, France and West Germany. By 1977 it supplied barely 10 per cent of the market, in third place behind France and West Germany.⁷¹

In recent years Japanese exports to Africa have on average risen at the high annual rate of eight per cent. In

58 UN, *World Economic Survey 1977*, op cit.

59 World Bank, *Annual Report 1978*, p118.

60 Ibid.

61 'A survey of foreign investment in Asia', *The Economist*, 23 June 1979, p6.

62 Foreign ownership of industry is more important in Africa than in any other continent. See, for example, L Rood, 'Foreign investment in African development', *Journal of African Studies*, Vol 5, No 1, 1978, p20.

63 These estimates were made by the Banque Ivoirienne des Donnees Financieres, see *African Business*, May 1979, p27.

64 Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Quarterly economic review of Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Niger, Upper Volta*, second quarter 1979, pp7-8. This massive state spending was financed through borrowing on the Western capital markets. In January this year it was reported that the Ivory Coast was saddled with a debt of over \$4000 million, *Financial Times*, 23 January 1979.

65 Quoted in T Shaw and M Grievy, 'The political economy of resources: Africa's future in the global environment', in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 16, No 1, 1978, p6.

66 *Marches Tropicaux*, 6 October 1978, pp2640-41. This survey shows that virtually every oil company is involved in this search.

67 *Standard Chartered Review*, January 1979, p7.

68 'The dollar crisis continues', *Africa*, June 1979, p95.

69 *The Economist*, 3 March 1979.

70 UN, *World Economic Survey 1977*, op cit, table 8, p45.

71 'Changing trends in Britain's trade', *Standard Chartered Review*, op cit, pp5-6.

1977 8.3 per cent of Japanese exports went to Africa, representing a trade surplus of \$4.5 billion.⁷² Much of this is due to Japan's success in breaking into the African market for consumer durables and machinery. Japan's share of the automobile market, for instance, rose from three to eight per cent during the 'seventies.⁷³ The growth of US exports to Africa has been less spectacular. In 1977 commodities worth \$2.2 billion were exported to black Africa and \$1.5 billion to South Africa.⁷⁴ The most dynamic imperialist exporter to Africa has been West Germany. It has established a dominant position in South Africa as well as showing every sign of increasing its share of exports to black Africa.

While West German exports have been increasing dramatically, the leading imperialist exporter to Africa is France. It owes this position to the strong links it has maintained with its former colonies. Despite formal independence in the French-speaking African nations, France has obtained highly advantageous trading arrangements. Many former French colonies are members of the franc zone; their currencies are readily convertible into French money. As a result the two-way trade between France and Africa had reached \$10 billion by 1978.⁷⁵ This explains why France is the most interventionist of all the imperialist powers in Africa. 13 000 French troops are spread across the continent to defend its imperialist interests.

South Africa: the new imperialist state

Imperialist domination in black Africa can only be fully understood by examining the role which South Africa plays for world capitalism. Apartheid, the brutal form of capitalist rule in South Africa, has created a haven for profitable investment. South Africa's importance for imperialism originally derived from its immense natural wealth. But it is not merely a source of raw materials or a sphere for investment. Massive capital inflows in the post-war period created the conditions for the development of a modern industrial sector: South Africa has become an imperialist nation in its own right. The ruthless oppression of the African population gives South Africa the appearance of an oppressed nation. These oppressive features should not obscure the fundamental character of South African capitalism. South Africa itself plays an important role in enforcing imperialist domination in southern and central Africa. For this reason imperialism will take every step necessary to guarantee security in this important region.

Despite its decline as an imperialist power, Britain continues to increase its investments in South Africa. It owns nearly 60 per cent of all foreign investment — assets worth an estimated £5 billion. Net earnings of British companies in South Africa rose by 202 per cent between 1972 and 1976.⁷⁶ This compares with increased earnings of 170 per cent in Western Europe and 129 per cent in North America. Other imperialist powers are also increasing their South African investments. By 1977 West German investment totalled 609 million deutschmarks (DM),⁷⁷ while US investments amounted to \$1.7 billion. A recent survey shows that US corporations plan to increase their investments in South Africa by about 20 per cent in 1979.⁷⁸

Foreign direct investments are only a small portion of the capital exported to South Africa. Bank loans and portfolio investments have also flooded in. As in other parts of Africa, British banks play a key role in providing funds for local industry. In June 1978 net UK bank loans to South Africa amounted to £1.2 billion.⁷⁹ US banks have also stepped up their loans — in 1978 US private banks

loaned more than \$2.5 billion to South Africa.⁸⁰ The IMF also consistently lends capital to the South African state. In 1976-77 it lent \$450 million in recognition of its military role in Angola.

Many of these loans are used by state corporations to import technology and raw materials. In addition, West German loans in the form of guarantees for commodity exports to South Africa rose almost fivefold between June 1976 and May 1978.⁸¹ Since 1976 West German bank loans to the South African state-run Strategic Oil Fund have amounted to DM221 million.⁸² These loans demonstrate world imperialism's support for South Africa's drive to become self-sufficient in oil.

Over the past decade the leading role of British capitalism in South Africa has been undermined by the intensification of imperialist rivalries. In particular, West German capital exports have risen faster than those of Britain, allowing West Germany to increase its commodity exports at a faster rate. West Germany has become South Africa's biggest supplier of imports and has been able to capture a large share of Britain's market for industrial plant and machinery.⁸³ The dominant position of West Germany as a supplier of manufactured goods owes much to a DM5 billion investment made by 400 West German firms in South Africa.⁸⁴

The declining position of British imperialism can also be seen in the tendering for contracts to supply the extension of the Sasol oil-from-coal projects. This scheme, the largest industrial construction project ever undertaken in South Africa, is designed to provide a buffer against any future oil sanctions. The major contracts were won by French and West German and, to a lesser extent, by Japanese capital. The principal management contract was won by Fluor Corporation of the USA. British participation in this much sought-after project is restricted to the provision of fire heaters and pumps.⁸⁵

South Africa has become an active imperialist power on the African continent. Its growing economic stake in black Africa recently led it to intervene militarily in Angola. South Africa plays a critical role in the internal economic life of Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. In particular Lesotho serves South Africa as a base for penetrating other African markets and the EEC. As the South African *Financial Mail* noted:

'Lesotho is holding out some juicy carrots to investors... [including] preferential access to many lucrative foreign markets. Thanks to trade pacts, such as the Lome Convention, Lesotho exports are entitled to lower customs duties than those from South Africa.'⁸⁶

The growing strength of South African capitalism is demonstrated in Malawi where it has overtaken Britain as the major supplier of imported goods.⁸⁷ In 1978 South African exports to 25 black African countries were estimated at \$521 million.⁸⁸

Despite the growing challenge of South Africa to the interests of other imperialist powers in black Africa, its role as a supplier of raw materials and as a sphere for extremely profitable investment gives it great importance for world imperialism. The imperialist powers have no qualms about supporting the apartheid regime. The hypocritical resolutions concerning human rights, much favoured by Western statesmen, give way before the quest for profits. As Cecil Parkinson, Minister of State for Trade, told the British House of Commons: 'Our bilateral trade with South Africa is not something that is peripheral to our economy, it is of central importance.'⁸⁹ The USA is likewise concerned to maintain the apartheid regime. One American observer recently warned of the consequences of a successful struggle against apartheid, not only for the world economy, but also for the 'fabric of race relations' in the USA

'But one American interest overrides all others — the avoidance of a violent racial confrontation in South Africa. Such a confrontation would not only polarize the African continent and dangerously exacerbate our relations with the Soviet Union. It could also put a major strain on the delicate fabric of race relations within the US.'⁹⁰

Imperialism looks upon South Africa as an embarrassing but very profitable sphere for investment and an essential source of raw materials. It also recognises South Africa as a useful guarantor of capital relations throughout Southern Africa. The imperialist powers would prefer South Africa to adopt a more acceptable public image — but *not* at the expense of the highly profitable exploitation of the South African working class. Even these minor disagreements are quickly forgotten in the face of the threat posed by the anti-imperialist movement.

How the imperialists line up

The undermining of French and British imperialism's dominance in Africa has been particularly noticeable in the banking sector. American banks have bought into two of the three largest British banks that once dominated English-speaking Africa; Citicorp now owns 49 per cent of National Grindlays, and Chase Manhattan has purchased 15 per cent of the shares of the Standard Bank. French banks have also seen their influence decline. Forty per cent of the shares of the Banque de l'Afrique Occidentale, one of the two big French banks in West Africa during the colonial era, are now owned by Citicorp.⁹¹

Japanese imperialism has not been slow to take advantage of the favourable conditions in Africa. While its investments are still relatively small they tripled between 1974 and 1976. At \$501 million they represent 3.1 per cent of its worldwide investments.⁹² One of Japan's primary concerns has been to secure a steady supply of raw materials and minerals. This has been achieved both through direct investment and bank loans. A recently concluded contract means that in return for a \$50 million long-term loan to the Zambian copper industry Mitsui and Mitsubishi are able to buy around 120 000 tons of copper a year.⁹³

As already indicated, West German involvement in Africa, both in terms of the export of commodities and of capital, has increased steadily throughout the 'seventies. One of the most important recent developments has been the establishment of a new division of labour between West Germany and South Africa. West Germany provides sophisticated technology for South Africa — notably in the field of uranium enrichment — and in exchange receives essential raw materials. West Germany has also made major inroads into its competitors' markets.

France, and to a greater extent Britain, have both lost ground to the other imperialist powers since the onset of the crisis. Nevertheless, Africa continues to be crucial for these two nations. Britain remains South Africa's primary export market, taking a quarter of its exports. Massive investments in South Africa guarantee a continuous supply of strategic minerals. The table below illustrates the importance of black Africa and South Africa for many leading British companies. (See Table 13)

As for France, its interests have been challenged particularly by West Germany. In Senegal, French holdings have dropped from 85 per cent of foreign investment in 1959 to around 55 per cent today.⁹⁴ However, French imperialism remains extremely dependent on Africa and has fought hard to defend its privileged position. Recently France has begun to expand its extremely profitable investments in black Africa. An indication of the profit-

ability of such ventures can be gained from the fact that on the Ivory Coast French companies retrieve the full value of their investments in as little as five years.⁹⁵

The relative importance of Africa to France's competitive position accounts for its increasingly interventionist approach. During the 'seventies France has emerged as the gendarme of imperialism in Africa. In the past three years French troops have fought in Chad, Mauritania and Zaire. France's military presence is not restricted to the 13 000 troops stationed in five African bases; it also has 2000 military instructors throughout the continent, and a special intervention force stationed in south west France.⁹⁶ At a recent conference of the 22 French-speaking African nations in Rwanda President Giscard d'Estaing indicated the direction of French involvement with his proposal for new 'collective security' arrangements.⁹⁷ While France is not the only imperialist power with troops in Africa, it is more interventionist than its rivals. Its aggressive raid into Zaire, at the expense of Belgian capital, shows just how dependent France is on the outcome of the struggle for Africa.⁹⁸

France retains considerable influence over its former colonies and controls a number of them through puppet regimes. The most glaring manifestation of this occurs in the Central African Empire (CAE). The brutal Bokassa regime is maintained through direct French assistance. France has encouraged Bokassa to run the CAE as his personal fiefdom, providing finance for his grotesque and lavish coronation ceremony. Although Emperor Bokassa has

- 72 Japan External Trade Organization, *White paper on international trade*, Japan, 1978, p221.
- 73 S. Plummer, 'Japan's growing African interest', *New African Development*, August 1977, p851.
- 74 'A sharper focus for US policy in Africa', *Fortune*, 14 August 1978, p134.
- 75 *Business Week*, 26 June 1978, p55.
- 76 'British business at stake in Africa', *Investors Chronicle*, 3 November 1978, p348.
- 77 'Le commerce germano-africain en 1977', *Marches Tropicaux*, 30 June 1978, p1790.
- 78 *African Business*, February 1979, p16.
- 79 *Investors Chronicle*, op cit, p349.
- 80 'Vorster banks on continuing dollar support from Carter', *New African*, May 1978, p143.
- 81 'Oiling apartheid', *New African*, June 1978, p88.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 'Trade with Germany: leaders of the pack', *Financial Mail*, Johannesburg, 2 March 1979, p677.
- 84 *Der Spiegel*, No 9, 1979.
- 85 'French, Germans in Sasol deals', *Financial Times*, 10 July 1979.
- 86 'Investments in Lesotho, South Africans come hither', *Financial Mail*, Johannesburg, 4 May 1979.
- 87 *African Research Bulletin*, Economic, financial and technical series, Vol 16, No 2, 31 March 1979, p5017.
- 88 *International Herald Tribune*, 2 April 1979.
- 89 *Financial Times*, 26 May 1979.
- 90 *Fortune*, op cit, p136.
- 91 A Seidman, *Journal of Southern African Affairs*, Vol 2, No 4, October 1977, p407.
- 92 D Morris, 'Economy recovers and investment starts to flow', *New African Development*, August 1979, p852.
- 93 S Plummer, op cit.
- 94 *Business Week*, 26 June 1978, p55.
- 95 Ibid.
- 96 J Hollick, 'French intervention in Africa in 1978', *The World Today*, February 1979.
- 97 *Le Monde*, 20-21 May 1979.
- 98 See Alan Harding's article in this issue of *Revolutionary Communist Papers*.

Table 13 The British stake in Africa⁹⁹

1 Companies earning a large part of total profit in Africa

	% of total profit	Amount £m	Remarks
Lonrho	96	66.1	£30.6m East and Central; £20.4 West; £15.1 Southern
Eastern Produce	89	3.47	Kenya, Malawi, Zambia.
Mitchell Cotts	88	12.1	"Southern Africa" £9.4m; "Eastern & Central Africa" £2.7m
Osborn (Samuel)	88	2.02	South Africa
Paterson Zochonis	71	10.5	West Africa
Marshall's Universal	69	2.64	East Africa
Finlay (James)	67	8.82	Kenya
Low & Bonar	51	3.63	Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, S. Africa
Blackwood Hodge	45	11.7	S. Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, etc.
Stocklake Hldgs	44	1.15	British Rhodesian Steel: results not consolidated.
Warren Plantns	44	4.82	Kenya £4.73m; Nigeria £0.09m
Berec Group	43	10.5	Nigeria, S. Africa
Bridon	39	4.57	S. Africa
British Commonwealth Shipping	37	5.86	After tax; equity interest in Safmarine, etc.
Assd. Brit Foods	36	28.0	"South Africa" (52% hldg in Premier Milling, etc.)
Haden Carrier	31	0.44	Nigeria, S. Africa
Bestobell	29	1.6	"South and Central Africa"
Half Engineering	26	1.16	South Africa
Delta Metal	24	8.63	S. Africa, Kenya
Coates Bros.	24	2.27	S. Africa, E. Africa, Zambia
Brit. Elec. Trac.	22	15.0	S. Africa, Kenya, Rhodesia
Reckitt & Colman	18	10.4	S. Africa, Zambia
Blue Circle Inds.	17	10.3	South, West, East Africa
BOC International	16	16.7	S. Africa, etc.
Chloride	16	4.72	S. Africa, etc.
Smith & Nephew	16	3.28	Africa & Middle East: S. Africa
Chubb	14	1.90	S. Africa

2 Companies earning big money in Africa

	Amount £m	% of total profit	Remarks
Lonrho	66.1	96	See Table 1
Unilever	59.0	11	For Anglo/Dutch group
Ascd. British Foods	28.0	36	See Table 1
BAT Industries	21.0	4	Various
Rio Tinto Zinc	18.8	7	S. Africa
BOC International	16.7	16	See Table 1
Brit. Elec. Traction	15.0	22	" "
Mitchell Cotts	12.1	88	" "
Blackwood Hodge	11.7	45	" "
Berec Group	10.5	43	" "
Paterson Zochonis	10.5	71	" "
Reckitt & Colman	10.4	18	" "

3 Companies ranked by turnover in Africa

	% of total turn-over in Africa	Amount of turn-over in £m	Remarks
Cohen (A)	41	18.1	S. Africa, Rhodesia
Metal Box	18	142.8	S. Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, etc.
Williamson Tea	22	5.94	Kenya, Tanzania
Amal. Power Engng	19	10.4	S. Africa
Fenner (J.H.)	16	11.6	"
Ascd Engineering	13	36.6	"
Babcock & Wilcox	12	80.0	"
Anderson			
Strathclyde	12	5.53	"
BTR	£81.1m	10%	Shareholders' funds: total and in Africa

'ruled' the CAE since December 1965 he has drafted no financial or economic policy in that period.¹⁰⁰ The IMF ceased to report on the CAE's foreign exchange reserves early in 1978 and it is not clear whether they still exist.¹⁰¹ The administration is run on French subsidies. It comes as no surprise therefore that France supplies 55 per cent of the CAE's imports and receives 64 per cent of its exports.¹⁰² But more ruthless measures are often required to maintain social stability. The rioting in Bangui, capital of the CAE, which was sparked off by the massacre of hundreds of school children who refused to purchase school uniforms from Bokassa's shop, was only quelled by the intervention of 300 Zairean troops at the behest of France.

France's colonial adventures are only the most bloody expression of imperialist domination in Africa. Whether it is the IMF running the Ministry of Finance in Zaire or Britain running the Kenyan intelligence service, imperialism retains vast power over black Africa. To date imperialist rivalries have taken the relatively mild and indirect forms of supporting and arming different sides in the Nigerian civil war, or of competing over markets, raw materials and spheres of influence. The imperialist powers still try to resolve their differences in a gentlemanly manner. Rivalries between imperialist powers will be minimised so long as they face a common enemy — the anti-imperialist movement in Africa. This common threat to imperialist interests in South

Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia is the main consideration behind imperialist strategy in Africa.

This gentleman's agreement between the Western powers should not be allowed to obscure either the intensification of imperialist rivalries or the re-emergence of a tendency towards direct intervention. If imperialism has its way the new redivision of Africa is about to begin.

The crisis and class struggle in Africa

The end of the colonial era in the early 'sixties did not end the imperialist domination of Africa. The distortions imposed on the African economies and the balkanisation of the continent during the colonial period mean that African capitalism has a very restricted basis for accumulation. As a result the African bourgeoisie is very weak and vulnerable to external pressure. It can only maintain its position through compromising with its ex-colonial masters and, ultimately, in uniting with imperialism against the African masses. This is why vicious anti-working class regimes prevail throughout Africa.

For its part imperialism has encouraged such regimes and has taken a leading role in crushing progressive tendencies

in these countries. Even the more independent-minded African regimes have been attacked, and sometimes overthrown, by imperialism. Attempts were made to destroy Toure's regime in Guinea, while Nkrumah in Ghana and Lumumba in Zaire were both ousted with the aid of imperialism. Throughout Africa trade union rights are curbed and all forms of union opposition face the combined force of imperialism and its local allies.

The African bourgeoisie can only play a reactionary role. Its ability to rule rests on its control of state revenues and its access to state investments, contracts and other resources. The weakness of African capitalism necessitates close ties between the local bourgeoisie and the state. This is confirmed by the prominent role of public corporations as opposed to private capitalist enterprises. The survival of the local bourgeoisie is based on wealth obtained through the state, commerce and land; with the exception of OPEC-member Nigeria, there is no African capitalist class capable of playing an active role in production.

The African bourgeoisie has attempted to legitimise its class rule under the banner of 'African socialism'. This vague ideology, which is used as a cover to justify a mixed economy, is often advanced with populist, or even anti-imperialist rhetoric. The propagation of some form of distinct nationalist strategy has always been important for mobilising the masses behind bourgeois rule. This mass support was particularly necessary during the phase of 'decolonisation'. In this period the nationalist leaders used mass pressure as a lever to gain important concessions from their retiring colonial masters. Once independence had been achieved the bourgeoisie always sought to crush this mass movement which posed more of a threat than imperialism. Thus the anti-colonial Mau Mau revolt was used by the Kenyan nationalist leaders to win important concessions from the British administration. Once the British had left, one of the first measures taken by the Kenyatta regime was to crush the mass land seizure movement and jail leading freedom fighters.

The road to 'African socialism' has always meant defeats for African workers and peasants. Even when the bourgeoisie has tried to oppose imperialism it has been forced to abandon its objective because of its weakness as a class. Quite simply, as long as capitalist relations prevail Africa will be subject to external pressure. A good example is provided by the Sikou Toure regime in Guinea which from its inception came into fierce conflict with French imperialism. Isolated by imperialism, Guinea adopted a 'socialist' system and sought support from the Soviet Union. However, it could not survive as a mixed economy. During the past year Guinea has asked French imperialism to return and has taken the appropriate economic liberalisation measures.¹⁰³ Not surprisingly relations with the Soviet Union have deteriorated, with Guinea denying access for military purposes.

The same trends can be seen in Angola and Mozambique. After a heroic struggle against imperialism the newly installed regimes have sought to come to terms with world capitalism. The first measure necessitated by this compromise was the destruction of working class organisation and the elimination of progressive sections of the national liberation movement. Unable to overcome its subservience to the world economy, Angola has gone out of its way to assure imperialists that 'foreign capital has a role to play'.¹⁰⁴ The deterioration of the economy has forced the ruling class in Mozambique to seek closer ties with South Africa. The *Financial Times* noted this shift in policy with satisfaction: 'Nothing better illustrates Mozambique's plight than President Samora Machel's willingness to bury his political pride by seeking closer commercial links with South Africa.'¹⁰⁵

The weakness of the African working class, due to its small social weight, has allowed the interests of imperialism to prevail throughout the continent. Because of the slow development of capitalist production, direct producers expelled from the land did not always become wage labourers. The landless masses formed a pool of migrant workers and a reserve army of labour. However, during the past fifteen years the working class has become a larger and more coherent social force. In conjunction with migrant workers, agricultural labourers and the unemployed, the proletariat is a growing menace to imperialism.

The working class in South Africa, like that in other parts of Africa, is hindered by the limited development of the proletarian movement. Whereas in the oppressor nations the central obstacle to the struggle for communism is the strength of reformism in the labour movement, in Africa the most immediate problem is to win the petit-bourgeois dominated mass movement to working class politics. The working class is the only force that can wage a consistent struggle against imperialism. African revolutionaries must ensure that the proletariat is organised as a class – not as the radical appendage to the nationalist movement. In drawing a clear class demarcation it will be possible to mobilise the masses around proletarian politics.

For too long the European labour movement has allowed imperialism to plunder and oppress Africa. Solidarity with the African people has come to mean little more than empty gestures of support. The role of the left in Britain has been particularly scandalous in this respect. Solidarity with the national liberation struggle is virtually non-existent. Boycotts of South African oranges and Barclay's Bank, accompanied by liberal moralising, are the bread and butter of the British anti-apartheid movement. Genuine solidarity with the African people requires other methods; it requires a fight against British imperialism. It means fighting imperialism at home in order to cripple the capacity of British imperialism to carry out its oppression of Africa.

Real solidarity with the African people will not be won through classless sermons about the excesses of apartheid. Revolutionaries must win the workers' movement to an all-out opposition to imperialist expansion. They must argue that the defeat of imperialism in Africa will undermine the class enemy of the proletariat in Britain. This task of solidarity with the African people is an urgent one. The hour is fast approaching. The new battle for Africa is about to begin.

Frank Richards

99 'British business at stake in Africa', *Investors Chronicle*, op cit, p347.

100 *Le Monde*, 24 January 1979.

101 EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review of Gabon, Congo, Cameroon, CAE, Chad*, second quarter 1979, p17.

102 Ibid, first quarter 1979, p20.

103 EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review of Senegal, Mali, Mauritania, Guinea*, second quarter 1979, pp28-32.

104 EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review of Angola, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe*, annual supplement 1979, p10.

105 *Financial Times*, 2 May 1979.

The rape of Zaire

'The scramble for Africa is on again. The capture of Kolwezi by the French signals the end of almost two decades of formal obeisance to the notion of African independence Politically as well as economically, Africa is being recolonised. That does not mean that history is being re-run or that the new map of Africa will be the old colonial one, with the states simply shown in different colours. It is infinitely more complicated. The detail of government is in African hands. Foreigners can, as a last resort, be shown the door. But African governments are more and more being maintained by money and weapons from overseas and are known to be so maintained. This seriously limits their freedom of action.'¹

In May 1978 hundreds of French paratroopers were airlifted into Kolwezi, a mining town in the Shaba province of Zaire. Their mission was to maintain political stability in a region which is rich in mineral resources and lucrative for foreign investment. When Belgium conceded national independence to the Congo in 1960, after 52 years of colonial rule, it made sure that this area remained under the control of the imperialist powers.² Within months of the formation of the Republic of the Congo Belgian and United Nations (UN) troops had intervened to safeguard the interests of foreign capital.

The fate of Zaire is determined by the world economy. The international crisis of the 'seventies has resulted in the stagnation of industry and agriculture, and in poverty, unemployment and famine. It has also exacerbated ethnic and regional conflicts. At the same time the recession drives the imperialist nations into a battle for the resources and markets of the backward capitalist world. Imperialism is compelled to adopt more direct means of control in its former colonies. The military invasion of Zaire, following almost 20 years of formal independence, signified a return to imperialist coercion.

The attempt to establish a stable regime in the Congo in the early 'sixties took a heavy toll on the masses. With the assistance of European troops, the newly appointed local rulers crushed popular resistance to imperialism and eliminated the last remnants of bourgeois democracy. This process culminated in the accession of Mobutu's corrupt and murderous military dictatorship in 1965. Once the country had been stabilised through force of arms, the expansion of the world market in the late 'sixties permitted a limited development of its economy. Encouraged by the state, a massive influx of foreign capital enabled the Congo to take advantage of rising copper prices. The result was an unprecedented period of economic growth. Rising confidence in national independence was indicated by the country's change of name from the Congo to Zaire in 1971.

The crisis of the 'seventies has exposed the fragility of capitalism in Zaire and the precariousness of the nation's independence. When in 1974 rocketing oil prices were followed by the collapse of the world copper market, the effect on Zaire was catastrophic. Despairing of the impotence of his ruling clique in the face of the international recession, Mobutu could only ask 'are we responsible for the dollar crisis, for the energy crisis, world inflation, the spectacular fall in raw material prices and for unemployment?'.³

The predominance of imperialism in Zaire leaves no independent role for an indigenous bourgeoisie. For the masses of Zaire the crisis means further immiseration and

repression. Nothing less is compatible with the survival of imperialism: this is the message that the French paratroopers brought to the Zairean people.

THE BELGIAN CONGO

The Congo contains rich deposits of copper, cobalt, tin, manganese and diamonds, as well as fertile agricultural land. Early in the twentieth century the Belgian colonial administration played the leading role in opening it up to capitalist exploitation. The state granted freehold rights for the extraction of mineral resources and encouraged plantation agriculture in coffee, groundnuts, palm oil, rubber, bananas and sugar. Most investments were controlled by the state and Belgian finance capital, which operated through four huge holding companies.⁴

The state encouraged capital accumulation by providing a cheap supply of labour. Compulsory recruitment forced workers into mines and plantations.⁵ Legislation enforced low prices for agricultural produce, which allowed wages to be kept down in the mining sector. The state also established the infrastructure necessary for capitalist development. In 1928 the government completed a rail/river link from Katanga province to the Lower Congo, which to this day remains the most important internal route for the transport of Katangan copper. Roads, railways, bridges and an extensive administrative structure were financed by extortionate taxes on the local population.

Production in the Congo was geared to the export of agricultural products and minerals, from which enormous profits were repatriated. Total capital outflow for the period 1887 to 1955 was £4300 million. In the five years preceding independence the net outflow of capital reached massive proportions. More than a third of the surplus-value produced in any given year during colonial rule went abroad.⁶

The plantations provided cheap foodstuffs for export and for the growing urban population. Agricultural development remained stunted. It rested on low wages or forced labour, which discouraged investment in modern farm equipment. Profits from the plantations were directed into mining or the economic infrastructure. Agriculture itself remained backward and under-capitalised.

Until the late 'fifties the Congolese were prohibited from owning property and denied access to loans or credit, thus frustrating the emergence of an African bourgeoisie. Prevented from securing their own smallholdings, the peasants were condemned to poverty and backwardness. Many migrated in search of work to the expanding mining sector. But the state quickly stepped in and introduced stringent controls on the recruitment of miners so as to maintain a stable workforce on the land.⁷

As the rural population expanded so the position of the peasants deteriorated. Many were forced to cultivate particular crops, some of which, such as cotton, were unsuited to the climatic conditions. Vast tracts of land were appropriated for national parks or allocated to foreign companies and settlers.⁸ Villages were broken up and

relocated by the colonial authorities – often along roadsides or on barren land.

The appropriation of the land and the compulsory cultivation of cash crops provoked rural resistance to the colonial regime. The emergence of urban petit-bourgeois opposition to Belgian rule in the 'forties and 'fifties found an immediate resonance among the disaffected peasantry.⁹ Since then the country areas have always been ready to support radical nationalist resistance to imperialism.

The gradual post-war expansion of capitalism in the Congo created a petit bourgeoisie largely composed of lower level employees of the colonial civil service: clerks, teachers and junior officials. The growth of trade and commerce gave rise to a small African bourgeoisie. In Leopoldville in 1956 there were 7000 self-employed persons, several with incomes of over \$20 000 per year.¹⁰

The growth of mining and commercial agriculture and the emergence of processing industries that were closely related to these sectors stimulated a rapid expansion of the working class.¹¹ On the eve of independence, 37 per cent of adult males in the Congo were wage-earners and 24 per cent of the population lived in towns. Although the Congolese working class was larger than that of many other African countries, its limited strength was exposed by the minor recession of the late 'fifties. The slowdown in economic growth and increased rural migration caused rising unemployment. This allowed wages to be forced down as production was rationalised.

Domestic servants and workers in the state apparatus were important components of the urban population. In the provincial capital of Bukavu, for example, more than a third of African wage-earners were domestic servants.¹² The fragmentation and repression of the working-class prevented large-scale political organisation. The only effective union represented employees in the civil service. This small stratum, together with other discontented sections of the petit bourgeoisie, gave voice to the antagonism between all sections of Congolese society and the colonial order.

The decay of colonial rule

Towards the end of the 'fifties Belgium began to lose its grip on events in the Congo. Falling demand for raw materials led to a steady rise in unemployment which, when combined with a drop in living standards, stimulated the growth of a mass anti-colonial movement. At first this was based in the towns. But soon youths, forced to return to the countryside because of high unemployment in the cities, spread a wave of nationalist sentiment into the rural areas. The whole of Leopoldville province was thrown into political ferment. The same mood swept through provincial centres such as Stanleyville.

Although the petit bourgeoisie was reliant on the colonial administration, it was denied real power under Belgian rule. In the late 'fifties long-standing resentment turned into outright opposition. Because of its education and social position, the petit bourgeoisie was able to channel the anger of the masses against the colonial regime.

The colonial authorities were caught unawares by a rising tide of mass discontent. Throughout 1958 the aggressive temper of the nationalist movement led to numerous confrontations. Large-scale riots in Leopoldville in January 1959 showed that the Belgian administration was no longer in control. The imprisonment of leading nationalists could not halt the upsurge, nor could major counter-insurgency operations – even though these left more than 500 dead.

The Belgian administration could not contain the nationalist explosion. The cost of maintaining direct rule

in the face of open revolt increased alarmingly as the country's economic problems worsened. By 1960, the service of the public debt took up 24 per cent of the total budget.¹³ So it was that the colonial administration eventually conceded the demand for independence. But

1 Editorial, *The Guardian*, 22 May 1978.

2 The Congo Free State was carved out in the late nineteenth century. Originally the personal fief of King Leopold II, it became a Belgian colony in 1908.

3 *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 March 1979.

4 The capital invested by these was as follows:

Societe Generale (41 companies) – £28m;

Banque de Bruxelles (16 companies) – £2.25m;

Groupe Cominiere (9 companies) – £2.5m;

Groupe Empain (5 companies) – £2.5m. These four groups controlled 75 per cent of all Congolese capital in private hands in 1932. R Anstey, *King Leopold's legacy, the Congo under Belgian rule 1908-1960*, Oxford University Press, 1966, p113.

5 The most drastic method of appropriating a surplus from the Congolese was the use of a labour tax of 40 hours per month. This was instituted in 1903. The diary of an American missionary reveals the suppression of the people that rubber collection entailed: 'Each time the corporal goes out to get rubber, cartridges are given to him. He must bring back all not used; and for everyone used, he must bring back a right hand! . . . As to the extent to which this is carried on, he informed me that in 6 months they, the state, on the Momboy river had used 6000 cartridges, which means that 6000 people are killed or mutilated. It means more than 6000, for the people have told me repeatedly that soldiers kill children with the butt of their guns.' Quoted in *ibid*, p7. By 1944 the required period of labour in kind had been raised to 120 days per year.

6 W Rodney, *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*, Tanzania Publishing House, Dar-es-Salaam, 1972, pp166-67.

7 Colonial paternalism stabilised the mining workforce. From 1923 Union Miniere de Haut Katanga (UM), the leading Belgian mining company, offered renewable three-year contracts, four days holiday each month and better housing and welfare facilities. Turnover and recruitment were reduced so that by 1940 approximately 78 per cent of UM's employees were prepared to renew their contracts and more than 25 per cent had worked for UM for over 10 years. Anstey, *op cit*, pp118-19.

8 By 1944 12 million hectares had been taken over by Europeans. M Merlier, *Le Congo de la colonisation belge a l'indépendance*, Francois Maspero, Paris, 1962, p70.

9 Joseph Kasavubu, an early popular critic of colonial rule who became first President of the Republic of the Congo, played upon these aspirations of the peasantry for land ownership. He gained widespread support with a speech in 1946 on the theme of 'the right of the first occupant'.

10 G Brausch, *Belgian administration in the Congo*, Institute of Race Relations, London, 1961, pp4-5.

In 1955 Elizabethville had 1309 African traders who earned a total of over 50 million francs per year. J Denis, *Le phenomene urbain en Afrique centrale*, Academie royale des sciences coloniales, Bruxelles, 1958, p339.

11 *Growth of wage-earning population*

Year	Wage-earners	Year	Wage-earners
1915	37 368	1935	377 531
1920	125 120	1937	491 634
1925	274 538	1940	536 055
1926	421 953	1945	701 101
1930	399 144	1950	962 009
1932	291 961	1952	1 070 346

C Young, *Politics in the Congo*, Princeton University Press, 1965, p206. The decline in the number of wage-earners during the world slump of the early 'thirties shows the close relationship between the fate of the Congolese working class and the fortunes of imperialism.

12 This was twice the proportion in other cities because low wages encouraged European households to employ two or three servants. Denis, *op cit*, p245.

13 Young, *op cit*, p65.

Belgium insisted on a transitional period to ensure that the interests of foreign capital would be preserved.

The end of an era

The Belgian administration wanted to hand over power to a stable pro-capitalist government. There was, however, no ready-made African bourgeoisie to administer such a regime. Though the Belgians could not create this bourgeoisie overnight, they did try to groom a leadership with a stake in the preservation of order and capitalist property relations. But, much to the chagrin of the imperialists, African politicians who were seen to compromise with the old order were summarily rejected by the masses. The storm of popular protest made stable decolonisation impossible. After a trip to the Cataract district in August 1959, the Belgian Vice-Governor General reported:

'Everyone I met unanimously agrees that at the political level contact with the population has become impossible. Directives, advice, efforts at persuasion, attempts at dialogue, everything which emanates from the Administration, from Europeans in general, or from Congolese viewed as collaborators of the whites, is rejected without discussion.'¹⁴

To retain popular support, the African political parties were forced to adopt a policy of civil disobedience.¹⁵ In Leopoldville province the ABAKO and the PSA even began to exercise quasi-governmental functions such as the supply of water and electricity, as did the MNC(L) in Orientale.

The resistance movement took different forms in the diverse provinces of the Congo. In the more backward regions of Kasai and Equateur the administration managed to maintain social order. In Katanga, the main centre of industrial advance, resistance was weakened by the long-standing paternalism of UM. The leading political party was the CONAKAT.¹⁶ Under Moïse Tshombe it became subordinated to Western interests, working to contain the popular revolt in close collaboration with the authorities and UM. Despite this, in the Congo as a whole the mass movement was powerful enough to destroy the administrative framework which the Belgians sought to pass on to their African stooges.

Even before independence, the nationalist leaders appreciated that the mass movement was a threat to their aspirations to power. To safeguard their future interests they tried to tame the popular movement. However, in the more militant parties, and especially in the MNC(L), the radical youth was in command of the local organisation. In these parties a high proportion of the membership was unemployed. Their militancy was born of the frustration of colonial society — they were denied secondary education and barred from most urban employment. They were not to be placated easily by their moderate leaders.

After the 1960 elections, the gulf between the rank and file and the petit-bourgeois leadership widened further. While the politicians deliberated in parliament, their supporters stayed on the streets. In this turmoil the political parties underwent repeated divisions; each faction had its own militia led by the urban youth. These citizen armies were an intolerable challenge to the African politicians who moved rapidly to disband them. In March the newly-elected Executive College, which included both Kasavubu and Lumumba, voted to dissolve all militias.¹⁷ Predictably, this had little effect on any of the armed factions.

By 30 June 1960, the date appointed as independence day, the administration had already collapsed. Leaders of rival parties were in open conflict for control of the new republic. Lumumba became Prime Minister, while Kasavubu was announced President. From its inception the new Government could not exercise authority over large parts of the country.

Foreign intervention and national resistance

In the absence of a stable capitalist government imperialism was forced to intervene in the Congo almost immediately after independence. Belgium wanted to hold on to the mineral-rich Katanga province where important investments were at stake. But this area was the scene of dramatic events and a source of instability which highlighted the fragility of the new Government.

Within days of independence the African rank and file of Force Publique mutinied against their European officers in a spontaneous uprising.¹⁸ The revolt was swiftly crushed by a Belgian invasion — ostensibly to protect European lives. Soon afterwards the CONAKAT declared the secession of Katanga. It was supported by UM which, labelling the Lumumba Government 'pro-Soviet', directed taxes into the coffers of the CONAKAT. Lumumba, who had little control over his own army, was unable to oppose the Belgian intervention and accepted it in the hope that secession would be reversed. When it became clear that this was not the Belgians' intention, he turned to appeal for Russian and UN assistance.

Inspired by the Belgians, the secession of Katanga was the signal for the disintegration of the Congo. It could not be halted by the new regime, which was forced to consolidate its power along regional and ethnic lines. The ABAKO raised the demand for tribal autonomy for the Bakongo, and Kalonji — the leader of a regional split from the MNC — declared South Kasai an independent state for the Baluba people. The farcical character of the Government was confirmed in September 1960, when Kasavubu and Lumumba simultaneously sacked each other.

Imperialism could not stand idly by in the face of mounting chaos. The Congo was of vital strategic importance in central Africa. There was the ever-present danger that political instability might spread to neighbouring countries such as Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Imperialism reasserted military control in the Congo in the guise of the UN. In July 1960 an intervention force invaded and established martial law. Local politicians were subordinated to the army and Lumumba, who insisted on the unitary state proclaimed in the constitution, was removed from office.

Despite his willingness to compromise with the Belgian authorities, as shown by his agreement to disband the militias, Lumumba became the focus of popular resistance to the invasion. Matters came to a head when he tried to reach his political stronghold in Stanleyville, where the PSA had established an opposition government. As General Von Horn, commander of the UN force, observed: 'To put it bluntly had Lumumba got to Stanleyville, the whole Congo might have gone up in flames'.¹⁹ Lumumba was murdered before he reached his destination.

Action on two fronts was urgently required if the general interests of imperialism were to be preserved. Firstly, the Belgian-supported secession of Katanga had to be reversed. The independence of Katanga was to Belgium's advantage because, through UM and the CONAKAT, it exercised firm control over the province. However, secession threatened the stability of the country as a whole and created a dangerous precedent for other African nations. The overall interests of imperialism in Africa demanded that Katanga be reabsorbed into the Congo. The UN was the best instrument for effecting the reabsorption of Katanga into the Congo.²⁰ Secondly, the popular movement and its leadership had to be destroyed.

The first aim was achieved through military intervention. Throughout 1961 and 1962 the UN and the Congolese

army fought Tshombe's Katangan gendarmes and his hired mercenaries. Tshombe eventually succumbed, announcing the end of Katangan secession in January 1963. The UN force remained in the Congo until 1964 to supervise the integration of Katanga into the Republic of the Congo. The second objective proved more difficult to achieve. Although there was no unified opposition to the UN occupation, constant unrest undermined the various attempts that were made to find a stable solution. The new state waged a long and bitter war of attrition against the mass movement.

In April 1962 the Union of Congolese Workers led a national strike in protest against unemployment, by this time at a level of 50 per cent. Like other sporadic outbreaks of organised opposition, this was crushed by troops. Subsequently all public meetings were banned, and Kasavubu sacked half the Cabinet. Later in the year the leaders of the popular movement were forced into exile in Brazzaville, where they set up an impotent provisional government. It included Gizenga (PSA), supporters of Lumumba's MNC and the Katangan Baluba. But pressure inside the Congo mounted. Kasavubu was forced to shut down parliament in September 1963 and concentrate his attack on the opposition movement. Bourgeois democracy in the Congo had lasted three years.

Over the next few months the anti-imperialist movement was destroyed before it could achieve anything. The suppression of mass opposition by the army, the UN, Belgian troops and Katangan mercenaries – who joined in the bourgeois offensive when Tshombe was integrated into the government – allowed imperialism to consolidate its hold. Even so, the inherent weakness of the bourgeoisie meant that the new regime was built on shaky foundations. Ultimately the state had to be bolstered up by military dictatorship. When Mobutu, head of the army, seized power in a coup of 1965 there was no one left to oppose him. Exhausted by half a decade of civil war, the mass movement offered no resistance. Any remaining opponents were driven into prison or exile.

The Congo was devastated during the five years of internecine strife. Between June 1960 and the end of 1964 the volume of production fell by a quarter.²¹ Agricultural output slumped; between 1958 and 1966 its share in the total value of production fell from 40 per cent to 25 per cent.

While the masses faced famine and repression the imperialists and their local allies prospered. They made

- 14 Centre de Recherche et d'Information Socio-Politiques (CRISP), *Congo 1959*, Bruxelles, 1960, p129.
- 15 All of the petit-bourgeois organisations which came to represent anti-colonial sentiment emerged in the period of militant activity just before independence. None had a coherent tradition of political work. Most had grown out of radical reading groups set up during the 'fifties. They included: (a) The Alliance des Bakongo (ABAKO), led by Kasavubu. Organised since 1950, it only became a party in 1959. It demanded independence for the traditional homeland of the Bakongo, the dominant tribe of the Lower Congo, but found little support beyond this key area. (b) The Parti Solidaire Africain (PSA), led by Antoine Gizenga and also founded in 1959. This was a federalist organisation formed in opposition to ABAKO. Its federalist ideology gave it a weak leadership with the result that in many areas its militant youth membership maintained substantial autonomy. (c) The Mouvement National Congolais (Lumumba) – the MNC(L). This was Patrice Lumumba's majority faction of the MNC which split in the summer of 1959. The MNC had been the first centrally organised nationalist party. Unconstrained by ethnic divisions, the MNC(L) grew rapidly in the immediate pre-election period. In the 1960 elections it emerged as the largest single party. Out of 137 seats, it won 33 outright and controlled another 31. Lumumba, who modelled himself closely on Kwame Nkrumah, was the popular and outspoken ideologue of radical petit-bourgeois nationalism.
- 16 Confederation des Associations Tribales du Katanga, founded in 1957.
- 17 CRISP, *Congo 1960*, Vol 1, Bruxelles, 1961, pp75-76.
- 18 Force Publique was a paramilitary group, created by the Belgian administration to suppress tribal disturbances and enforce the collection of taxes.
- 19 Quoted in J Archer, *Congo – the birth of a new nation*, Bailey Bros, Folkestone, 1971, p134.
- 20 This upset the more short-sighted sections of the bourgeoisie. US Senator Barry Goldwater spoke out strongly against the UN: 'We have seen the inexplicable and disgusting episode in the Congo when the United Nations, financed by \$40 million of US money, brought war into Katanga, the one part of the Congo where there was peace and a growing prosperity, and insisted that the government there submit to a Communist-dominated central authority'. Quoted in *ibid*, p158.
- 21 *Rapport Banque Nationale du Congo*, 1967, p38.
- 22 *Rapport Banque du Zaïre*, 1968-69, p32; 1972-73, p68; J L Lacroix, *Industrialisation au Congo, la transformation des structures économiques*, Paris, 1966, p30.

Table 1 Economic growth in Zaire, 1958-72²²

	1958		1966		1972	
	Value million francs	Per cent	Value million Zaire	Per cent	Value million Zaire	Per cent
1 Commercial agriculture	11	40	27	25	91	22
2 Mines and metallurgy	10	33	54	50	163	41
3 Industries	4	15	18	16	102	25
4 Buildings, public works, public utilities	3	12	9	9	43	11
5 Total output	28	100	108	100	399	100
Value of foreign trade and proportion of total output	5	16	41	38	168	42
Value of state services and proportion of total output	9	29	50	46	172	43

sure that the production of refined copper was maintained; foreign capital kept control in this key sector of the economy.

Table 2 **Copper output²³**
(thousand metric tonnes)

	1960	1965
Copper mine production	302	289
Refined copper production	145	153

The emergent national bourgeoisie strengthened its position in trade and commerce. Trade as a proportion of total output leapt from 16 per cent to 38 per cent between 1958 and 1966.

Although state revenues were limited as a result of the breakdown of the tax system, the national bourgeoisie's control of the available resources allowed it to use government funds for its own benefit. The money supply more than trebled between June 1960 and the end of 1964, while the salaries of state officials were kept up and even increased.²⁴ The bourgeoisie's solution to the weakness of the economy was to tighten the screws on the working class and the petit bourgeoisie; this was the objective of Mobutu's monetary reform of June 1967.²⁵

By the mid 'sixties the remnants of opposition had been wiped out and the territorial integrity of the country re-established. The stabilisation of Mobutu's autocratic regime allowed the Congo to emerge from the turmoil that followed independence into a short period of rapid growth.

CAPITALISM IN ZAIRE

Steady growth in the advanced capitalist countries during the 'sixties created a continuous demand for the Congo's raw materials. The economy expanded, largely as a result of state-supported foreign investment in mining and the economic infrastructure. The extent of these investments was strictly limited by the amount of money that the state could borrow on Western capital markets. Development policies were tied to the accumulation of capital in the imperialist countries. The facade of economic independence was quickly torn away at the first sign of trouble in the Western capitalist world.

Zairean capital

Under the Mobutu regime the feebleness of the national bourgeoisie led the state to become the major driving force of the economy, providing most of the capital invested in mining, transport and telecommunications. It also had a major stake in manufacturing industry, trade, and to a lesser extent in banking and insurance.²⁶ Large-scale state involvement in the economy continued the pattern laid down in the colonial era. Widespread destruction of the productive forces during the first five years of independence forced the state to step in to reorganise production. The decline in the public sector investments which underpinned the economy was only halted after the stabilisation measures introduced by Mobutu in 1965.²⁷

Though the state held a dominating position in the Congolese economy it could not insulate it from the laws of capital accumulation. This became clear when world copper prices plummeted: the Congo suffered a substantial

reduction in revenue. Though the average annual price of copper fell by 27 per cent between 1970 and 1972, mine output and refined production rose by less than 15 per cent.²⁸ Public sector investment programmes could only be maintained by heavy borrowing from the imperialist powers.

Foreign capital

Throughout the boom foreign investment dominated the most profitable sectors of the economy. In 1967 output from foreign dominated enterprises accounted for 72 per cent of Zaire's Gross National Product (GNP).²⁹ A degree of political stability made possible a substantial increase in the input of foreign capital. As production expanded the imperialist powers became more and more ready to invest in manufacturing industry. They were further encouraged by liberal trade relations and generous concessions. By 1967, 41 per cent of foreign investment was going into manufacturing, being channelled into the profitable processing sector that had grown up around mineral extraction and commercial agriculture.³⁰ In 1967 processing accounted for 16 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and took up 43 per cent of foreign direct investment.³¹

As the colonial era came to an end Belgium's rivals began to penetrate the Congo. Although they made some advances in the manufacturing sector, they could not break the long-standing Belgian monopoly in mining. Even as late as 1967 Belgium still held 88 per cent of the foreign capital in the Congo.³² Most of this investment was in the mining industry, which provided the state with its primary source of revenue. The copper industry illustrates the inter-relationship between the state and foreign capital in the exploitation of the Congo's resources.

Copper from the Congo was as vital to the Belgian economy after independence as it had been throughout the colonial period. Even after 1971, well over half of Belgium's imports of refined copper came from Zaire.³³ In 1974, 52 per cent of the copper processed in Metallurgie Hoboken-Overpelt, a 44 per cent UM-owned refinery in Olen, Belgium, was still supplied by Zaire. Throughout the 'sixties the emerging national bourgeoisie tried to take advantage of its most precious export by seizing control of the copper industry.

In 1967 the government nationalised UM, the largest mining concern in the Congo and transferred the assets to the state-owned Gecamines. However, this change of ownership did not jeopardise Belgian interests, for the management of production and marketing was entrusted to a UM subsidiary – the Societe Generale des Minieres (SGM). Nationalisation revealed the full implications of the monopoly on technical expertise which the Belgians had jealously guarded over decades. This, together with control over financing, ensured continuing Belgian supremacy in the Katangan copper belt. The compensation agreement which accompanied nationalisation guaranteed SGM six per cent of the value of metal sold until 1982, and one per cent subsequently. An attempt in 1974 to terminate this agreement and establish direct control of the industry was unsuccessful.³⁴ Power remained firmly in the hands of the Belgian company, whilst Gecamines continued to bear the full cost of extraction.

Foreign domination placed strict limits on the activity of the Zairean state. It was reduced to the role of a mediator between imperialism and the local bourgeoisie, borrowing money on the world market to finance economic expansion. This became particularly important when copper prices began to fall and the limitations of a development strategy based on a single industry were clearly

revealed. Only heavy state borrowing allowed Zaire to maintain its public investment and prevent complete collapse. Zaire's external debt multiplied 12 times between 1966 and 1972.³⁵ Borrowing could only postpone the financial crash. Table 3 shows the scale and diversity of Zaire's indebtedness to international banks:

Table 3 Zaire's slide into debt³⁶
(million Zaire)

	December 1970	June 1973
Fonds Belgo-Zairois	64	—
USAID	42	62
BIRO/IDA	3	28
Societe Generale de Banque	—	38
First National City Bank	—	25
Morgan Crenfell and Tokai	—	25
Morgan Guaranty Trust	—	15
Other banks	2	18
Other public institutions	—	10
Total financial debt	111	221

The state

To attract foreign capital, the state in Zaire had to do more than build roads and railways and install electricity networks. If it was to create the right climate for foreign investors, it also had to suppress the working class. It was obliged to look after the interests of the layers of society on whose support the unstable state apparatus depended.

A major priority of the state was to rationalise production. In mining the organic composition of capital rose constantly in the drive to increase the productivity of labour. Rising investment created fewer and fewer jobs. Between 1969 and 1973 investment worth Zaire 473 million provided employment for only 19 000 workers.³⁷ Employment in mining fell by a third between 1958 and 1972, with only a small increase in manufacturing employment as compensation.

Table 4 Changes in output, employment and productivity
1958-72³⁸

	1958	1966	1972
Mines and metallurgy			
Output	100	83	105
Employment	100	60	66
Productivity	100	138	160
Manufacturing industries			
Output	100	109	152
Employment	100	87	112
Productivity	100	125	135

The expansion of the reserve army of unemployed was one of the central features of the Zairean bourgeoisie's attempt to find a solution to the country's economic problems. The expulsion of workers from mining was supplemented by a two-thirds reduction in the workforce

engaged in commercial agriculture. Although there was some growth in public sector employment, the number of jobless climbed steadily. By 1972 the proportion of the active population engaged in permanent wage employment had fallen to eight per cent.

Table 5 The workforce in Zaire³⁹
(in thousands)

	1959	1968	1972
Population over 15 years	7650	9280	11 500
Permanent wage employment in the private sector	663	500	680
Public sector employment	167	210	225
Total permanent employment	830	710	905
Total permanent employment as percentage of population	11	9	8

23 *World Copper Statistics since 1950*, World Bureau of Metal Statistics, 1977.

24 Ibid, p202.

25 The monetary reform devalued the Congolese franc to about 30 per cent of its former value, from an exchange rate of 180 Congolese francs = US \$1 to 500 Congolese francs = US \$1 (1 Zaire = 1000 Congolese francs). *Rapport Banque Nationale du Congo*, 1967, pp198-99.

26 The state had an 81 per cent share of the 'value added' in the mining sector, 97 per cent in metallurgy, 85 per cent in transport and telecommunications, but only 10 per cent of banking and insurance. Its share in the capital of the enterprises it controlled was also very high: 89 per cent in mining, 38 per cent in manufacturing industries, 36 per cent in banking and insurance. See 'L'entreprise privée étrangère en République du Zaire', *Afrique Contemporaine*, No 64, 1972, p12 and *Rapport Banque du Zaire*, 1970-71, p94.

27 In 1966 the public sector's contribution to gross capital formation was less than a third of that of the private sector; by 1970 this proportion had risen to more than a half, although this was still far below the 1958 level. See *Bulletin BCB*, November 1959 and *Rapport Banque du Zaire*, 1968-69, p44 and 1972-73, p75.

28 Calculated from various issues of *World Metal Statistics*, World Bureau of Metal Statistics, London.

29 H Hveen, 'The extent and type of direct foreign investment in Africa', in C Widstrand, ed, *Multinational firms in Africa*, Upsala, 1975, p85.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid, p89.

32 Ibid, p84.

33 In 1971, 1972 and 1973 the share of Zairean refined copper in total Belgian refined copper imports was 76, 70 and 67 per cent respectively. Calculated from *World Metal Statistics*, op cit.

34 A more serious challenge to Belgian capital came from rival imperialist powers searching for raw materials and keen to invest in Zaire. Two large consortia, the Japanese Societe pour le Developpement de l'Industrie Miniere au Zaire (Sodimiza) and the American-led Societe Miniere de Tenke-Fungurume, entered the fight for Zaire's copper in the early 'seventies.

35 *Rapport Banque du Zaire*, 1968-69, p105 and 1972-73, pp132, 143. There was also an important change in the composition of this debt during this period. Private lending by banks and financial groups increased substantially while public lending became relatively less important.

36 Ibid, 1972-73, p193.

37 Ibid, pp65,91.

38 Ibid, 1967, pp38,69; 1968-69, pp34,67; 1972-73, pp64,68.

39 J Houyoux, 'Budgets menagers', *Nutrition et Mode de vie a Kinshasa*. PVZ, Paris, 1973, p23; *Rapport Banque du Zaire*, 1967, 1968-69, 1972-73.

The vast reserve army gave the bourgeoisie a powerful weapon with which to drive down wages. The defeats suffered by the mass movement during the years of civil war enabled the Mobutu regime to implement draconian austerity measures. Between 1960 and 1973 the minimum wage of workers in Kinshasa fell by about one half.⁴⁰

The state also provided the funds necessary for the upkeep of the ruling class. Mobutu's regime was based on the small commercial bourgeoisie and the administrators of the state bureaucracy. This social stratum was funded by taxing profits. In 1970 value added taxes consumed two-thirds of the surplus of Gecamines, which itself provided more than half of the state's tax revenue. Through its control of the state apparatus the bourgeoisie used taxes to maintain its social position and enhance its political power.

Limits to growth

By 1973 Zaire appeared to be moving towards prosperity. Revenues from copper had increased by more than 130 per cent between 1965 and 1970.⁴¹ In the same period GNP grew by an average of 5.7 per cent each year.⁴² Yet by early 1974 the limited scope for capitalist development had already become apparent. Even if copper prices had stayed high and production had continued to expand, export earnings would have been insufficient to pay for the oil, food and the capital goods necessary for Zaire's industrial development. To meet its commitments the state had to expand its budget by 25 per cent in 1974.⁴³ This massive increase in state spending was financed by further public borrowing, which shot up from a planned annual figure of £25m in early 1973 to £105m by December of the same year.⁴⁴

To finance its industrial investment the state became even further dependent on export earnings from minerals in general and copper in particular. Between 1958 and 1972 the share of mineral exports as a percentage of total exports rose from 59 per cent to 82 per cent. The change took place mainly at the expense of agriculture; its share of exports declined from 41 per cent to 14 per cent.⁴⁵

The consequences of the narrow basis for capital accumulation became evident after 1973. Difficulties caused by the increase in the price of oil imports were compounded by a catastrophic fall in copper prices.⁴⁶ The state was forced to cut back drastically on its expenditure plans.

By 1974 it was clear that the transient boom made possible by rising copper revenues had failed to alter the structure of the Zairean economy. When the capitalist recession unfolded Zaire was still highly dependent on its narrow mineral base. In addition the penetration of imported consumer goods had risen substantially during the 'sixties. The strategy of substituting domestically produced goods for imports was a failure because of the restricted development of manufacturing and the grip of cheap foreign goods on the small home market. Even in this period development had been possible only through increased state indebtedness — indebtedness to world imperialism. From 1967 to 1974 the ratio of debt repayments to export revenue climbed from 2.4 per cent to 11.7 per cent, the second highest in Africa.⁴⁷

The backwardness of Zairean capitalism has been constantly reinforced by the world economy. Development in Zaire is reliant on the pace of accumulation in the imperialist countries. When the giants of the capitalist world were plunged into recession in the early 'seventies the outlook for the puny Zairean economy was bleak indeed.

Recession and intervention

The world crisis generates powerful pressures towards foreign intervention in Zaire. The recession has led to the breakdown of the domestic economy and to a sharp decline in both industrial and agricultural production. Unemployment, hunger and disease have provoked riots and resistance against a corrupt and incompetent regime which is finding it increasingly difficult to protect vital foreign investments. At the same time deepening conflict among rival imperialist powers for the rich resources of Zaire compels each to strive for greater influence. Military force is becoming the only way to safeguard the interests of imperialism.

Breakdown

In just two months copper prices in 1974 tumbled from a record level of \$1.40 per pound to \$0.60 — a price below the cost of production in Zaire.⁴⁸ As a result of the Angolan civil war this disaster was made worse by the closure of the Benguela railway, the cheapest export route from the mining province of Shaba. There was an immediate contraction in the mineral and metallurgical sector — in 1975 by 3.2 per cent and by 11.6 per cent the following year.⁴⁹ Today the production of both copper and cobalt (which is largely extracted as a by-product of the same ore) is still falling. Copper output fell by 6.7 per cent in 1978.⁵⁰ The most optimistic forecasts have predicted a level of output for 1979 a third less than that of 1977.

Manufacturing output also fell dramatically. GDP overall declined in each successive year after 1974.⁵¹ In 1974-75 there was a \$0.5 billion deterioration in Zaire's balance of trade, a severe setback for a country with a GNP of only \$3 billion. By the end of 1976 Zaire's external public debt was \$3.3 billion.⁵² To repay its foreign borrowing Zaire became more dependent than ever on loans and imported capital goods. Between 1970 and 1976 debt service payments rose from 4.4 per cent to 11.7 per cent of the revenue from exports.⁵³ In an attempt to finance this debt Zaire went still further into the red to pay for imports of capital.⁵⁴

Rampant inflation was spread still further by high government spending, which exceeded revenues by a third. Factories were forced to work at less than 50 per cent capacity. Even before the 1979 OPEC oil price rises, Zaire could afford no more than 60 per cent of its fuel requirements. Bureaucratic corruption ensured that 90 per cent of Zaire's fuel was consumed in the capital Kinshasa; Shaba, whose rich mineral deposits are the source of 60 per cent of Zaire's foreign exchange, was left with only minimal supplies.⁵⁵ Unemployment reached astronomical levels. In Kinshasa province it was recently estimated at 80 per cent.⁵⁶

The crisis hit agricultural production heavily. By 1978 Zaire, formerly self-sufficient in agricultural produce, had run up a food import bill of \$300 million.⁵⁷ This accounted for a third of all foreign exchange expenditure. Cultivation for the market was deterred by government controls on agricultural prices. For example, an index of the price of manioc, the staple food crop in the Western zone, declined from 126 in 1960 to 36 in 1974 (June 1967 = 100).⁵⁸ In a desperate bid to appease its creditors the Government continued to expropriate more than half the peasants' income through ruthless taxation.

The savage measures necessary to regenerate capitalism in Zaire force more and more workers to the brink of starvation. Since 1972 import controls have boosted the prices of imported foods. Successive devaluations and the efforts of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to direct foreign exchange into debt servicing and productive industry

have cut living standards still further. The following table shows the fall in real wages since independence:

Table 6 The fall in real wages in Kinshasa⁵⁹
(1960=100)

	Minimum wage index	Price index	Real wage index
June 1960	100	100	100
May 1964	383	576	67
October 1971	960	1486	65
September 1975	1274	3100	41
March 1976	1530	5888	25

The *Financial Times* recently commented on the consequences of these drastic wage cuts for the working class:

'It is calculated that real wages in the cities are a fifth of what they were in 1960. The wage of an unskilled worker, some Zaire 40 a month, does not buy one bag of manioc flour, the staple diet. One bag feeds two people for a month.'⁶⁰

The results of driving wages below the poverty line include endemic malnutrition, high levels of infant and maternal mortality and short life expectancy. The poor health of the masses leaves them open to epidemics of infectious diseases. One recent outbreak of cholera spread rapidly and killed 8500 people.⁶¹

Resistance and repression

The decaying social fabric of Zairean society gives rise to continual spontaneous revolts against the established order. One such uprising took place in the traditionally prosperous region of Idiofa in January 1978; 2000 local people were killed. Smaller riots are almost everyday events.

The organised political opposition was recently (and not inaccurately) dismissed by Mobutu as 'the rotting corpses of the 'sixties'. Today it consists of numerous groupings of Mobutu's rivals, defeated by him in the early struggles for power. Lacking support in Zaire, they are condemned to political isolation in Brazzaville, Brussels and Paris.

The National Front for the Liberation of the Congo (FNLC) has its origins in Tshombe's Katangan gendarmerie. Many young exiled Shabans have been attracted by its radical anti-Mobutu rhetoric. Although the programme of the FNLC is nationalist, its support is confined to Shaba; it has won little sympathy in the country as a whole. Like most of the opposition factions it reflects divisions within the weak national bourgeoisie. Such movements, however, gain in strength as the pressures of imperialism compel Mobutu to alienate more and more sections of the ruling class. In Zaire there is a ready response for any appeal to nationalism against foreign interference. However, as long as Mobutu's Western backers are forthcoming with military and economic aid, the fragmented opposition has little hope of success.

The working class has no organised representation on a national scale. There are no nation-wide independent trade unions. The Union Nationale des Travailleurs du Zaire (UNTZA), which was formed in 1967 from three major federations, is a government institution. Genuine trade union organisation is illegal and all strikes are banned.

The spontaneous revolts in Zaire have exposed the weakness of the state. The ruling stratum has no hesitation

in putting down resistance, though it lacks the strength and cohesion to deal with the ill-organised but widely dispersed opposition. The Government receives expert guidance, training and equipment from the West to assist its repressive activities, but it is still incapable of keeping order.

Exacerbated by the crisis, conflicts within the national bourgeoisie now extend into the state apparatus. The army has been kept weak to prevent it becoming a pole of opposition to the Government. Soldiers are for the most part untrained, and often unpaid; this is why they are usually more interested in looting than in fighting. Mobutu's supremacy is ensured by granting concessions to the army on political and ethnic grounds. The Presidential Guard of four battalions, drawn mainly from Mobutu's home province Equateur, is well paid and trained by European advisers. Any opposition within the army is crushed remorselessly. After an attempted coup in 1975, seven generals, twelve colonels, eighteen majors, thirteen captains and eleven lieutenants were charged with complicity; after summary courts martial, a number were shot.⁶² In March 1978, thirteen alleged conspirators against the state, including nine army officers, were executed.

The civilian population is policed by the National Documentation Centre. It conducts counter-insurgency operations, using special 're-education' camps such as the one at Locanda in Kivu province. Refugees who had fled to Angola from the fighting in Shaba in 1978 have been singled out for repression on their return. Many have been tortured and imprisoned; others have disappeared and are presumed dead.

- 40 Lacroix, op cit, p203, *Rapport Banque du Zaire*, 1967, pp182, 185-86, 190; 1968-69, pp72, 190; 1970-71, p97; 1972-73, pp93-95.
- 41 Calculated from *World Metal Statistics*, op cit and from Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *World Outlook*, 1979, p105.
- 42 World Bank, *World Tables*, 1976.
- 43 EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review*, first quarter 1974.
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 *Rapport Banque du Zaire*, 1967, pp38, 121-24; 1970-71, pp20, 75; 1972-73, p200.
- 46 The price of copper fluctuated wildly throughout the early 'seventies.
- 47 EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review*, first quarter 1977, p6.
- 48 C Young, 'Zaire: the unending crisis', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 7, No 1, 1978, p171.
- 49 EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review*, annual supplement 1978, p10.
- 50 *African Business*, June 1979, p36.
- 51 EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review*, annual supplement 1978, p10.
- 52 World Bank, *Annual Report*, statistical annex, 1978, p124.
- 53 Ibid, p126.
- 54 The volume of imported capital goods relative to the total production of industrial goods remained at a very high level of 2 to 1.
- 55 *Africa Research Bulletin*, 15 January-14 February 1979, p4989.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Ibid, 15 March-14 April 1979, p5057.
- 58 Young, 'Zaire: the unending crisis', op cit, p176.
- 59 See Union Nationale des Travailleurs Zairois, 'Positions concernant la politique des salaires', cited in J Ryneman, 'Comment le regime Mobutu a sape ses propres fondements', *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 1977.
- 60 *Financial Times*, 12 February 1979.
- 61 *The Guardian*, 1 February 1979. Lack of official statistics makes it difficult to trace the attack on the working class in Zaire. The International Labour Office *Yearbook* for 1978 contains no entries for population, employment, hours of work, wages and salaries, accidents or disputes.
- 62 *New African*, July 1978, p15.

The crisis plunges Zaire into deeper and deeper chaos. The Belgian Foreign Ministry recently summarised the breakdown of economic and political order:

'As far as Kinshasa is concerned, difficulties can break out any day. There are already local riots and demonstrations carried out, in some cases by unhappy and disaffected troops of the Zaire Army. There is a real danger of fighting between these armed gangs and other units of the Zaire army. Kinshasa is in danger also because food is becoming more and more scarce. The people have nothing to eat and there is little or no medicine. Serious riots are now threatened and the Zaire Army cannot guarantee security to the Europeans.'⁶³

The implications of this statement are clear: if the Government cannot keep order, then foreign troops will be obliged to step in.

Imperialist strategy

'If the almost indefensible President Mobutu is to be defended, his helpers are entitled to impose conditions.'⁶⁴

The prospect of imperialist interference in Zaire was brought closer by the inability of the Government to pay its debts. In June 1975 Zaire fell behind on its interest payments; subsequently it has failed to meet other commitments. In January 1976 Chase Manhattan was obliged to suspend a nine year loan of \$227 million, and \$250 million of US export credits were postponed indefinitely.⁶⁵ The IMF, the agency which advances the general interests of imperialism in Zaire, has imposed more stringent controls and conditions on the national bourgeoisie. It is less concerned with the amount of capital at risk (only \$400 million, divided among 120 banks) than with the circumstances that led to today's unprecedented moratorium on loans to Zaire. The imperialist nations are anxious to discourage other countries with weak economies, such as Peru, the Sudan and Turkey, from reneging on their debts. The IMF dispatched top trouble-shooter Erwin Blumenthal to run the Bank of Zaire. He acted swiftly to control the use of foreign exchange:

'Banks cannot now open a letter of credit unless they have the foreign exchange in their own hands. They cannot add to existing debt, and 30 per cent of export receipts must be automatically sent to the Banque du Zaire. The remaining 70 per cent has to be split according to a strict set of guidelines: 35 per cent to raw materials, spare parts etc, 33 per cent to food and pharmaceuticals, 25 per cent to invisibles, 2 per cent to energy and 5 per cent to others.'⁶⁶

The IMF must show that debts can be paid; it must insist on the imposition of the measures necessary to achieve financial solvency.

The problem that confronts imperialism at every turn is the inability of the national bourgeoisie to defend the interests of capital. The difficulty is that debt repayment requires not only the pauperisation of the workers and peasants, but also attacks on sections of the bourgeoisie. This threatens the very foundations of Mobutu's regime. Inevitably the Government has proved incapable of carrying through the demands of foreign capital. This became clear in August 1978 when Zaire failed to raise the security necessary for a \$250 million Eurocredit.⁶⁷ Bofossa, then Governor of the Bank of Zaire, pleaded that further talks on the rescheduling of commercial loans should be postponed for at least six months.

The patience of Zaire's creditors began to wear thin when it became obvious that little was being done to restructure the economy. It was further strained by the obvious fact that much revenue was consumed by a profligate and decadent ruling clique instead of being used to revive the economy. Bourgeois cynics at the Economist Intelligence Unit gave vent to the exasperation of metro-

politan usurers at the misuse of their credit: 'Repression and inequality that might be tolerated if they led to rapid capital formation in Zaire are insupportable when they result in the conspicuous consumption of an unproductive elite and the banking of funds in Switzerland'.⁶⁸ Imperialism's need to force Zaire to repay its debts and make better use of foreign exchange points to the need to assume direct political control.

In Zaire the imperialist powers are caught in a contradiction of their own making. They need to maintain Mobutu for the same reason that they have always backed him — he can pursue the interests of foreign capital and contain the potential threat from the masses more efficiently than direct European occupation. Yet the deepening world recession daily reveals the incapacity of Mobutu's dictatorship to safeguard foreign interests. Increasingly, these pressures force imperialism to resolve its problems through military invasion.

Imperialist rivalry

Most advanced capitalist countries have important investments in Zaire. At the end of 1975, foreign investment was valued at over \$1 billion.⁶⁹ Fiat, British Leyland and General Motors all have assembly plants there — all working today at a fraction of capacity. In the fiercely competitive climate generated by the recession, each imperialist nation must try to increase its share of the market and secure cheap raw materials at the expense of the others. The scramble for Zaire is encouraged by the weakness of Belgium, the traditional colonial power. It is wide open for redivision amongst the contending forces of world imperialism.

Belgium's share of Zaire's import market fell from 22 per cent in 1970 to 17 per cent in 1975. In these years of expanding investment the major part of capital and commodity imports came from the countries with the most productive economies. The USA led the field in the sale of high technology goods, the share held by it and Canada rose from 12 per cent to 20 per cent between 1970 and 1975. In the same period West Germany's import share rose from 9 per cent to 15 per cent.⁷⁰

The pattern of foreign investment in Zaire has changed over the last few years. The USA has been less prepared to risk capital in the trouble spots of central Africa. However, nations like France and Belgium, which are more dependent on Africa and have less solid domestic economies than the USA, cannot afford to be so discriminating.⁷¹ The US share of the agricultural equipment market declined to the advantage of European suppliers, encouraged as they were by government export guarantees. Japan has also sought a share in Zaire's market, offering the most competitive investment terms of all the imperialist powers. Recently the Ishicawajima-Harima Heavy Industries Company and five other Japanese firms won a \$172 million contract to build a suspension bridge across the river Zaire.⁷²

The immediate conflict over Zaire is between France and Belgium. France, which increased its share of the Zairean import market from 8.6 per cent in 1970 to 14 per cent in 1975, is crucially dependent on Africa.⁷³ However, since the recession began to bite in 1974 the French Treasury has been unable to finance all its African commitments. French companies have been forced to complement state grants by borrowing at punitive market rates of interest (12-13 per cent in 1978). France can no longer compete with other national capitals. In 1975 it lost out in the negotiations at the Lome Convention; German support for free trade triumphed over its attempts to check US and Japanese intrusions into a traditional European market by keeping preferential relations in Africa. France has been

obliged to adopt a more belligerent policy to compensate for its economic weakness.

France has established firm military links with the French-speaking countries of Africa. One commentator explained the simple logic behind these moves: 'By organising armies to be dependent on French logistics and training, France can exercise a degree of control over these countries' national politics . . .'.⁷⁴ In addition to this extensive assistance, France maintains 12 500 troops of its own in Africa.⁷⁵

The French military build-up has provoked Belgian wrath. The Belgian Foreign Minister pinpointed the root of his country's animosity towards France in his polemic against its intervention in Zaire in 1977: 'France is particularly interested in Zaire's natural resources and Belgium resents this as international rivalry'.⁷⁶ Indeed, France's crass attempts to stake a claim in Zaire have antagonised not only Belgium but also Britain, Germany and the USA.

The reconquest of Zaire?

'Ideally Africa should be left to the Africans. But its resources are vital to the West.'⁷⁷

Copper and cobalt are both vital to imperialism. Copper is a crucial raw material for the telecommunications, electrical and engineering industries. Cobalt is necessary for the production of cutting tools, jet engines and permanent magnets. Zaire contains almost two thirds of the known world deposits of cobalt.⁷⁸ And, to Western powers now desperately seeking new sources of energy, Zaire offers rich reserves of uranium.⁷⁹

Continuing difficulties in the production and supply of these important minerals force the imperialist powers into action. Supplies and investments in Zaire are under constant threat from mounting internal chaos and deepening imperialist rivalries. These difficulties are compounded by the political instability of the surrounding countries. Despite US encouragement to a rapprochement between Zaire and Angola, the activities of UNITA (National Front for the Total Independence of Angola) guerrillas have frustrated efforts to reopen the Benguela railway. The southern transport route to South Africa, which at present carries more than 15 000 tonnes of copper per month, is liable to close at any time as a result of the war in Zimbabwe.⁸⁰

Imperialism cannot tolerate interruptions in its supplies. Capital invested in mining is of a high organic composition with a long period of turnover. The demand for metals, and the risks involved in their extraction, mean that foreign powers will take over if the indigenous ones cannot maintain suitable conditions for production and distribution. Urging some form of intervention, one leading mining capitalist summarised the situation as follows:

'Unless these countries are going to be content to sit on their copper resources without developing them, it seems inevitable that they will have to attract foreign capital, and to attract it will require the establishment of conditions which will be different to some of those ruling today. It is for this reason that I believe some of the present political constraints which I have mentioned earlier could be greatly modified.'⁸¹

May 1977 was the first time since Mobutu came to power that foreign troops saw active service in Zaire. Supported by French troops, Moroccan soldiers were deployed in a two month battle to repel FNLC guerrillas entering Shaba province from bases in neighbouring Angola. A year later, a much more substantial force including many exiles from Shaba exposed the vulnerability of Mobutu's regime by capturing the important mining centre of Kolwezi. This time European soldiers had to be drafted in; 600

French legionnaires were rapidly followed by 1000 Belgian paratroopers.⁸²

Once Kolwezi had been recaptured and the immediate danger contained, the European forces were withdrawn. An 'inter-Africa force' composed mainly of Moroccans and Senegalese, together with token forces from Togo, Gabon and the Ivory Coast, took over the supervision of law and order in Shaba.⁸³

Zaire today provides a glimpse of the forces of barbarism unleashed by the capitalist recession. As the people turn to subsistence farming to escape starvation, the imperialist powers prepare to do battle for the country's mineral wealth. The process of decolonisation destroyed the anti-imperialist movement, and today foreign troops can easily suppress resistance to Mobutu and the West.⁸⁴ For the present imperialism has been able to hold back the popular struggle. But imperialism cannot develop the productive forces of Zaire. The future lies with the only force that can – the working class.

Alan Harding

63 *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol 16, No 2, 15 March 1979, p5167.

64 Editorial, *The Economist*, 27 May 1978, p14.

65 *Euromoney*, February 1979, p10.

66 Circular No 156 dated 1 September 1978, quoted in *ibid*, p11.

67 Zaire could not raise the \$130 million as required by Citibank to be deposited in the Bank for International Settlement in Basle. In fact it was forced to *withdraw* a further \$18 million.

68 EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review*, second quarter 1978, p3.

69 US Department of Commerce, Overseas Business Report, *Marketing in Zaire*, April 1977, p18.

70 EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review*, annual supplement 1976, p19 and 1978 p24.

71 The US Department of Commerce observed at the end of 1976 that the only 'new machinery being bought to re-equip the forestry industry was German, supplied by Belgian companies with a long term relationship and willing to extend credit'. *Marketing in Zaire*, op cit, p7.

72 *Africa Report*, March/April 1979, p36.

73 EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review*, annual supplement 1976, p19 and 1978, p24.

74 T Jallaud, 'France's intervention in Africa', *Africa Background*, 1979, p52.

75 France keeps five military bases in Africa: in Djibouti, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Gabon and Mayotte. J C Hollick, 'French intervention in Africa in 1978', *The World Today*, February 1979, p71.

76 *Africa Research Bulletin*, May 1978, p4858.

77 Editorial, *Daily Mirror*, 31 May 1978.

78 700 000 out of 1.1 million tonnes. *Africa Research Bulletin*, 15 March-14 April 1979, p5057. Sixty-five per cent of US imports of cobalt originate in Zaire. *Africa Report*, September/October 1978, p15.

79 This is a major concern of France which has embarked on a massive programme of investment in nuclear energy. *Africa Research Bulletin*, 15 May-14 June 1978, p4705.

80 *The Guardian*, 15 March 1979.

81 Sir Ronald Prain, 'African mining in the doldrums', *African Business*, pre-issue, September 1978, p15.

82 The Belgian army, lacking the immediate strike capacity of the French, was backed up by the USA. Although no US troops were sent to the war zone, the 82nd Airborne Division was placed on alert and used to fly in food and supplies. *Africa Research Bulletin*, May 1978, p4855. President Carter, speaking at a NATO summit, welcomed the Franco-Belgian initiative in Zaire, and all efforts by NATO member countries 'to work for peace in Africa and support nations and peoples in need'. *Ibid*, p4861.

83 All foreign soldiers were due to pull out in summer 1979. As they provide the only security for 3000-4000 white technicians who remain in Shaba, the prospects for complete military withdrawal are remote.

84 In February 1979, for example, Belgian troops were used to quell popular unrest around Kitona, 200 miles from Kinshasa.

Showdown in Zimbabwe

Today the war in Zimbabwe rages more fiercely than at any time since the fighting began in December 1972.¹ In the last year more than 250 Rhodesian soldiers have died; in the first three months of 1979 about 1000 guerrillas were killed.² A major escalation in the war has taken place since the Internal Settlement was signed on 3 March 1978. Events in Zimbabwe have become the focus of world attention, bearing witness to the seriousness with which imperialism regards the outcome of the struggle.

The result of the struggle in Zimbabwe will determine the future of Southern Africa. The potential threat to South Africa's vast interests in the area is something that the imperialist powers, and in particular Britain, cannot ignore. The need to maintain spheres of influence within which profitable investment and a ready supply of raw materials can be assured has made Southern Africa of paramount importance for imperialism.

It is not only the imperialist nations which want a stable solution in Zimbabwe. The Front Line states of Zambia, Mozambique, Botswana, Tanzania and Angola have made numerous attempts to clamp down on the nationalist forces. The intensification of the war and the failure of Ian Smith's Rhodesian Front (RF) to defeat the armed guerrillas has badly disrupted the economies of Zambia and Mozambique. The tacit support which the Front Line states give to the Patriotic Front (PF) means that the war inevitably extends onto their own terrain. The raids on refugee and guerrilla camps have become a regular feature of the fighting. As 'Rhodesia's top soldier', Lieutenant-General Sir Peter Walls, put it: 'There is no single day of the year we are not operating beyond our borders'.³ The direct threat to stability in these countries forces them, too, to seek a rapid settlement through negotiation.

But, to succeed, any settlement must include the nationalist guerrilla leaders. Their parties retain considerable support in Zimbabwe and they are vital to its long-term stability. The war can only be ended by including the PF or one wing of it within an all-party settlement — a solution which has so far proved elusive.

The guerrilla war has pushed the Rhodesian economy to the limit. Together with subsidies for crops necessitated by sanctions and the fighting, the war accounted for 40 per cent of government spending and 15 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by the beginning of 1978.⁴ In July 1979, Ian Smith announced that the cost of the war had quadrupled in the previous five years, rising from Rh\$0.26m to Rh\$1.1m a day.⁵ The public sector is one of the few expanding areas of the economy. It grew by 24 per cent in 1977, largely because of the mounting cost of military and civilian security.⁶

Since 1975 real GDP has fallen by 13 per cent.⁷ In 1977 alone the output of the manufacturing sector declined by 9.4 per cent.⁸ When account is taken of an overall population increase of 13 per cent since 1974, it is clear that living standards have fallen by 25 per cent.⁹ The effect of the war on the economy is shown by the decline in investment, especially in the manufacturing and service sectors; gross fixed capital formation fell from 23 per cent of GDP in 1975 to 17.4 per cent in 1977.¹⁰

In a country where whites make up less than four per cent of the population, military call-up has created a shortage of skilled white workers. This shortage has been compounded by high rates of emigration. More and more people have chosen to leave the country as conditions have deteriorated. They include many of the 45 per cent of the white population which came to the country in the 10 years after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965.¹¹ A major exodus has begun; the white population fell by 11 000 in 1977 (3.5 per cent) and by a further 14 000 in 1978.¹² In the first four months of 1979 a further 4500 settlers left the country — more than twice the total for the same period in 1978.¹³

Casualties on both sides have grown enormously since the Internal Settlement was signed. According to the RF 7000 guerrillas died between December 1972 and March 1978. In the following nine months at least another 6000 were killed — 800 of them in September alone.¹⁴ These figures exclude the thousands killed in attacks on refugee and training camps in Zambia and Mozambique.

Despite heavy losses the ranks of the guerrillas have continued to swell. Since 1977 the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) has expanded its military wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA). Two groups of guerrillas have finished their training in Tanzania, putting a force of at least 15 000 under the command of ZANU leader Robert Mugabe. The Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), the military wing of Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), numbered 10 000 in 1978, with a further 17 000 under training in Angola and Zambia.¹⁵ ZANLA has borne the brunt of the war in Zimbabwe: it has more than 10 000 guerrillas in the country, while ZIPRA forces number 2000.¹⁶

The effect of the war on the African population has been catastrophic. As part of the 'war effort' Africans have been thrown off the land into camps known as 'protected villages' (PVs). Many have been made landless, losing their subsistence; at the same time Rhodesia's agricultural productivity has been reduced. In May 1977 there were 203 PVs, containing 580 000 Africans, more than double the official figure of 250 000.¹⁷ The occupants of these camps have been used as forced labour to build a more extensive road network. Hundreds of curfew-breakers have been shot by the security forces and many more have been tortured for helping the guerrillas.¹⁸ These are the measures the RF has been forced to adopt to regain control of the countryside.

Repression has not deterred rural support for the guerrillas. Many Africans refuse to pay school or cattle-dipping fees to the government. By the end of 1977 the non-payment of dues to the African Councils — the local government bodies in the Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) — had bankrupted 50 out of a total of 240.¹⁹ Rural administration has almost disintegrated. In the same year 36 000 children were boycotting school in the eastern TTLs. By June 1978 some 750 schools had been forced to close because of unpaid fees, and a further 63 had been burnt down by guerrillas.²⁰ By the end of the year 986 black primary and secondary schools had been closed, leaving 300 000 African

children without education and 6000 teachers without jobs.²¹

Increased guerrilla activity in rural areas has widely disrupted agricultural production. Work on tea estates and white-owned farms in the eastern part of the country has been halted. ZANU has frequently shelled Umtali, a town at the centre of an area in which 70 per cent of white-owned farms have been abandoned.²² Of the country's 6100 white farms, some 2000 are now deserted as a result of the fighting. In August 1977 a Rhodesian official in the eastern part of the country admitted that the whole economy of the Honde Valley was near collapse, and that the area was being run by guerrilla forces.²³ Since the Internal Settlement the rapid spread of martial law, which now covers 95 per cent of the country, has revealed the inability of the security forces to control the rural areas. The successful destruction of 14 PVs in May 1978 by ZANLA forces and the subsequent escape of the 30 000 occupants confirm this fact. By early 1978 Mugabe could claim that at least two thirds of the country consisted of 'semi-liberated areas'.²⁴

The Smith regime has attempted to stem the growing influence of the Patriotic Front within Zimbabwe. Immediately after the Internal Settlement was signed the government lifted its ban on ZANU and ZAPU within the country in a desperate attempt to end the war. But the shooting down of a Viscount airliner and the killing of 10 survivors, allegedly by ZIPRA guerrillas, put an end to this strategy. Selective martial law was introduced and the leaders of the internal wings of ZANU and ZAPU were thrown into prison.²⁵ At the same time the *Zimbabwe Times*, owned by the British-based Lonrho company, was banned by the RF for openly supporting Nkomo.²⁶

In the last few months the growth of private armies attached to the nationalist parties supporting the Internal Settlement has added a new dimension to the war. Bishop Abel Muzorewa's United African National Council (UANC) and the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU/ANC) are reported to control around 6000 armed auxiliaries throughout the country.²⁷ Recently the Pfumo Revanhu (Spear of the People), an auxiliary militia drawn from Sithole's and Muzorewa's private armies, has been formed. Although these militias include a few guerrillas who have left the Patriotic Front to join the Internal Settlement, most have been recruited from the urban unemployed. Peter Walls, head of the security forces, explained the relationship between the private armies and the Government:

'These guerrillas are under the control and direction of the Interim Government. They are on-side . . . Let me clarify one point. We call people who are fighting against the Government terrorists. If they come on-sides with the Government, we call them guerrillas.'²⁸

Many of these 'guerrillas' were trained abroad in Zaire, Libya, Malawi and the Sudan.²⁹ They were instrumental in coercing the African population to vote for their respective parties in the Internal Settlement elections in April 1979. Without them the Interim Government and the security forces would have been severely stretched.

The 1979 Commonwealth Conference in Lusaka has shown that the Internal Settlement has failed to achieve the stability that imperialism requires. One way or another, imperialism must preserve capitalist relations in Zimbabwe and strengthen its position in South Africa. However, whether it uses the smooth diplomacy of Commonwealth politicians or direct repression, imperialism can only postpone its ultimate defeat. It cannot contain the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe.

RHODESIA: A SETTLER STATE

The foundation of the white regime

Since the turn of the century imperialism has maintained its interests in Zimbabwe through the white settler community. The privileges granted to the white settlers ensured their support for imperialism. In this way, imperialism was guaranteed access to the country's raw materials while the

- 1 Because of their imperialist connotations we reserve the terms Rhodesia and Rhodesian for creations of British imperialism, such as the settler state and the security forces. The terms Zimbabwe and Zimbabwean are used in connection with the country's territorial boundaries and the struggle of the African masses.
- 2 *Financial Times*, 1 May 1979.
- 3 *The Daily Telegraph*, 28 September 1978.
- 4 Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), *Quarterly Economic Review*, first quarter 1978, p3.
- 5 *Financial Times*, 27 July 1979. [Rh\$1=£0.71, July 1979, Ed]
- 6 'L'economie rhodesienne en 1977 et ses perspectives pour 1978', *Marches Tropicaux*, 15 October 1978, p2470.
- 7 *Financial Times*, 12 April 1979.
- 8 EIU, op cit, fourth quarter 1977, p3.
- 9 *Financial Times*, 12 April 1979.
- 10 Calculated from *Supplement to the Monthly Digest of Statistics*, Central Statistical Office (CSO), Salisbury, April 1979, p6.
- 11 M Loney, *Rhodesia: white racism and imperial response*, Penguin, 1975, p197.
- 12 *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, CSO, Salisbury, April 1979, p1.
- 13 *Marches Tropicaux*, 8 June 1979, p1562.
- 14 *Rhodesia after the Internal Settlement*, Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), in consultation with the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Rhodesia (CCJP), 1978, p18; 'Bright spots in the gloom', *Financial Mail*, 6 October 1978.
- 15 *The Observer*, 23 April 1978.
- 16 *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 April 1979.
- 17 J Atkinson, 'Counterinsurgency and terror against the African masses', *Revolution in Zimbabwe 7*, *Intercontinental Press*, Vol 15, No 39, 24 October 1977, p1172.
- 18 In a policy codenamed Operation Turkey, the security forces have been driven to use food as a weapon of war. They have prevented rural Africans from feeding the guerrillas by allowing them their immediate food requirements alone. Grinding mills and shops have been closed down over wide areas, making the African peasantry bear the brunt of the war. *Financial Times*, 1 May 1979.
- 19 J Atkinson, 'Obstacles to mass mobilization', *Revolution in Zimbabwe 6*, *Intercontinental Press*, Vol 15, No 38, 17 October 1977, p1146.
- 20 *International Herald Tribune*, 17 June 1978.
- 21 'Private armies cause problems', *New African*, No 137, January 1979, p34. The health sector has seen the closure of 122 clinics and 30 hospitals.
- 22 'Zimbabwe - a case of diminishing options', *Africa*, No 187, November 1978, p35.
- 23 *Zimbabwe: the facts about Rhodesia*, International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, November 1977, p46.
- 24 'The war round Salisbury', *Financial Mail*, 24 February 1978. In early 1978 ZANLA leader J Tongogara claimed that there were 'not less than 15 000 active ZANU workers inside Rhodesia'. They include guerrillas, village chairmen, secretaries and other political officials in areas which ZANU administers. See *Africa Confidential*, Vol 19, No 10, May 1978, p1.
- 25 *The Times*, 11 September 1978.
- 26 'Bright spots in the gloom', op cit.
- 27 *International Herald Tribune*, 20 April 1979.
- 28 *Rhodesia after the Internal Settlement*, op cit, p14.
- 29 *New African*, May 1978, p31.

unhampered exploitation of the indigenous population was secured. Capitalist exploitation went hand in hand with the denial of democratic rights to the black population – its national oppression. Today this provides the backcloth for the war in Zimbabwe.

The colonisation of Zimbabwe was first undertaken by Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company (BSAC) in the 1890s. The colony was named Rhodesia in his honour. Anticipating mineral wealth comparable to the deposits discovered in the South African Rand, the company made large investments to develop the infrastructure of the region.³⁰ But when the BSAC's initial optimism proved unfounded it turned to European settlement to make the colony pay. Settlement provided the BSAC with firmer control over the territory and greater security for its assets. The value of its mines, railways and land increased considerably and BSAC was able to realise a substantial profit on its investments by selling land to the settlers. By 1923 more than 35 000 whites had settled in Zimbabwe and the region had been integrated into the British Empire.³¹

The invasion of European settlers had a drastic impact on the African population. They took the most fertile land and pushed the Africans onto the worst land. By 1922, 64 per cent of the population was confined to tribal reserves.³² A series of laws was passed forcing Africans to work on European farms and enterprises. Their wages were kept down through the Masters and Servants Act, which empowered the settler to dispose of his 'servant' at will. Legislation was also introduced to curtail the free movement of Africans. African farmers were prevented from growing certain cash crops, guaranteeing European settlers a monopoly over profitable agriculture. Systematic discrimination against the African population was essential for the establishment of a viable, European settler community. The political oppression of the African population provided the framework for capitalist development in Zimbabwe. It is still necessary for capital accumulation today.

The white working class also played an important role in consolidating the hold of imperialism over the country. Drawn to Zimbabwe to take up jobs in mining, transport and services, white workers from Britain and South Africa could earn much higher wages than in their home countries. Their privileges depended on forcing Africans to play a subservient role in the economy. In this they shared a common interest with the bourgeoisie, and with the white farmers in particular. Both supported the repression of the black population – the workers to maintain their higher wages and skilled status, the farmers to guarantee their control of the land.

The strength of the coalition between white workers and the bourgeois farmers and mine-owners allowed them to achieve a degree of independence from colonial control. The introduction of 'Responsible Government' in 1923 made Southern Rhodesia a self-governing colony – unlike most of Britain's other colonies. Although still subservient to Britain, it had its own parliament, army and police force.³³

The dominance of the white settlers over the African population was consolidated by legislation introduced in the 'thirties. The position of the white farmers was strengthened by the 1930 Land Apportionment Act, which institutionalised the racial allocation of all land. The privileges of European workers were further protected under the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934; it stipulated that the term employee 'shall not include a native'.³⁴ The same year saw the formation of the United Party (UP), which represented the common interests of Rhodesian whites without interruption for the next 28 years. This coalition of class interests could only be maintained through

the political oppression of the African masses. Capitalist domination took the form of national oppression – the denial of the most basic rights of the African majority.

Settler power

The Rhodesian economy flourished after the Second World War. Between 1945 and 1953 GDP grew in real terms at an average annual rate of 10 per cent.³⁵ New local industries in the manufacturing sector expanded, encouraged by a policy of import substitution. Gross manufacturing output rose from £3m in 1938 to £14m in 1945; by 1957 it stood at £105m.³⁶ The contribution of manufacturing to national income rose from nine per cent before the war, to 15 per cent in the early 'fifties and to over 18 per cent in the early 'sixties.³⁷ The expansion of the economy was speeded up by the concentration and centralisation of capital, and a modern manufacturing sector began to emerge.

Nowhere was the concentration of capital more apparent than in the mining industry, and in particular in gold mining. The closure of many small mines reduced the number of gold workings from 1754 in 1935 to 301 in 1956.³⁸ Despite a decline in the contribution made by mining to GDP, from 25 per cent in 1938 to 10 per cent in the early 'fifties and to only five per cent in the early 'sixties, total output increased.³⁹

The expansion of agricultural production was stimulated by high prices on the world market. The total value of output soared from £4m in 1938 to £42m in 1957. The cultivation of tobacco accounted for a major part of this increase.⁴⁰ Between 1948 and 1958, production trebled, the value of output increased fourfold, and the number of growers rose from about 1000 to 2669.⁴¹ Tobacco became the most important foreign exchange earner; between 1947 and 1953 exports jumped from £23m to £64m.⁴² Although in 1939 tobacco had made up only about 10 per cent of exports, by 1945 this figure had reached 27 per cent.⁴³

The boom following the Second World War allowed the white working class to achieve higher living standards and strengthen its privileged position. A clear division of labour was established. White workers were assured of skilled jobs in the towns while the emerging African working class was consigned to unskilled labour in industry and agriculture. White supremacy was reinforced by the constant influx of new settlers anxious to share in the benefits of a prosperous economy.

Capital's strategy in Rhodesia was determined by the need for a regular supply of labour in the manufacturing industries and stable class relations in the countryside. Much of the peasantry was dispossessed and an African working class emerged, expanding from 254 000 in 1936 to 377 000 in 1946. By 1955 it numbered more than half a million.⁴⁴ As the conditions of the Africans in the reserves deteriorated they were forced to seek employment in the towns.

As the African working class grew black workers began to form their own trade union and political organisations. In the late 'forties the struggle against economic exploitation precipitated a series of strikes. This militant action was seen by the white working class as a threat to its privileged position. Its privileges rested directly upon the subordination of African workers, and any attempt by blacks to bargain with capital on the same terms as white workers challenged their differentials. During the 'twenties the white labour movement had made clear its feelings on migrant labourers and the African peasantry, referring to them as 'potential blacklegs whom employers might use one day to undercut

white wages'.⁴⁵ On every important occasion since then the white working class has stood shoulder to shoulder with the Rhodesian bourgeoisie in denying democratic rights to the African masses.

The emergence of a militant African working class in the post-war period and the growth of the nationalist movement posed a direct threat to the entire white community. It was met with a united response. A revised version of the Industrial Conciliation Act introduced in 1959 protected white workers from African competition by discriminating in favour of skilled European workers. It allowed the state to maintain control over the black working class by regulating the formation of black trade unions. As the Minister of Labour said at the time: 'It could be argued that to provide for these associations is nothing more than a *control measure* and let me be perfectly frank, it is'.⁴⁶ Workers not covered by this Act, such as agricultural labourers and domestic servants, were employed under the terms of the Masters and Servants Act of 1901. This barbaric piece of legislation sets out a series of penalties for workers erring in the course of their employment. Further attacks on the African working class followed, with the introduction of measures such as the Unlawful Organisations Act, the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act and the Detention Act.

In the past 20 years the preservation of European privilege has required more intense political oppression. Under the 1969 Land Tenure Act, the division of land into white and black areas was laid down, 'for all time'.⁴⁷ New laws were passed to protect the reservation of skilled jobs for European workers. Even white semiskilled and unskilled workers in the lower echelons of the civil service and the railways are immune to African competition.⁴⁸ Strict control of apprenticeships makes it nearly impossible for Africans to enter certain skilled trades.⁴⁹ Political oppression has been a constant feature of life for the African masses, from 'Responsible Government', through UDI, to the present Internal Settlement.

UDI: IMPERIALISM AND THE AFRICAN WORKING CLASS

The Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the 'illegal' Smith regime in 1965 merely represented an extension of 'Responsible Government'. UDI ratified the dominant social and political position of the European settlers. It was a recognition of the fact that power could not be transferred to an African middle class without infringing the privileges jealously guarded by the European community. The stabilisation of Smith's new government depended on its ability to contain the only consistent adversary of imperialism in Zimbabwe – the African working class.

Imperialism came to accept UDI because the strategy it had tried in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties, the strategy of decolonisation, had failed. The attempt at decolonisation had been a response to the emergence of a militant African working class. Industrial militancy, which reached a high point in the General Strike of 1948, was followed by rural unrest after the implementation of the 1951 Land Husbandry Act. To contain this rising resistance the settler regime sought the support of the nascent African middle class.

The 'fifties therefore saw the adoption of a new strategy of 'racial partnership', the aim of which was to build a buffer between the settler state and the African masses. It was hoped that a stratum of better-off Africans in the towns and countryside could be created and used as a stabilising influence on the African masses. The Land Husbandry Act was passed with the aim of concentrating

land in the hands of a small number of African farmers. Educational reforms were introduced, leading to the establishment of multiracial schools and a 10 per cent annual growth in the number of teachers and pupils between 1956 and 1959.⁵⁰ The electoral system was also modified to enfranchise the white regime's intended black friends. Fully supported by international capital, the European settlers carried out these measures to contain mass opposition and provide stability throughout Southern Africa. The new approach was summed up by Prime Minister Huggins: 'we shall never do much with these people until we have established a native middle class'.⁵¹

The other motive behind 'racial partnership' was to win acceptance for the proposed Central African Federation (CAF) from the African middle class of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia (now Malawi and Zambia). The aim of the CAF was to bring these two countries together into one economic unit under the domination of Southern Rhodesia. The CAF was to take responsibility for the large debts which Southern Rhodesia had incurred and to control the investment of the revenue from sales of Northern Rhodesian copper. The backward economies of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia were to become protected markets for the growing manufactures of Southern Rhodesia. The formation of the CAF was strongly encouraged by Britain and South Africa, which saw this new economic unit as a potentially profitable area for investment and a means for strengthening the hold of imperialism throughout the region.

The settlers' strategy foundered on the contradictions inherent in their own social position. This attempt to extend and consolidate settler power aroused African nationalist

- 30 G Arrighi, 'The political economy of Rhodesia' in G Arrighi & J Saul, *Essays on the political economy of Africa*, Monthly Review Press, New York & London, 1973, p336.
- 31 C Stoneman, 'Foreign capital and the prospects for Zimbabwe', *World Development*, Vol 4, No 1, 1976, p28.
- 32 Arrighi, 'Labour supplies in historical perspective: a study of the proletarianization of the African peasantry in Rhodesia', in Arrighi & Saul, op cit, p202.
- 33 Loney, op cit, p15.
- 34 P S Harris, 'Industrial relations in Rhodesia', *South African Journal of Economics*, Vol 42, No 1, 1974, p66.
- 35 C Stoneman, 'Economic development with unlimited supplies of capital: the case of Southern Rhodesia', *South African Labour Bulletin (SALB)*, Vol 2, No 7, February 1976, p4.
- 36 L Tow, *The manufacturing economy in Southern Rhodesia*, mimeo, Washington, 1960, p4.
- 37 Arrighi, 'The political economy of Rhodesia', op cit, p353.
- 38 Loney, op cit, p114.
- 39 Arrighi, 'The political economy of Rhodesia', op cit, p35.
- 40 J Atkinson, 'The superexploitation of African labour', *Intercontinental Press*, Vol 15, No 35, 26 September 1977, p1045.
- 41 Arrighi, 'The political economy of Rhodesia', op cit, p351.
- 42 M Faber, 'Economic structuralism and its relevance to Southern Rhodesia's future', *The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers*, No 36, p29.
- 43 G Kay, *Rhodesia: a human geography*, University of London Press, 1970, p47.
- 44 Stoneman, 'Foreign capital and the prospects for Zimbabwe', op cit, p31.
- 45 Harris, op cit, p65.
- 46 Quoted in P F Sithole, 'Major problems in union formation in Rhodesia in the 'seventies', *SALB*, March 1975, p6.
- 47 R Riddell, 'The land question', *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, CIIR, No 2, 1978, p5.
- 48 P S Harris, 'Black industrial workers in Rhodesia', *Mambo Occasional Papers*, 1974, p16.
- 49 P S Harris, 'Job reservation - Rhodesian style', *SALB*, March 1975, p47.
- 50 Arrighi, 'The political economy of Rhodesia', op cit, p360.
- 51 Quoted in *ibid*.

sentiment in all three regions. Strong opposition to the CAF developed among the African population of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland and resulted in the eruption of conflict within Southern Rhodesia itself. Most urban Africans saw the CAF as nothing more than an instrument of white Rhodesian domination over the other regimes in the federation. By 1963 the CAF became completely unworkable and was dissolved. While Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were granted independence, imperialism was forced to turn to more direct oppression to maintain its rule in Southern Rhodesia.

The emergence of political opposition to the CAF showed the settlers that, rather than containing unrest, 'racial partnership' fuelled it. Led by the Dominion Party (forerunner of the Rhodesian Front) the European settlers became determined to resist any arrangement which could set a precedent for majority rule. The reformist strategy fell foul of the settlers' interests. UDI, the institutionalisation of European privilege on an extended scale, was to ensure that everything would remain as before.

The economics of UDI

In the late 'sixties Britain could not openly support the racist Smith regime. To retain their influence in black Africa the imperialists were forced to distance themselves from UDI. However, it was only in 1968 that full mandatory sanctions were imposed. By then the RF was ready for the gradual imposition of sanctions. Smith had withdrawn most of Rhodesia's reserves from London to South Africa before Britain moved to freeze them. Thus, when Britain withheld payment of a sum of £5.1m owing to Rhodesian investors, Rhodesia retaliated by blocking the transfer of £8.8m due to Britain – netting £3.7m in the process.⁵²

The initial effect of sanctions was to reduce Rhodesia's export earnings, and hence its capacity to import.⁵³ Rhodesia responded by re-routing its trade through South African middlemen.⁵⁴ Foreign firms – with the exception of South African ones – became 'Rhodesianised' and were prevented from freely repatriating their profits. The state assumed control of industry to encourage the diversification of the Rhodesian economy. International companies were pressurised to re-invest locally and to diversify their production in line with the state's guidelines for import substitution.⁵⁵ State intervention was used to direct foreign exchange away from commerce towards industry. The state found jobs for white workers facing unemployment. Often whites retained their jobs while local African workers were fired: they in turn were saved from massive lay-offs by the repatriation of migrant workers.⁵⁶

These measures led to the recovery of the economy. Between 1967 and 1974 the annual growth of the Rhodesian economy averaged eight per cent in real terms.⁵⁷ Diversification led to a massive 212 per cent growth of secondary industry between 1966 and 1974. During the same period the volume of production rose by 110 per cent.⁵⁸ The number of firms doubled as a result of the encouragement given to small companies by the state.⁵⁹

The boom in manufacturing led to a transfer of capital from agriculture to industry. In 1964 agriculture contributed 21 per cent to GDP, more than any other single sector of the economy. Six years later manufacturing accounted for 20.9 per cent of GDP and agriculture for only 15.5 per cent.⁶⁰ Sanctions had the effect of weakening the position of the tobacco industry. Previously the main source of foreign exchange, tobacco had to be subsidised by the state after sanctions were imposed. Together with sugar, tobacco

was stockpiled while the state took measures to encourage the diversification of agriculture.⁶¹

The RF used every opportunity to stabilise the economy, passing the costs of sanctions onto the Africans. The standard of living in the African areas fell drastically. Rural African income dropped from £15 per head in 1956 to £11 in 1968.⁶² The buttressing of the economy at the expense of the Africans resulted in a period in which profitability was high for international capital. South African capital, intertwined with British investment, maintained its strong position in the Rhodesian economy. UDI appeared to work.

The African working class

UDI was also advanced as a solution to African working class resistance. As the African working class grew during the 'forties and 'fifties the African trade unions emerged as the main opposition to white rule in the urban areas. The bare fact that Africans were organising in defence of their interests posed an immediate threat to the settler state and to the privileges of white workers. The simplest trade union demands brought the black working class into political conflict with the Rhodesian state.

To stem the tide of African militancy the bourgeoisie introduced comprehensive state control over the trade unions. Under the amended Industrial Conciliation Act of 1959 all unions were forced to register with the state. The restrictions imposed on union activity were such that strikes were practically banned; since 1959 there have been no 'legal' strikes.

The ability of the black working class to resist oppression was undermined by its own trade union bureaucracy. The union leadership's strategy was to restrict workers' activity to the narrow framework of wage arbitration. Politics was left to the nationalist movement.⁶³ The legal trade unions could only survive in so far as they accepted the restrictions on their activities imposed by the settler state. Consequently the primary aim of the bureaucracy was to work within the system, even at the expense of the workers' immediate interests. The African trade union bureaucracy began to police the working class rather than defend it. Such strikes as did take place came up directly against the opposition of the union bureaucrats. As one observer noted:

'It is more common for strikes to "break out" in the plant or organisation and union leaders only appear on the scene, or are called in, after the crisis has arisen. Their role then is usually a mediating and moderating one, of negotiating with management and sometimes of trying to get the workers to go back to work.'⁶⁴

The trade union bureaucracy's control over the working class has been strengthened by the difficult conditions that workers face. Workers going on strike are threatened with immediate dismissal. Insecurity of employment is maintained through the existence of a large reserve army of labour. Any vacancy can be filled at once. The scarcity of jobs is reinforced by a system of migration both inside Zimbabwe and from other states, especially from Mozambique and Malawi – a system which is used to keep wages low and to discipline the working class. Migration laws also ensure a high labour turnover and undermine the formation of a stable union membership.⁶⁵

The evolution of African trade unions in a conservative direction was continually encouraged by imperialism. The creation of a moderate, pro-capitalist union leadership was assisted by financial aid from the AFL-CIO (the American

equivalent of the TUC) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). The ICFTU in particular attempted to ensure that African trade unions followed a pro-Western policy in international politics. It supported various key trade union bodies in an effort to moderate the struggles of the African working class. In 1971 the ICFTU noted: 'It is probably true to say that this country has received in recent years more international trade union assistance than any other country on the African Continent'.⁶⁶ This financial aid enabled the trade union bureaucracy to maintain its position.

The pro-imperialist politics of the trade union bureaucracy was personified in Reuben Jamela, the leader of the Southern Rhodesia Trade Union Congress (SRTUC). Jamela resisted any move to involve the unions in the struggle for national liberation. When the National Democratic Party (NDP), the leading nationalist organisation, called for a political strike, he protested: 'I cannot destroy industry when at the same time I want the same industries to flourish so that my followers may get better and higher wages'.⁶⁷

The trade union leadership did not merely play the role of strike breaker. It further disorientated the African working class through propagating a pro-capitalist ideology. Though it protested against the excesses of the repressive settler regime it collaborated in the defence of the social system. One candid trade union leader spoke for the whole bureaucratic stratum when he explained his attitude to strikes:

'Well in the capitalist economy the strike weapon is a legitimate necessity, not to wreck the economy but to build it, because there are tendencies in employers which militate against economic growth. When the policies are no longer progressive, you have to shift control to the employee and the only effective weapon to do this is a strike . . . When the strike weapon is used at the correct time it will help to improve the economy.'⁶⁸

The ICFTU had invested its money wisely in the moderate trade unions of Southern Rhodesia.

The significance of UDI

The essential factor that made UDI a viable solution and spurred the confidence of Smith's RF supporters in their new regime was the weakness of the anti-imperialist movement. At the root of this weakness lay the fragmentation and oppression of the black working class and the dissipation of its struggles by the class collaboration of the trade union bureaucracy.

After UDI the RF turned on the unions and viciously crushed militant opposition to the new regime. The number of work stoppages fell from 138 in 1965 to 57 in 1966 and to 19 in 1971.⁶⁹ The state had no hesitation in using its full military and police apparatus to attack the black working class. The already spurious right to strike was formally removed. On the few occasions when strikes did erupt the state used emergency powers to maintain 'industrial peace'. In June 1972, for example, the RF invoked these powers to order troops to operate services during the busdrivers' strike.⁷⁰

52 J Kombo Moyana, 'The political economy of sanctions and implications for future economic policy', *Journal of Southern African Affairs*, Vol 2, No 4, October 1977, pp503-4.

53 Exports fell from Rh\$322m in 1965 to a low of Rh\$193m in 1968; by 1972 they had risen to Rh\$350m. Imports regained their 1965 level by 1970. *National Accounts and Balance of Payments of Rhodesia*, CSO, Salisbury, 1972, p51. These figures

must be used with caution because many of the transactions between Rhodesia, South Africa and Mozambique were not revealed.

54 J Burgess, 'Interdependence in Southern Africa', *EIU Special Report*, No 32, p23.

55 Kombo Moyana, op cit, p504.

56 Ibid.

57 Stoneman, 'Economic development with unlimited supplies of capital', op cit, p11.

58 J C Chitty, *Recent trends and likely developments in industry*, July 1976, p1.

59 Stoneman, 'Economic development with unlimited supplies of capital', op cit, p10. About 60 per cent of these firms employed 50 workers or less. Kombo Moyana, op cit, p506.

60 A Hoogvelt & D Child, 'Rhodesia: economic blockade and development', *Monthly Review*, October 1973, p45.

61 The RF guaranteed the market for a fixed, but declining quota for tobacco. As a result, 900 of the country's 2600 farmers stopped growing tobacco between 1966 and 1977. Kay, op cit, pp113-14.

62 EIU, *Annual Supplement*, 1976, p5.

63 T E Mswaka put this very clearly in his Presidential Address to the Southern Rhodesia African Trade Union Congress (SRATUC): 'It is high time all of us realised that we cannot use this organisation as a political platform for our political ends. I hate to have a political boss in the Trade Union Movement and I hate to lead this Organisation on politically borrowed leadership because this would be grossly misleading indeed. The workers must be prepared to follow us because we are their Trade Union leaders and not because we support this or that political leader. . . . politicians must stop interference into Trade Union affairs either directly or indirectly through individuals in the Trade Union Movement, and stop wrecking this Organisation.' See SRATUC, *Second annual conference*, mimeo, Gwelo, 28-29 September 1963. In an even more reactionary vein, the African Trade Union Congress (ATUC) did not consider that 'one man, one vote' was a possibility in 1965: 'It is not an immediate proposition for two reasons: first, it creates an immediate sense of insecurity in the minds of the minority settlers some of whom have invested colossal sums in property and established permanent homes and trust in our country; it is feared that the policy of One Man One Vote may bring about political changes overnight, which are tantamount to a political revolution and rebellion.' See W W Nyangoni, *African nationalism in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia)*, University Press of America, 1977, p121.

64 C M Brand, 'Race and politics in Rhodesian trade unions', *African Perspectives*, 1976, p65. This spirit of class collaboration logically led ATUC President P F Sithole to become acting Secretary-General of ZANU/ANC, and to side with the Internal Settlement. Reassuring white businessmen about nationalisation under majority rule, he declared: 'There are those who think nationalisation is proper. We feel not, and we want to ensure the rights of the individual to property . . . There are many situations where the common man may want nationalisation and we want to say from the start NO to such pressures as the government of the day.' Quoted in *Africa Confidential*, Vol 19, No 7, 31 March 1978, p4.

65 In 1956, 60 per cent of the workers were foreign Africans; in 1975 they still formed 34 per cent of the workforce. D G Clarke, 'The unemployment crisis', *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, CIIR, No 3, 1978, p22. The influx of unskilled workers, especially into the agricultural and domestic sectors, undermined the stability of the labour market. In 1975 less than seven per cent of the African workforce was unionised.

66 Letter from W Lawrence of the ICFTU/ITS, 14 July 1971, to H M Mutekwe, General Secretary of National African Federation of Unions (NAFU). He added: 'there is not a union here which has not received assistance either directly or indirectly in recent years . . .'. Ibid, p2.

67 Quoted in C M Brand, 'Politics and African trade unionism in Rhodesia since Federation', *Rhodesian History*, Vol 2, 1971, p97.

68 'Interview with P F Sithole, President of the ATUC', *SALB*, Vol 2, No 7, February 1976, p20.

69 Harris, 'Industrial relations in Rhodesia', op cit, p75.

70 Brand, 'Race and politics in Rhodesian trade unions', op cit, p61.

The trade union leadership continued to play a central part in policing the African working class. Its pro-imperialist role became particularly clear in 1971, when the Anglo-Rhodesian settlement was put forward.⁷¹ Only a handful of trade unionists voiced their opposition to this imperialist plan. As a result both Britain and the RF were under the impression that the acceptance of the settlement would be a formality. But when the Pearce Commission arrived in January 1972 to determine whether the proposals were acceptable to the African population it was confronted by strikes, demonstrations and widespread unrest. In some areas as much as 70 per cent of the African population took action. These strikes were called against the instructions of the trade union leadership. As an observer noted:

'The union actually registered to represent the interests of the striking workers did not initiate the strike. In some instances, the union officials were openly hostile to the strike whilst in others they were powerless to persuade the striking workers to adopt the course of action that they regarded as advisable.'⁷²

Once it had overcome the constraint of the trade union bureaucracy, the black working class demonstrated its strength on a massive scale. During the first two months of 1972 alone five major strikes, involving 6640 workers, led to the loss of 58 600 working days.⁷³

Although the African working class could break from the trade union bureaucracy, its political and organisational weakness prevented the emergence of a proletarian political party. While the working class was out on the streets protesting against the Anglo-Rhodesian proposals, the leadership of the national liberation struggle remained in the hands of the petit bourgeoisie. It is to this nationalist movement and its central role in the struggle against imperialism that we now turn.

THE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

Resistance in Zimbabwe

Origins of the nationalist movement

The African nationalist movement in Zimbabwe was based on the petit bourgeoisie. The social position of this stratum, and in particular the access it enjoyed to education, allowed it to articulate the demands of the masses for democratic rights. Initially the political objectives of the African nationalist movement were limited to reforms designed to eliminate the obstacles restricting the development of this social group. However, the African petit bourgeoisie soon realised that it was too weak to wrest concessions from the settler regime. In the 'fifties it began to mobilise the masses in its support by extending its political platform to the demand for majority rule.

The first organisation to voice this demand was the Southern Rhodesia African National Congress (SRANC). Established in 1957 under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo, the SRANC was a fusion of different regional groupings. In contrast to other African political organisations, it called for the establishment of an African government elected by universal suffrage. It sought to reform the colonial system so as to gain political control. In addition the SRANC tried to pressurise the settler government to improve conditions for rural and urban Africans. In its gradualist approach, the SRANC failed to grasp that European domination could not be eliminated through reforms — that concessions would only be granted in so far as they stabilised settler rule. As a consequence it directed the energies of the masses towards narrow legal ends. Yet even this moderate strategy

represented a threat to the settler regime. In 1959 the SRANC was banned and other repressive laws were introduced against the nationalist movement.

These moves convinced the nationalists that little could be gained by putting pressure on the Rhodesian Government. Instead, they adopted the strategy of forcing Britain to implement the process of decolonisation which it had already initiated in other parts of Africa. They drew a distinction between the reactionary settlers and the more 'progressive' British imperialism. The NDP was launched in January 1960 with the goal of winning British support for majority rule and, more immediately, of obtaining representation at the Constitutional Conference in London called by Britain for the following year.

At the Conference the consequences of the nationalist programme became clear. Led by Nkomo, the NDP delegates accepted a constitution which provided for a dual electoral roll that gave 15 seats to Africans and reserved 50 seats for white voters.⁷⁴ The NDP's agreement to this formula showed its willingness to drop majority rule for a few trifling concessions. Nevertheless Nkomo portrayed this blatant sell-out as a major achievement. On his return to Zimbabwe he announced: 'We have moved the mountain an inch. Independence is around the corner.'⁷⁵ The membership of the NDP did not agree. Hostility to Nkomo's betrayal was so widespread that he was forced to reverse his decision and call for a boycott of the proposed referendum.

The significance of the Constitutional Conference was not lost on imperialism or the settler regime. Britain saw no reason to hand over political power to the Africans, given the evident willingness of the nationalist leadership to conform to its wishes. For the settlers the Conference acted as a signal to renew their efforts to achieve full independence under European rule.

By contrast, the nationalist leadership learned nothing. When, in 1962, ZAPU was established after the banning of the NDP, it adopted the same programme as its predecessor. The nationalists still looked to Britain — and the United Nations (UN) — for a solution, so strengthening the illusion among the African masses that imperialism had a progressive role to play in Zimbabwe. ZAPU used the nation wide violence that broke out after UDI as a justification for calling on the British to show a sense of responsibility and intervene militarily. Nkomo repeatedly called for a British invasion.⁷⁶

The narrow political perspective of the nationalist leadership weakened the growing anti-imperialist struggle. Aiming merely for short-term gains and a role in the administration of the country, it was soon rent apart by bitter internal rivalries. In the two years preceding UDI the nationalist movement split into two wings — ZAPU, led by Nkomo, and ZANU, led by the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole. The split was accompanied by fierce fighting between the two factions. Frustrated by the conflicts, many rank and file members of the two organisations decided to by-pass the leadership and begin a military campaign.

The radicalisation of African nationalism

The wave of resistance provoked by UDI resulted in a series of strikes and demonstrations which confirmed popular hatred for the Smith regime. In November 1965 a major strike in Bulawayo was only defeated through large-scale arrests and the use of the police and army.⁷⁷ Similar disturbances broke out in Que Que and Gwelo, while property belonging to white farmers and mining companies was destroyed in other areas.⁷⁸

The spontaneous upsurge of the masses lacked both organisation and leadership. While the people were on the

streets the exiled leaders of ZANU and ZAPU were still engaged in factional manoeuvres. To gain credibility they initiated a number of unsuccessful guerrilla actions in 1966; yet even at this stage their intention was to precipitate British intervention.

The failure of the military strategy embarked upon by ZAPU and ZANU, together with their growing isolation from the masses, forced them in a radical direction. They came to recognise more and more that constitutional change would not work and that European rule had to be overthrown. But their overall political weakness, compounded as it was by the difficulties of an enforced exile, ensured that insignificant differences came to the fore. Personal rivalries continued to plague ZAPU and ZANU. Ethnic tensions between the Shona and Ndebele led ZAPU to split in 1970.⁷⁹ When fighting broke out in ZAPU camps the result was that the Zambian authorities arrested about 200 guerrillas and deported more than half back to Zimbabwe – where a number were executed.⁸⁰

Despite the infighting that beset the nationalist leadership, mass opposition to UDI flourished. A wave of political protests greeted the Pearce Commission in 1972. At one point Smith announced that over 1500 Africans had been arrested.⁸¹ Spontaneous in origin, the protests posed a real threat to imperialism, despite the attempt made by the newly-formed African National Council (ANC) to head them off. As the European representative of the ANC later noted of popular reaction to the Pearce Commission's programme:

'Undoubtedly the meetings were full of excitement and passion, but the local ANC leaders were often the ones who quietened the meetings down, so that they could proceed. There were occasions when the underlying anger of the majority of the people against the Proposals erupted into anger against the few who accepted them. While appreciating the reason for that anger, the ANC took every opportunity to call for calm and toleration.'⁸²

Mass demonstrations and strikes forced the British Tory Government temporarily to abandon its efforts to reach a settlement with the RF. Moreover the emergence of an internally-based nationalist party – the ANC – forced a shift in imperialist strategy. The ANC's success in side-tracking the anti-imperialist movement showed Britain that any further negotiations would have to be founded on an agreement between the RF and the ANC.

Mass pressure forced ZANU to change its strategy from sporadic military infiltration to guerrilla warfare based on the politicised Africans in the rural areas. ZAPU and the newly-formed Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe (FROLIZI) also began to step up military activity.⁸³ The pressure towards unity could not overcome the bitter rivalries that existed among the different wings of the nationalist movement. Attempts to establish a joint military command met with little success.

Just as the events sparked off by the Pearce Commission threw the relationship between the African masses and the petit-bourgeois nationalist movement into sharp relief, so the mass response to the Muzorewa-Smith talks of 1973 highlighted the tension between African politicians and their supporters. In a dress rehearsal for today's Internal Settlement, ANC leader Bishop Muzorewa came out of clandestine talks with Smith with an agreement that called for a 75-seat Parliament in which Africans would be granted the privilege of no more than 23 MPs.⁸⁴ The ANC rank and file remained unimpressed. Not only did they force the ANC Executive to reject the agreement, but they embarrassed Muzorewa enough to elicit a denial that he had ever made it.

The liberation struggle and its leadership

Detente in Southern Africa

The mass movement in Zimbabwe was considerably strengthened by the setbacks imperialism suffered in Mozambique and Angola. They enabled the guerrillas to pursue the war more vigorously. Imperialism was forced to go on the defensive.

71 These British proposals were an attempt to grant independence to the Europeans while postponing majority rule until the year 2035 at the earliest.

72 Harris, 'Industrial relations in Rhodesia', op cit, pp79-80. He cites the example of R M Bongo of the Transport Workers Union who was unable to convince the bus drivers of the Salisbury United Omnibus Company to return to work.

73 Ibid, calculated from Table 2, p76. The strikes took place at Shabani Asbestos Mine, Trojan Nickel Mine, Blanket Gold Mine, Hippo Valley Estates and Salisbury United Omnibus Company. They reflected the growing social weight of the African working class. Out of a total of 840 000 in employment in 1972, 336 400 worked in agriculture, 11 700 in manufacturing and 54 500 in the mining sector. More than one eighth of employed Africans were domestic servants for the European population. *Supplement to the Monthly Digest of Statistics*, CSO, Salisbury, July 1978, p4.

74 Educational and income requirements excluded blacks from any of the 50 reserved seats. It was no coincidence that there were 15 members in the NDP national executive at the time and 15 seats available for Africans. 'Focus on Zimbabwe', *African Revolution*, Vol 1, No 1, p27.

75 Quoted in ibid.

76 N Shamuyarira, *Crisis in Rhodesia*, Andre Deutsch, 1965, p70. Although British Prime Minister Harold Wilson made it clear at the time of UDI that military intervention was 'not on', the nationalist leadership later admitted that this remained part of its strategy. J Chikerema, *Reply to observations on our struggle*, ZAPU, 1970.

77 K Maxey, *The fight for Zimbabwe: the armed conflict in Southern Rhodesia since UDI*, Rex Collings, 1975, p54.

78 Ibid, p55. According to government sources there were 80 incidents of sabotage between early November 1965 and mid July 1966. There were also 36 cases of crop damage in the three months following UDI. K Maxey, *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, Fabian Research Series, No 301, 1972, p19.

79 Ibid, p28.

80 A Wilkinson, 'From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe', in Davidson, Slovo & Wilkinson, *Southern Africa: the new politics of revolution*, Penguin, 1976, p249.

81 M Jones, *Rhodesia: the white judge's burden*, International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF), London, May 1972, p18.

82 E Mlambo, *No future without us – the story of the African National Council in Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia)*, ANC, London, 1972, p21. In a statement on 14 January 1972 the ANC further disassociated itself from opposition to the Pearce Commission: 'We are in no way connected with the disturbance at a meeting called by the Chiefs . . . or with the disturbance of employees at Shabani who were complaining about the dismissal of their fellow workers. We believe that the RF Government is trying to find a pretext to undermine the activities of the ANC by trying to associate us with unpopular incidents. . . . we call for peace and calm among all people – black and white.' Quoted in *African Contemporary Record (ACR)*, 1972-73, pB439.

83 FROLIZI was formed in October 1971 from sections of ZAPU and ZANU which shared a desire to overcome the divisions in the movement. It failed in its attempts to unify the nationalist struggle and became another distinct nationalist party.

84 Again, it was more than a coincidence that there were 23 active members of the ANC National Executive to fill the 23 seats. 'Focus on Zimbabwe', op cit, p27.

South Africa was particularly anxious to end the armed conflict, fearing that it would destabilise the entire surrounding region. Its strategy was to replace the RF with a moderate African government. 'The alternative', as former South African Premier John Vorster put it, was 'too ghastly to contemplate'.⁸⁵ South Africa sought the co-operation of neighbouring African states through a policy of 'detente' with them. Its diplomatic overtures were greeted with support from Zambia, which, its economy hit hard by the capitalist crisis, saw 'detente' as a first step to a reopening of its border with Zimbabwe and a resumption of trade.

Detente, the preferred policy of imperialism, failed for two reasons. Firstly, the RF resisted any solution which threatened the privileged position of the European minority. Secondly, and most importantly, those nationalist leaders prepared to compromise with imperialism quickly lost all credibility with the mass movement. They could not hold back the armed struggle. Today this remains a fact of life in Zimbabwe; despite repeated attempts, leading African politicians have been unable to win mass support for a compromise with imperialism and the settler regime.

The first important test for detente was the Lusaka Agreement of 1974. Arranged by South Africa and Zambia in an effort to end the war, its aim was to eliminate political rivalry among the nationalist leaders so that a united discussion with the Smith regime could begin. Pressure from the Front Line states forced ZAPU, ZANU and FROLIZI to unite under the leadership of Muzorewa's ANC. South Africa for its part put pressure on Smith to release Nkomo and Sithole from prison to take part in the Agreement. But all was in vain. The signatories could not sell their sell-out to the guerrillas.⁸⁶ Sithole, who put his name to the Agreement on behalf of ZANU, was not taken seriously by the organisation's rank and file. Those sections of the nationalist movement who were most sensitive to mass pressure, such as ZANLA, turned it down and denounced Sithole into the bargain. Finally, the Executive of ZANU threw the Agreement out altogether – despite pressure from Zambia.

The Front Line states persisted in their attempts to unite the nationalist parties around a common negotiating position. But these only reinforced rivalries between Muzorewa, Sithole and Chikerema as each fought to gain control of the guerrilla camps. The only thing the warring nationalist leaders could agree on was their common fear of the more radical elements in ZANU/ZANLA, whom they saw as the main obstacle to a negotiated settlement. In March 1975 the assassination of ZANU Chairman H Chitepo, a key figure in the guerrilla struggle, provided them with the pretext they needed for an attack on this section of the movement.⁸⁷ The Zambian state moved quickly to arrest 1200 ZANU/ZANLA members and took their camps under its control.

The political rivalries precipitated by detente widened the gap between the nationalist leaders and their supporters. The guerrilla camps rejected the factionalism of their petit-bourgeois leadership. One group stated:

'We must take a fresh look at the factions. Clearly they do not constitute a road to national unity and independence. Instead via factions we are heading for a bitter civil war, if not perpetual colonial bondage. This is because factional leaderships hanker after personal glory even at the cost of national unity and independence.'⁸⁸

Similar feelings of mistrust for the leadership pervaded the guerrilla camps. Dismissing Nkomo out of hand, a memorandum signed by 44 officers from the Mgagno camp in Tanzania criticised Sithole, Muzorewa and Chikerema in the following terms:

'In our opinion, the three leaders are incapable of leading the ANC. An executive member who has been outstanding is Robert

Mugabe. He has demonstrated this by defying the rigours of guerrilla life in the jungles of Mozambique. . . . We will not accept any direct discussions with any of the three leading members of the ANC we have described above. We can only talk through Robert Mugabe to them.'⁸⁹

Mugabe's role in organising the armed struggle in Mozambique allowed him to maintain a following.⁹⁰ The 'Mugabe Diary', which contained his denunciation of the efforts to stifle the armed struggle that were made following Chitepo's assassination, won him considerable support.⁹¹ Eventually he was able to gain control over the guerrillas in Tanzania and Mozambique and strengthen his position as leader of ZANU.

Detente failed because it polarised the nationalist movement. Although imperialism was able to get African politicians around a table, it could not control the struggle for national liberation.

Formation of the Patriotic Front

During the period leading up to the formation of the Patriotic Front (PF) the Front Line states, aided by imperialism, tried to achieve a negotiated settlement. At their instigation, a war council consisting of nine members from ZANU and ZAPU was formed in late 1975 to lead the Zimbabwe People's Army (ZIPA). The Front Line states hoped to overcome the fragmentation of the nationalist movement by creating a new united leadership out of the military wings of ZANU and ZAPU. Their aim was to establish a leadership under their political control – a leadership which would fall in line when the time was right for negotiations. Meanwhile, increased repression in Zimbabwe forced them to accept the need for guerrilla war. As Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania, explained:

'We are forced back to the alternative strategy outlined in the Lusaka Declaration of 1969 – support for non-peaceful methods of struggle. Unfortunately, but inevitably, the armed struggle in Rhodesia will have to be resumed and intensified until conditions are ripe for realistic negotiations.'⁹²

This recognition of the need for 'non-peaceful' methods came at a time when the armed struggle had drastically declined. By the end of 1975 the Rhodesian security forces were able to claim that there were only between 50 and 80 guerrillas left in the north-east of the country.⁹³ Detente and the squabbles among the nationalist politicians had had a demoralising effect on the armed struggle. But the formation of ZIPA stimulated the thousands of Africans who had fled to Mozambique to join the guerrillas and provided the impetus for a new offensive.⁹⁴ Following the victory of the People's Liberation Movement of Angola (MPLA) against South African intervention, explicit detente became impossible. The Front Line states were forced to renew their support for the armed struggle, bombastically declaring that majority rule could only be won 'on the battlefield'.⁹⁵

For many in the nationalist movement ZIPA appeared to mark a decisive break with the past. It seemed to be a revolutionary alternative to the perennial rows of the politicians and to hold out the hope that the armed struggle could be articulated as a genuine political movement. Yet ZIPA could not remain immune from the bitter political rivalries prevailing in the nationalist movement. Initially, it had tried to distance itself from the politicians. When ZAPU and ZANU each claimed credit for its military victories, ZIPA bluntly stated: 'Neither faction is in control of the army, and neither faction deserves any kind of credit for the army's work'.⁹⁶ But tensions within ZIPA were exacerbated by Nkomo's attempt to arrive at a settlement with Smith. In a series of discussions beginning in December

1975. Nkomo proposed a compromise formula that would have guaranteed the privileged position of the European settlers.⁹⁷ Differences of opinion arose over these negotiations, and by May 1976 military clashes were taking place between ZANLA and ZIPRA guerrillas within ZIPA. This led to the effective break-up of ZIPA and ZIPRA guerrillas were withdrawn from Mozambique.

Diplomatic pressure from Britain and the USA in September 1976 forced Smith to declare his commitment to majority rule within two years. At the Geneva Conference one month later the present-day line-up of the nationalist movement emerged. Nkomo and Mugabe, each of whom had guerrilla support, came together to form the uneasy alliance known as the Patriotic Front. Those politicians like Muzorewa and Sithole who had no following among the guerrillas were forced to return to Zimbabwe and negotiate directly with the Smith regime.

The PF did not gain the full confidence of the guerrillas overnight. Even the much-favoured Mugabe did not have clear authority over ZIPA forces. While the PF, Muzorewa and Sithole were negotiating in Geneva, ZIPA condemned the Kissinger Plan as an 'imperialist plot' and sent its own delegation to the Conference to forestall a sell-out. ZIPA leader Nhongo explained why:

'We are going to Geneva to guarantee the independence of the people against the political and personal ambitions of the opportunists and the defenders of monopoly capitalism . . . and to prevent the racists, their imperialist allies and the apologists of monopoly capitalism to create a neo-colonialist Zimbabwe.'⁹⁸

Given the past enthusiasm shown by Nkomo and others like him for secret negotiations and reactionary deals, this mistrust was well founded.

The programme of the Patriotic Front

The need to present a united negotiating force at the Geneva Conference provided the initial impetus for the formation of the PF. Such an alliance held obvious advantages for both ZAPU and ZANU; it gave ZAPU a degree of credit for a war that was being fought mainly by ZANU, and enabled Mugabe to consolidate his control over ZANU's guerrillas.⁹⁹ The military and economic support ZAPU received from the Soviet Union was also important to ZANU, which was poorly armed.¹⁰⁰ It was also clear that neither party was strong enough on its own to negotiate with the RF.

The emergence of the PF and the international support it enjoyed prompted both ZAPU and ZANU to assert their authority over the guerrilla forces. Mugabe simply eliminated the radical military wing of ZIPA; in early 1977 Machingura and other ZIPA leaders were arrested in Mozambique and a further 90 ZANU guerrillas imprisoned in Tanzania.¹⁰¹

The social basis and the programmes of the two wings of the PF are essentially the same. Both aim to democratise the present political structure; both accept the permanence of capitalist social relations. The PF's desire to establish capitalism with an African face stems from the class interests of its petit-bourgeois leadership. Only the RF's refusal to make any concessions has forced it to advocate the use of violence. Conversely, the PF has only been able to mobilise mass support because its limited opposition to the existing state has coincided with the democratic demands of the masses.

The reactionary consequences of petit-bourgeois politics have yet to become apparent to the African masses. Although revulsion against those politicians who have compromised with imperialism has been demonstrated again and again, petit-bourgeois politics itself has not been discredited. The guerrillas have only rejected the obvious

degradation of the national struggle. Their commitment to military methods is no alternative to petit-bourgeois nationalism. The petit bourgeoisie supports the armed struggle as a means for speeding up *political* but not *social* change.

The narrow focus of the PF's programme is particularly striking in its treatment of the land question. In Zimbabwe the denial of land to Africans has been fundamental to the maintenance of European privilege; the transformation of Zimbabwean society will require the nationalisation of land and its redistribution to the peasantry. Yet ZAPU has argued for capitalist land reforms which will do nothing to change the present system of land ownership. ZAPU's internal wing, the ANC(Z), agrees that there should be no expropriation of the large white commercial farms, except where they have been abandoned or are not being used productively.¹⁰² Chinamano, Nkomo's spokesman in Zimbabwe, announced that the ANC(Z)'s land policies broadly coincided with those of the RFNU, the white farmers' association. In May 1977 he assured a meeting organised by the Association

85 ACR, 1974-75, pB511.

86 The RF for its part never intended to honour the Agreement. As soon as it was signed the RF called on the nationalist forces to surrender unconditionally. It was primarily through the intervention of South Africa that further attempts at negotiations were made.

87 G Matatu, 'Who killed Chitepo?', *Africa*, May 1975, p23.

88 'Away with factions', *Chimurenga Newsletter*, No 3, ZIPA, 1976, p1.

89 Quoted in ACR, 1975-76, pB643.

90 C Legum, *Southern Africa: the year of the whirlwind*, Rex Collings, 1977, p21.

91 ACR, 1975-76, pB641.

92 Quoted in C Legum, 'Southern Africa: how the search for peaceful change failed', *ibid*, ppA54-55.

93 K Maxey, 'The continuing fight for Zimbabwe', *African Perspectives*, No 1, 1976, p97.

94 By March 1976 the security forces had been compelled to deploy 60 per cent more men than three months earlier. It was estimated that there were 500 guerrillas operating from the north-east, 200 on the eastern border and many more attacking from across the border. *Ibid*, p103.

95 ACR, 1975-76, pB639.

96 'Away with factions', *op cit*.

97 Predating the Internal Settlement of 3 March 1978, the formula called for immediate political control by Africans, but with 36 black and 36 white voting constituencies, plus a further 72 seats to be contested on a qualified voting franchise such that 50 would be in black hands. ACR, 1975-76, pB654.

98 'Zimbabwe - apres Geneve avant. La lutte continue', *Liberation Afrique*, No 19, January 1977, p8, our translation.

99 Mugabe was unsure how much support he had from the radical ZIPA faction led by Nhongo and Tongogara. Most of its members were still in prison for the Chitepo murder.

100 The formation of the PF also enabled ZANU to use Nkomo's influence on Kaunda to secure the release of some of its military and political leaders from Zambian prisons. The leaders included Mudzi, Kangai, Gumbo, Hamadziripi, and eventually Tongogara - on trial for Chitepo's murder, but also a vital intermediary between ZANU and ZIPA/ZANLA.

101 *Africa Confidential*, Vol 18, No 22, 4 November 1977, p3. Machingura had previously led opposition to the Geneva Conference and had become an obstacle to the Front Line states' efforts to unite the newly-formed PF and ZIPA. In early 1978, opposition within ZANU was also suppressed; Gumbo, Hamadziripi and other leading members were arrested. Complaints about the arrests resulted in a further 100 men being imprisoned. *Ibid*, Vol 19, No 7, 31 March 1978, p2. It has long been the practice of all the nationalist factions to suppress opposition in this way.

102 *Ibid*, Vol 18, No 14, 8 July 1977, p3.

of Rhodesian Industries that 'gainfully used land will not be touched'.¹⁰³ Nkomo confirmed Chinamano's position: 'No, we don't confiscate anything'.¹⁰⁴

ZAPU clearly presents no threat to the existing social order. ZANU, however, claims to be guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism and to be engaged in a 'people's war'. This approach has won ZANU support from the radicals in the mass movement; but, despite its militant rhetoric, ZANU's programme has little to offer the African masses. Following in the tradition of the Russian Mensheviks and international Stalinism, it promulgates a two-stage theory of revolution. Confining its aims to the democratic revolution, it postpones the struggle for socialism to a later, unspecified date. This is how ZANU puts it:

'The driving force behind the revolutionary movement in Zimbabwe has been the broad front of workers, peasants, soldiers, and students, and the lumpen proletariat in both ZANU and ZAPU. . . . At this *national democratic* phase, all elements of the oppressed and colonized people have to be mobilised to fight against the common enemy in Zimbabwe. . . . At this stage, even the petit bourgeoisie and traditional chiefs and headmen who are opposed to the enemy can and should join the struggle . . .

'The second state (sic) of the *socialist revolution* will be undertaken by a movement with a proletarian ideology after political independence has been won. But, the success of this process in the second stage, depends on the emergence of the working class movement with a proletarian ideology during the first phase.'¹⁰⁵

The experience of the African people has again confirmed that in the imperialist epoch there is no possibility of a 'democratic revolution' in a backward capitalist country. The oppression of the people of Zimbabwe is not merely the consequence of settler reaction; it is the only way that capitalist social relations can be maintained. As long as capitalism exists the masses will be denied their democratic rights. Throughout black Africa the ruling classes have been unable to afford the trappings of bourgeois democracy. All over the continent capitalism takes the form of one-party states and military regimes.

The low level of development of the forces of production in Africa means that capitalism cannot grant democratic rights. Bourgeois democracy cannot be guaranteed even in the less developed areas of Western Europe — Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey have all experienced the denial of democratic rights during the post-war period. In Africa the anti-democratic tendency of capitalism exists in a much more direct form. That is why the programme of a 'democratic revolution' can only condemn workers and peasants to the ruthless oppression necessary for the survival of backward capitalism.

The struggle of the Zimbabwean masses for democratic rights requires the overthrow of the social relations defended by the settler regime. The 'unity of the people' around the objectives of the democratic revolution is, in reality, the unity of workers and peasants around the class interests of the petit bourgeoisie. Despite radical promises, it is a unity which acts against the interests of the African masses.

ZANU's programme represents the convergence of African petit-bourgeois nationalism and Stalinism. The Stalinist trend is an expression of the influence of the ruling bureaucracies of the Soviet Union and China, since the isolation of the nationalist movement has inevitably led it to look to these countries for assistance. Rivalries between these two states have reinforced the divisions between the two wings of the PF. Soviet assistance to ZAPU and Chinese support for ZANU flow from their common commitment to international detente and to the reactionary politics of the national road to socialism. Little separates the interests of petit-bourgeois nationalism from those of Stalinism. Both provide a means of reconciling class antagonisms.

The PF's failure to challenge the existence of capitalist social relations limits its political independence and debilitates the struggle against imperialist domination. The petit-bourgeois leadership of the PF has proved again and again that it is prepared to subordinate the interests of the masses to those of imperialism. Its acceptance of the promises of the Anglo-American initiative at talks held at Malta and Dar-es-Salaam in 1978 is only another example of this.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, the PF expects imperialism to play a progressive role. Thus an official ZAPU publication, *The Zimbabwe Review*, commented:

'If Britain and the United States, which appear to be assuming an increasing mediating role in our situation, wish to gain credibility in the eyes of the liberation movement, they will have to prove beyond rhetoric that they have now joined the forces that seek to bring the Rhodesian regime to its knees.'¹⁰⁷

More recently Nkomo pledged to cease cross-border guerrilla activity during the Queen's visit to the Commonwealth Conference in Lusaka. He explained:

'We have great deference to the Commonwealth and the role it plays internationally for the benefit of our struggle. Consequently, we will not engage in any activities at the Zambia-Rhodesia border as are likely to provide a pretext for the Rhodesian regime to undermine the conference.'¹⁰⁸

Nkomo's willingness to enter into secret discussions with Ian Smith and his deference to the Queen are not the result of a personal desire to betray the African masses. They are the logical outcome of his whole political strategy. Under imperialist pressure, petit-bourgeois nationalism can only degrade the struggle for national liberation.

ZIMBABWE IN CRISIS

The limits to capitalism

Zimbabwe's economy has gone through years of crisis and war. UDI, an attempt to restructure capitalist social relations by means of state subsidies and protectionism, could only register the success it did when the world economy was booming.¹⁰⁹ Once the international recession intensified the limits to this strategy became clear. The index for the volume of production in the sector most susceptible to economic downturn — manufacturing industry — fell from some 215 in 1974 to about 185 in 1978.¹¹⁰

Zimbabwe's economic downturn is not unique; every capitalist country has suffered the impact of the world crisis. But Zimbabwe has also had to contend with the cost of a war. The long-term viability of UDI always hinged on the outcome of the RF Government's attempts to maintain social stability while continuing the oppression of the African masses. UDI itself has frustrated these efforts by provoking mass opposition, which in turn has led to economic chaos.

War, not sanctions, has undermined the development of capitalism in Zimbabwe. The commitment of the imperialists to oil sanctions has been desultory, as the Bingham Report made clear. In minerals the story is the same: Union Carbide, the leading source of American investment in Zimbabwe, has continued the export of minerals regardless of sanctions.¹¹¹ More generally the settler regime has maintained foreign trade by channelling it through South Africa.

The main effect of sanctions has been to limit Rhodesia's access to foreign exchange and to undermine its tobacco industry.¹¹² But these difficulties were clearly taken into account when the Smith regime embarked upon its strategy

of economic nationalism; the RF was quite prepared to stomach them in exchange for the long-term development of Rhodesian capital. Today the lifting of sanctions would do little to halt the decline of capitalism in Rhodesia. According to one bourgeois observer it would relieve the country's shortage of foreign exchange by only £140m a year.¹¹³

Nor can state intervention, even though it has expanded enormously, extricate the economy from crisis. Public sector investment rose 169 per cent in real terms in the eight years preceding 1973, when it accounted for 44 per cent of all investment.¹¹⁴ As the crisis has deepened and the war has spread, the state has been forced to increase its subsidies to all sectors of the economy to overcome the reluctance of domestic capitalists to invest. Much of the European farming sector has only survived because of increased state subsidies which, together with loans, totalled Rh\$138 million between 1969 and 1976.¹¹⁵ Yet all the state's frantic attempts to bolster the economy have not prevented real GDP from falling since 1975.

To finance its subsidies the state has borrowed money abroad, particularly from South Africa.¹¹⁶ In addition it has resorted to domestic loans – it raised £90 million in the first three months of 1979 and the same amount again in the first month of the Muzorewa Government.¹¹⁷ This has only resulted in further indebtedness. By April the war was costing £675 000 a day, making the state less and less able to prevent economic collapse.

The state-organised protection of industry in Zimbabwe has been weakened by the penetration of world imperialism. Although the Smith regime has closely controlled the activities of international companies in order to defend domestic industry, foreign capital has suffered little. Indeed, between 1966 and 1976 there was a net inflow of foreign capital of about Rh\$350m; if reinvestment is included, foreign investment over the same period totalled Rh\$1 billion.¹¹⁸ Moreover, South African imperialism has been able to integrate the Rhodesian economy into its sphere of influence, particularly as it acts as the conduit for Rhodesia's trade. South African firms and British companies based in South Africa have established a dominating interest in the Rhodesian economy.¹¹⁹ They have consolidated their position through takeovers of domestic firms, especially in beverages, tobacco and in the non-gold mining sector. Domestically owned companies have been restricted to less profitable operations. The growing hold of imperialism over Rhodesia reveals the limitations of the strategy of economic nationalism. This is a problem the national liberation movement will be forced to confront.

The war economy

The impact of the war in Zimbabwe goes beyond the cost of military defence. The extension of the liberation struggle and the closure of borders with Zambia and Mozambique have driven transport costs up and have disrupted trade.¹²⁰ New distortions to the economy have arisen as a consequence. As one bank reported in 1976, '10 years of import control have left the economy with an ageing capital stock for which replacement and renewal is long overdue'.¹²¹ The war has

105 'Political education in ZANU: Abridged Commissariat Lectures', *Zimbabwe News*, Vol 10, No 1, ZANU, January-February 1978, p54.

106 At Malta the PF agreed to a number of imperialist proposals. They included the holding of 'free elections' under 'impartial supervision' and the establishment of a transitional period in which British High Commissioner Lord Carver would rule and in which the UN would have a role. *The Observer*, 5 February 1978. The PF made further concessions in Dar-es-Salaam in April 1978. It concurred in giving full executive authority for defence and for law and order to the Resident Commissioner, and agreed to the UN 'peace-keeping force' to ensure 'free and fair' elections, *Zimbabwe News*, Vol 10, No 2, ZANU, March-April 1978, p40. Although disagreements emerged over whether the PF should be in a predominant position during the transitional period, it nevertheless accepted all the fundamental points of the Anglo-American proposals.

107 *The Zimbabwe Review*, Vol 6, No 9, ZAPU, 1977, pp33-34.

108 *The Guardian*, 7 July 1979.

109 Before UDI, manufacturing accounted for 18-19 per cent of GDP; it now accounts for more than 24 per cent. The volume index of manufacturing production more than doubled in the decade after 1964. C Stoneman, 'Foreign capital and the reconstruction of Zimbabwe', *Review of African Political Economy (RAPE)*, January-April 1978, pp69-70.

110 *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, op cit, April 1979, p8. In 1974 manufacturing accounted for 25.8 per cent of investment; by 1977 it took only 22.5 per cent. Calculated from *Supplement to the Monthly Digest of Statistics*, op cit, April 1979, p6.

111 With the help of its global network of subsidiaries, Union Carbide has been able to conduct nearly all of its dealings with Zimbabwe 'in house'. This makes sanction-busting practically impossible to uncover. B Rogers, *White wealth and black poverty – American investments in Southern Africa*, Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1976, pp221-22.

112 Even in the early 'seventies state aid could not protect every tobacco plantation. As one farmer put it in 1972: 'Tobacco growers are receiving subsidies to the tune of Rh\$12m, yet they cannot make the grade. If we are redundant tell us now. And don't tell us not to rock the boat. We are no longer in it.' *ACR*, 1972-73, pB460.

113 P Ellman, 'Rhodesia: time runs out', *Financial Weekly*, 27 July 1979.

114 Stoneman, 'Foreign capital and the reconstruction of Zimbabwe', op cit, p72.

115 Riddell, op cit, p12. In spite of this the total area of land farmed fell by over 1 million acres between 1975 and 1976. *Ibid*, p13.

116 Most of the finance for the war has come from foreign loans. Because most are secret no precise figures exist.

117 *The Guardian*, 30 July 1979.

118 Stoneman, 'Foreign capital and the reconstruction of Zimbabwe', op cit, p82. Foreign capital supplied some 37 per cent of investment during the decade, compared with 25 per cent for the 1962-65 period. *Ibid*, p68.

119 It has been estimated that Britain now accounts for almost 60 per cent of all foreign investment. *New African*, August 1979, p82. South Africa's share has increased massively. This was achieved through many large-scale investments, the establishment or cheap purchase of Rhodesian subsidiaries and the supply of old plant and stocks, in exchange for Rhodesian exports ('no currency involved' deals). Stoneman, 'Foreign capital and the reconstruction of Zimbabwe', op cit, p69.

120 Rhodesia's terms of trade deteriorated from a 1964 index of 100 to 81.9 in 1974 and 62.8 in 1978, *Supplement to the Monthly Digest of Statistics*, op cit, April 1979, p15. Since the closure of the Mozambique border, extra transport costs and bottlenecks have led Rhodesia Railways to make continual losses. Some reports claim that Mozambique was still carrying 60 per cent of Rhodesia's trade at the time and not the 20 per cent claimed by Salisbury; R Good, 'Rhodesia: more of the same with a difference', *Africa Today*, Vol 23, No 3, July-September 1976, p41. Furthermore in 1977 South Africa slapped a 15 per cent import charge on Rhodesian goods which cost Rhodesia Rh\$20 million, *Southern Africa*, Vol 11, No 3, April 1978, p9.

121 'Rhodesia: economic blues', *Financial Mail*, 15 October 1976.

103 *Ibid*, p4.

104 Quoted in *Zimbabwe Information Group Bulletin*, No 5-6, December 1977-January 1978, p11.

highlighted the failure of the state to replace outdated plant and machinery.¹²²

The reopening of the Zambian border in 1978 provided only a limited breathing space. Congestion on Rhodesia Railways meant a monthly loss of Rh\$6.5 million of foreign exchange throughout 1978.¹²³ A guerrilla attack on oil depots at the end of the year led to further bottlenecks as supplies were replenished – the foreign exchange cost of the lost fuel amounting to about Rh\$10 million.¹²⁴ Another sector of the economy vulnerable to guerrilla attacks has been the tourist trade.¹²⁵ This major source of foreign exchange only survives through heavy state subsidies.¹²⁶

The war has had severe repercussions for the mining industry. This was the most dynamic sector of Rhodesian capitalism during the UDI period; mining output grew almost fourfold from Rh\$63.9m to Rh\$230.5m between 1965 and 1976.¹²⁷ However, the effect of the war on the supply of skilled labour has slowed the growth of output. In 1978 it was worth only Rh\$252m, less in real terms than two years previously.¹²⁸ In July 1977 Anglo-American Corporation announced that it was stopping exploration and recalling all its prospecting staff because of the war.¹²⁹ By April 1978 the President of the Rhodesian Chamber of Mines announced that all mining exploration throughout Zimbabwe had been terminated because of the 'deteriorating security situation'.¹³⁰

Guerrilla attacks have led to the abandonment of large areas of farmland. In September 1978 it was revealed that 100 farmers had left their land in the previous year, bringing the number of departures since UDI to 400. Another 140 have been killed. In all, several million acres of land have been deserted since the beginning of the armed struggle in December 1972.¹³¹

The war threatens to bring the economy to a standstill. This is why imperialism and its Rhodesian allies have increasingly come to accept the principle of African majority rule. For imperialism the continuation of capitalist rule in Zimbabwe depends on the political reorganisation of the state, through the introduction of that form of majority rule which will best preserve capitalist social relations. This is why major industrialists in Zimbabwe have been behind some of the most vehement calls for a negotiated settlement. Indeed, the large mining firms began to prepare for majority rule as early as 1976. Anglo-American claimed to have instituted 'complex and comprehensive training plans to raise the level of responsibility of black miners'.¹³² For its part, Lonrho decided to back the PF and developed a close 'working relationship' with Nkomo. When the war ends imperialism wants to be on the right side.

The African masses bear the burden

The position of the blacks has deteriorated since UDI. Whilst the Europeans have taken measures to shore up their privileged economic position, blacks have met with the barbaric consequences of the disintegration of agriculture and industry. They have also faced sharper political repression as the war for national liberation has come closer to the heart of Rhodesia.

In the TTLs productivity is declining and there is more landlessness – in some areas more than 40 per cent of men have no land.¹³³ The days of the subsistence sector are numbered, for 70 per cent of Zimbabwe's food requirements are now produced commercially.¹³⁴ Even the more 'well-off' black cultivators have been unable to compete with white farmers because of the small size of their holdings and their exclusion from state subsidies.

The crisis has accelerated the process of social differentiation within the African peasantry. This has made rural poverty still more savage in its effects. Most African peasants have insufficient land to satisfy their subsistence requirements. At the same time the inroads made by capitalist social relations into agriculture have concentrated land in the hands of a small section of peasants owning plots some 20 times larger than the average.¹³⁵ Although these 'large peasants' have different material interests from the working class and the mass of the peasantry they, too, suffer discrimination.

For blacks the most serious feature of the decay of the Rhodesian economy has been rising unemployment. In the last four years the African workforce has shrunk from close to a million to less than 800 000.¹³⁶ The ranks of the reserve army of labour are swelled by the run-down or closure of Rhodesian firms. Smith has had to admit that 100 blacks are being thrown out of industry each day as a result of the war, sanctions and the world recession.¹³⁷ More importantly, they are enlarged by the continual influx of migrants leaving the rural areas. In mid 1978, 400 Africans entered Salisbury every day, with no hope of finding employment.¹³⁸ These unemployed workers are a source of revolt against the government and provide a stream of recruits to the guerrilla camps.

Even at the height of Rhodesia's 1969-75 mini-boom, black employment grew by only 200 000. Taking account of the natural increase in the size of the employable population, this meant that capitalism failed to provide 37 000 jobs each year.¹³⁹ By the late 'seventies the political and social stability of Rhodesia was clearly threatened by the thousands of Africans seeking work. As the Minister of Finance was forced to concede:

'Economically we are in bad shape. There is high unemployment in the country. This affects more blacks than whites. This worries me. Unless we can come up with something that stops the war and gives confidence to big business, we are in trouble.'¹⁴⁰

The expansion of the reserve army of labour has enabled capital to force down the wages of African workers. In 1975, when more than a third of employed Africans worked in agriculture, 85 per cent of farm labourers received wages less than half the Rh\$40 subsistence level.¹⁴¹ All domestic servants and 63 per cent of Rhodesia's mine-workers have wages below this subsistence level.¹⁴² The differential between black and white wages, which widened from Rh\$1548 in 1965 to Rh\$2969 in 1974, reached Rh\$5568 in 1977.¹⁴³ In the past four years black real incomes have fallen by an estimated 40 per cent.¹⁴⁴

The growing unemployment and the drive to reduce wages below the value of labour-power forces Africans to the margin of capitalist society. A survey of the provincial town of Hartley revealed thousands of illegal taxi drivers, vegetable hawkers and many other service trades.¹⁴⁵ The rural areas exhibit a similar phenomenon because starvation level agricultural wages make thousands of Africans seek an alternative means of subsistence.¹⁴⁶ The result is lower agricultural productivity and the further ruination of the countryside.

ABORTIVE DECOLONISATION

Another phase in imperialist strategy

Imperialist strategy is dictated by the need to maintain capitalist social relations in Zimbabwe. This demands the transfer of power to a class of Africans prepared to

accommodate the needs of foreign capital in a more subtle way than their European predecessors. Zimbabwe must no longer appear as an imperialist colony; instead, through a process of decolonisation, it must gain formal independence from the political domination of the West – an independence that preserves the rule of capital. The hatred of the African masses for their oppressors must be eliminated by the installation of a pro-capitalist African regime.

This process is complicated by the presence of Zimbabwe's firmly entrenched European population. Although staunch defenders of capitalism, this minority has consolidated a privileged position which is threatened by African majority rule. In the 'sixties imperialism could accommodate the interests of the settler population in full. Harold Wilson's negotiations with Smith in 1966 and 1968, and the Tory proposals of 1971, were direct attempts to legalise UDI and grant independence. At that time it was enough for Britain just to cover its imperialist strategy with a few anti-racist gestures for the benefit of black African states. But times have changed. Because UDI has been undermined by the growth of African opposition, it no longer gives Zimbabwe the economic and political stability which imperialism requires. In 1979 the strategy must be a different one. The deepening of the crisis and the upsurge of armed resistance demand a solution which politically integrates the liberation forces and creates a stable African middle class.

To ensure that the interests of imperialism are safeguarded, the USA has taken an increasingly interventionist role in Southern Africa. By 1976 the US government had realised that Britain was too weak to handle a peaceful transition to majority rule by itself. As a result it adopted a policy of 'enlightened' imperialism to smooth over the process. Senators and Congressmen rapidly became staunch opponents of apartheid.¹⁴⁷ The Anglo-American initiative and the accompanying diplomatic manoeuvres of Callaghan, Owen, Kissinger and Young expressed the changing strategy of imperialism.

The central objectives of the Anglo-American proposals are to win time for the creation of a stable African government and to keep real power in the hands of Europeans. They are to be realised by the establishment of a transitional government. During this period African politicians are to be tested out while Europeans retain control over 'law and order'. To assist the restoration of profitable accumulation a Zimbabwe Development Fund, financed by the imperialist powers to the tune of \$1.5 billion, is to be set up.

These proposals have formed the framework for every imperialist initiative during the past three years. Proposals for a Bill of Rights contain the promise that existing property relations will be maintained:

'Protection from deprivation of property: this will confer protection from expropriation of property except on specified grounds of public interest and even then only on conditions that there is prompt payment of adequate compensation . . . and that the compensation may be remitted abroad within a reasonable period.'¹⁴⁸

The PF did not agree to the Anglo-American proposals. Both ZANU and ZAPU found the general approach acceptable, but objected to the maintenance of European domin-

122 Although the government had previously lowered the amount of foreign exchange available to industry for the purchase of imports to an 'irreducible minimum', it was forced to reduce it further by 20 per cent at the beginning of 1978. Such a cut could only affect imports of new technology, since luxury items had been prevented from entering the country years before, EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review*, first quarter 1978, p9.

123 'Rhodesia: after the fire', *Financial Mail*, 22 December 1978.

124 Ibid.

125 The number of visitors to Zimbabwe dropped from 400 000 in 1972 to 100 000 in 1978, *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, op cit, April 1979, p2. *New African* correctly suggests that 'most tourists prefer their holidays without the excitement of rocket attacks and the restrictions of convoys', *New African*, April 1978, p57.

126 In April 1978, following a series of hotel closures, the Rhodesian Hotel Association announced that only continuing government subsidies enabled the 132 remaining hotels to stay in business. 'Rhodesian tourism: tough but tangible', *Financial Mail*, 7 April 1978.

127 *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, op cit, April 1979, p7. Together with agriculture, mining accounted for 70-80 per cent of the country's total exports. 'Rhodesia: the grimness grows', *Financial Mail*, 31 December 1976. The high rate of profit associated with mining made it attractive to capital, despite the fact that it accounted for only 8.3 per cent of GDP in 1976. See EIU, *Quarterly Economic Review*, annual supplement 1977, p10.

128 *Monthly Digest of Statistics*, op cit, April 1979, p7.

129 *Financial Times*, 25 July 1977.

130 Ibid, 21 April 1978.

131 *New African*, September 1978, p22.

132 *Africa Confidential*, Vol 18, No 2, 21 January 1977, p3.

133 A K H Weinrich, *African farmers in Rhodesia*, Oxford University Press, 1975, p298.

134 This compares with 30 per cent in the early 'sixties. More food has therefore had to be imported into the TTLs. International Labour Organisation (ILO), *Labour conditions and discrimination in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe)*, Geneva, 1978, p38. African agriculture's contribution to GDP declined from 7.1 per cent in 1966 to 5 per cent in 1978. *Supplement to the Monthly Digest of Statistics*, April 1979, calculated from Tables 8 & 11, pp6,8.

135 Riddell, op cit, p10. Cattle represent the other major form of wealth for rural Africans. In 1960, 66 per cent owned at least one cow; by 1978 the figure had fallen to about 50 per cent. An increasing number of households own no cattle at all. Ibid.

136 Ellman, op cit, p2.

137 *Africa Research Bulletin*, Vol 15, No 1, January-February 1978, p4562.

138 *International Herald Tribune*, 26 August 1978.

139 R Riddell, 'Alternatives to poverty', *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, No 1, CIIR, London, 1977, p11.

140 Quoted in Clarke, 'The unemployment crisis', op cit, p8. Of course, for the bourgeoisie a more cynical view is possible. One industrialist put it like this: 'If it were not for the war and both the government and the guerrillas recruiting wildly, I do not know what half of these guys would be doing'. Quoted in *Southern Africa*, op cit, p9.

141 Riddell, 'Alternatives to poverty', op cit, p12. These figures exclude 112 811 casual, seasonal and contract labourers whose wages are even lower.

142 Ibid.

143 ILO, op cit, p92. Calculated from *Marches Tropicaux*, op cit. 15 October 1978, p2470. It is estimated that up to 70 per cent of African households are primarily dependent upon wage-labour for basic subsistence. D G Clarke, 'African workers and union formation in Rhodesia', *SALB*, March 1975, p4.

144 Ellman, op cit, p2.

145 R Davies, 'The informal sector: a solution to unemployment?', *From Rhodesia to Zimbabwe*, No 5, CIIR, London, 1978, p10.

146 The numbers have been estimated at 300 000 in the rural areas. Ibid, p12.

147 The change of attitude reflects the fact that majority rule – and a central role for the PF within it – today presents the best way of ensuring capitalist stability in Zimbabwe. Needless to say, the new position is justified in the best traditions of pragmatic philosophy. Rejecting the claim made by RF Minister P Van der Byl that majority rule would amount to unconditional surrender and produce a Marxist-backed state, Senator George McGovern said 'If the Russians come out against smallpox, that's no reason we have to be for smallpox in order to show that we are patriotic Americans'. Quoted in *The Daily Telegraph*, 5 December 1978.

148 *Rhodesia: proposals for a settlement*, Cmnd 6919, HMSO, September 1977, p11.

ation during the transition period. The European settlers, for their part, viewed the proposals with suspicion. Although a settlement along the lines of the Anglo-American initiative would have preserved capitalism, it did not contain sufficient guarantees to maintain the settlers' privileges. Smith moved fast to consolidate their position — with the co-operation of the collaborationist wing of the nationalist movement he signed the Internal Settlement.

Although they had been outflanked, the USA and Britain did not oppose the Internal Settlement as such. Owen called it 'a significant step towards majority rule' while for Young it was a 'step toward bringing all the parties together in a free election'.¹⁴⁹ However, imperialism saw this settlement as short-sighted, for it failed to integrate the mass movement and end the war. As Owen observed: 'An internal settlement which excludes one of the leading nationalist groups cannot bring about a ceasefire during elections or bring peace and stability to a newly-independent Zimbabwe. Nor would it eliminate the threat to international peace'.¹⁵⁰

Imperialism understands that any internal settlement can only draw attention to the collaborationist role of the nationalist leaders involved, making it impossible for them to mediate between imperialism and the masses. That is why an all-party settlement is a key component of British and American diplomacy. The aim of imperialism is to bring at least one wing of the PF into government. Owen made this clear to Sithole in 1978:

*'My position is that if all were included, that would be desirable. . . . If you can include one of the external nationalists then that would help in gaining recognition at the earliest time. They can't come without their men coming with them. . . . Joshua has been realistic to me. . . . His problem is that he cannot be seen to be breaking from Robert Mugabe before he gets a concrete offer. . . . Before he breaks with Robert he must be assured of success. . . . If you were to get both in so much the better, but at least get Joshua.'*¹⁵¹

At present Zimbabwe is in flux. Imperialism wants the PF in government; pressure from rank and file guerrillas stops the PF from compromising with Smith. Imperialism must prevent any further deterioration of the war and must avoid provoking any escalation of Soviet involvement in the region.¹⁵² Any steps that might lead to a confrontation with the PF must be rejected for the time being.

In a brash statement shortly after her election victory, Thatcher indicated that she would not renew sanctions in November and that recognition 'would take a little longer'.¹⁵³ In mid May the US Senate voted 75 - 19 in favour of the Muzorewa Government and advised Carter to lift sanctions. But these steps do not represent a departure from the integrationist policy pursued by Britain and the USA. Carter said that he was 'absolutely convinced' that lifting sanctions would be neither in the best interests of the USA 'nor in the best interests of the people of Zimbabwe'.¹⁵⁴ Imperialist strategy remains the same — the integration of the PF into a stable pro-capitalist African government.

The struggle continues

The internal agreement which Smith signed with Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau provides no long-term answers for imperialism. It signifies only a temporary gain for the European settlers. Van de Byl betrayed a misunderstanding of the realities of Zimbabwe when he declared: 'What we have achieved is a masterpiece as a politico-diplomatic exercise. No one could ever have believed that we could get internal leaders to agree to so much'.¹⁵⁵ Precisely because

the African collaborators have made so many concessions — leaving the judiciary and police in European hands, for example — the internal agreement has no credibility among the African masses. The token changes in restrictions on land ownership, health and education merely replace racial discrimination with the criterion of ability to pay. This excludes all but a tiny percentage of blacks from education and social services.¹⁵⁶ European privilege has been preserved. As Ian Smith put it: 'We have now got majority rule but not majority rule based on colour'.¹⁵⁷

The Muzorewa Government and its collaborator allies have not been able to restore stability. Their growing isolation from the African masses has heightened the power struggle within their own ranks. Muzorewa and Sithole have been unable to fulfil their promise to end the war. Four weeks after the signing of the agreement only 100 guerrillas had surrendered.¹⁵⁸ No sooner did the Government legalise ZANU and ZAPU and release 700 political prisoners than it reversed its concessions. As the war intensified ZAPU and ZANU were banned again and the detainees re-arrested.

The April elections were not so much an attempt to gain the confidence of the African masses as a catalyst for the fragmentation of the alliance of African collaborators. Having received only 12 seats, Sithole declared that there had been 'gross irregularities' in the voting procedures. Muzorewa promptly moved against him and rounded up 60 of his supporters.¹⁵⁹ Recently private security forces killed 180 of Sithole's armed auxiliaries. The political situation has been made still more unbalanced by Chikerema's defection from the UANC, the effect of which was to end Muzorewa's parliamentary majority.¹⁶⁰

The rejection of the Internal Settlement by the African masses was clear and immediate. The announcement was greeted by a series of bombs.¹⁶¹ In April police arrested 80 African protesters in Salisbury.¹⁶² Above all the war of liberation has been stepped up. The PF called the settlement a sell-out and promised to redouble its military efforts; Mugabe even called for a 'Marxist one-party state'.¹⁶³

During the election campaign the African collaborators made regular tours around the country to promote the settlement. But when Smith, Chirau and Sithole made a trip to Wadza for this purpose, they found themselves addressing a gathering of only 300 Africans. Again, only 1000 out of an expected audience of 10 000 turned up to hear Muzorewa in Mangwende — despite his provision of free beer and food.¹⁶⁴ This kind of rejection of the collaborators was particularly marked among African workers. Industrial unrest prevailed in two major industrial centres — the Wankie Colliery and the Shabani mining complex. On one occasion 3000 black miners armed with axes and bars assembled outside the offices of the Mangula copper mine, insisting on higher wages. In the event four miners were shot dead.¹⁶⁵ On 23 August 1978, a black minister came out to speak at a meeting organised for the Wankie workforce, to be greeted by a grand total of seven of the 13 000 miners.

During the April elections the security forces were mobilised to force the African masses into voting. This method raised the turnout in Mashonaland Central to 108 per cent and in Mashonaland West to 101 per cent.¹⁶⁶ European farmers drove their workers to the polling stations. In the towns workers were threatened with immediate dismissal if they refused to vote. As one senior military officer summed up the success of the operation: 'The way we are going about it, this country will end up with a White majority'.¹⁶⁷ However, coercion alone cannot explain the eventual 64 per cent turnout among the African electorate. In the rural areas the collaborators played on the widespread yearning for peace and for an end to the PVs and martial law. Their main slogan was 'Your Vote Can Stop the War'.¹⁶⁸

Nevertheless the electoral charade failed to endow the Muzorewa Government with any credibility. There may be a new Prime Minister, but he is in no position to restore social stability. As a result the Muzorewa-Smith Government has been forced to continue the oppressive and unpopular policies of the European regime. Its only hope is that, with time, the African masses will come to accept it and thus force an end to the war.

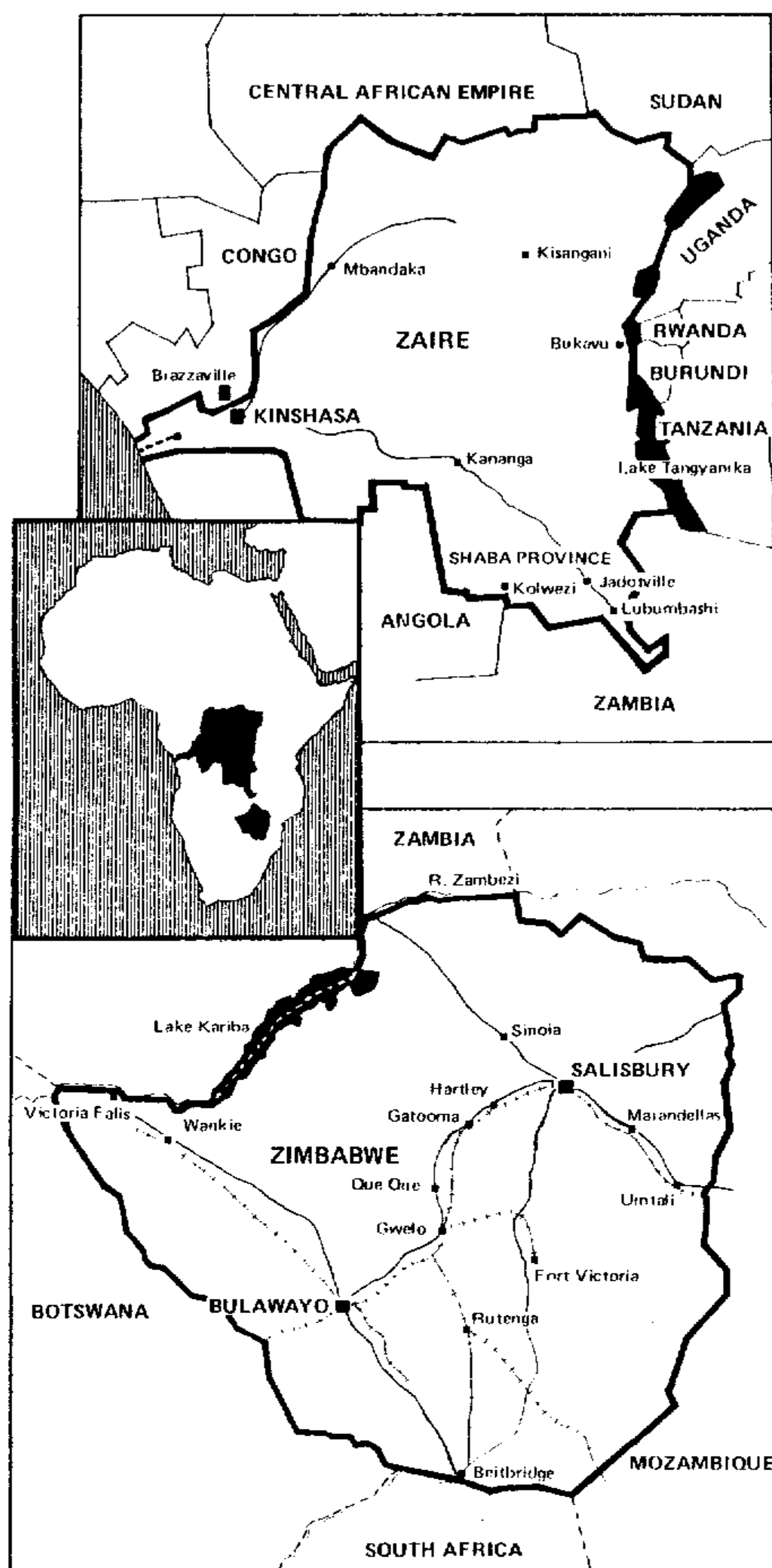
The main obstacle to an imperialist solution in Zimbabwe is the determination of the African masses to achieve full national self-determination. Until now pressure from the masses has prevented the PF from reaching a compromise with the European-dominated regime. Ever since Nkomo's secret negotiations with Smith in August 1978 there has been no sign that the PF is prepared to accept the internal agreement. Nevertheless the political programme of the PF threatens to undermine the struggle of the masses. Nkomo's assurance in July 1979 of his support for the Commonwealth shows how vulnerable the PF is to imperialist pressure.

Much blood has been shed in the struggle of the Zimbabwean people. If the aspirations of the African masses are developed on the basis of proletarian politics this sacrifice will not have been in vain. Revolutionary workers have an obligation to ensure that the struggle for national liberation is not subordinated to the interests of petit-bourgeois politicians and careerists.

Workers in the towns and the rural masses face not only political oppression but the social domination of capital. A change of personnel will do nothing to alleviate the plight of the landless and the unemployed. The problem is not lack of resources, for Zimbabwe is potentially very rich. The problem is the social relations of capitalism, which restrict production to the narrow limits set by the criterion of profitability – the same social relations which reproduce imperialist domination no matter who is in power. The liberation of the people in Zimbabwe and their final emancipation from imperialist domination depends on a relentless fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The British working class can draw considerable inspiration from the struggle of the Zimbabwean people. Workers in this country have a responsibility to expose the manoeuvres of the British state in Africa and prevent imperialism from enforcing its solution in Zimbabwe. Like its Labour predecessor, the Tory Government has assisted the offensive against the Zimbabwean liberation movement. It is time for British workers to assume responsibility for thwarting imperialism's designs in Zimbabwe.

André Robinson



149 *New African*, April 1978, p33.

150 Quoted in *Africa Research Bulletin*, 1-31 January 1978, p4718. Young later agreed: 'There can only be a settlement if the overwhelming majority of the citizens of Rhodesia decide to support it rather than continue to support the armed struggle'. Quoted in *ibid*, 1-28 February 1978, p4756.

151 *Africa Confidential*, Vol 19, No 7, 31 March 1978, p2.

152 Brzezinski, Carter's top foreign policy adviser, has expressed his fears on this score with particular eloquence. The situation which he hopes never to see will have arrived when 'white nuns being raped by black guerrillas wearing red stars on their armbands start appearing nightly on television news'. Quoted in *The Observer*, 21 January 1979.

153 'Rhodesia: a waiting game', *New African*, August 1979, p47.

154 *Ibid*.

155 Quoted in 'Rhodesia after the settlement', *op cit*, pp9-10.

156 Only about 10 000 - 15 000 black families earn enough to send

their children to white schools, to use white hospitals and live in white areas. *Financial Mail*, 20 October 1978, p216.

157 *The Guardian*, 1 June 1979.

158 'A journey without maps', *Africa*, May 1978, p13.

159 'The Bishop's house of cards', *New African*, August 1979, p13.

160 In June 1979 Chikerema formed the Zimbabwe Democratic Party, taking eight seats from Muzorewa. This has made Muzorewa even more dependent on the RF. *Ibid*.

161 *The Sunday Times*, 5 March 1978.

162 *International Herald Tribune*, 26 April 1978.

163 *Financial Times*, 17 April 1978.

164 'Rhodesia after the settlement', *op cit*, p11.

165 *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 August 1978.

166 *Financial Times*, 23 April 1979.

167 'Rhodesia: violence escalates, morale slumps', *New African*, April 1979, p23.

168 *Financial Times*, 24 April 1979.

Book reviews

Charles Perrings, **Black mineworkers in Central Africa**, Heinemann, London, 1979, pp302, hardback, £10.50.

An analysis of the nature of the working class in Africa is of central importance for understanding the class struggle in today's world crisis. The formation of the working class alongside the penetration of imperialism, the relationship between workers and the peasantry and the divisions within the working class itself are vital questions for the revolutionary movement.

By discussing one of the leading sections of the working class in Africa, *Black mineworkers in Central Africa* takes up these questions. It provides a wealth of empirical material on the colonial period, particularly on the copper mines in the Belgian Congo and Northern Rhodesia. Perrings brings out the violent repression and brutality that accompanied the process of creating a working class to serve the needs of imperialism.

A comprehensive description of the mineworkers 'recruited' (by force) and of those taken on by 'voluntary' means is followed by a detailed account of control and repression in the minefields and on the land. Later measures to stabilise the workforce are explained, not as attempts to bring migratory movements to an end, but as devices dictated by the balance between economic necessity and social control.

Perrings' study is illuminating in its treatment of the divisions established within the working class — both between black and white workers and amongst the black workers themselves. He describes how a small stratum of European workers emerged from South Africa and Belgium after the First World War. These workers were predominantly employed in skilled and supervisory work in the mines. In the Copper Belt, however, they lacked the political influence enjoyed by their counterparts in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. In the field of employment, therefore, they were more vulnerable to replacement by low-wage African workers — a strategy adopted by the mining companies in response to the inter-war recession. To protect their position the white Northern Rhodesian Mine Workers Union advanced their sectional interests against those of the Africans.

From the early 'twenties onwards the mineowners sought to stabilise a section of the African workforce. This was a means of reducing the proportion of European workers and an attempt to cope with labour shortages. Welfare benefits were introduced and a system of wage differentials instituted, giving higher pay for long and regular service. The divisions in the working class as a whole were thus reproduced among the African workers as skilled and semi-skilled workers rose above labourers. Drawing extensively from material on the crisis of the 'thirties, Perrings illustrates how capital used these divisions in its attack on the working class. The real wages of black mineworkers were pushed below the bare subsistence level.

The most useful section of this book deals with the eruption of strikes and militant protest among African workers in the late 'thirties and early 'forties. Lacking organisation and political leadership, these spontaneous revolts against repression and exploitation were crushed by the colonial authorities. Nevertheless, they represented the first major upsurge against imperialist oppression. They

marked the first appearance of the decisive force in Central Africa's future development — the working class.

Unfortunately Perrings' empirical research is not matched by his approach to theory, which is an eclectic one. Perrings rejects Marx's theory of primitive accumulation and endorses Rosa Luxemburg's thesis that the existence and development of capitalism can only take place in an environment characterised by non-capitalist forms of production. He uses the development of labour migration in Central Africa and the continued survival of subsistence farming to try to refute Marx's theory of the 'free labourer'.

Perrings fails to understand that Marx's historical account of primitive accumulation was specific to Britain. Marx explicitly warned that this account cannot serve as a 'model' for the process of primitive accumulation elsewhere. Marx's point was that capitalist development demanded the separation of the direct producers from their means of production. The nature of this process and the subsequent fate of the proletarianised layers depends on the specific circumstances in which accumulation takes place.

The limited basis for the expansion of capitalism in Central Africa meant that the transformation of the countryside was uneven and partial. The slow growth of industry restricted the rise of the working class and its absorption into industry. Perrings is wrong to see in this evolution the 'coexistence of both capitalist and non-capitalist social relations' (p3). Subsistence agriculture and the constant flow of migrant workers between town and country do not contradict the overall rule of capital. Indeed, such forms of uneven development are a feature of advanced as well as backward capitalist countries. To label large parts of Central Africa as non-capitalist is to neglect the *dominant* tendencies inherent in imperialism. The features which Perrings explains as non-capitalist social relations are vivid testimony to the inability of capital to develop the forces of production systematically.

Perrings himself realises that a few impressions do not make a theory. He concedes that he is 'seeking less to develop a theoretical position than to harness a closely wrought conceptual framework to the task of interpreting a body of empirical evidence' (p3). As a source of information Perrings' book is valuable. As a work of analysis, it is misleading and confused. Like so many radical writers on Africa, Perrings fails to pinpoint the fundamental contradiction between labour and capital.

Peter Wilson

Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane, **The political economy of race and class in South Africa**, Monthly Review Press, New York & London, 1979, pp364, hardback, £10.75.

In the preface to this book, the author confides: 'I feel very lonely just now, for my assumptions challenge authorities on South Africa, and my Marxist methodology is anathema to most liberal minds' (p xiii). Magubane's methodology is best illustrated by his characterisation of apartheid as having a 'psychosociological function' (p256). For the author, 'apartheid marks the last stage in the white settlers' neurotic flight from reality' (p240). Liberal minds will not be too perturbed by this. When an attempt is made to explain capital's need to maintain the political oppression of the African population in psychological terms it proves anathema not to liberals but to Marxists.

Magubane's book is no more than a liberal history of class relations in South Africa. It follows Simons and Simons' *Class and colour in South Africa*¹ on most essential points. Like Simons and Simons, Magubane rewrites the history of African resistance so that it conforms with the politics of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and its sister organisation, the African National Congress (ANC). This book does not even present the wealth of material amassed by Simons and Simons – it is merely an apology for the SACP.

Magubane's 'Marxist methodology' leads him to describe the formation of the SACP as a 'potentially major step forward', and to remark that 'from then on, the aims, character, and outlook of the national liberation and labour movements were informed by a scientific ideology' (p282). The SACP's record shows what this 'scientific ideology' has meant in practice. The party chose to work among South Africa's white labour aristocracy whom it defined as a vanguard. As a result it adapted to the white workers' attacks on the black proletariat during the 1922 Rand Rebellion. Until 1928 it refused to take up the struggle against the oppression of the black population.

Despite this approach the SACP was unable to gain credibility among white workers. Together with growing state repression and a series of directives from the Soviet bureaucracy, this failure forced the party to turn towards the black masses. Whereas before it adapted to the chauvinism of the white working class, the SACP came to uphold the banner of petit-bourgeois nationalism. The main effect of this new orientation was to give the ANC the radical credentials it still likes to crow about today.

The gradual merger of the SACP with the ANC undermined the struggles of the African working class against the racist state. At the very time when the black working class was growing in strength, the SACP and the ANC advised the proletariat to support its oppressors. During the Second World War they backed the imperialist war effort and told African workers to postpone their demands for democratic rights. ANC President Luthuli argued that his organisation 'would rather fight for, and correct the evils of our present State' than agitate for the independent mobilisation of the oppressed.²

Magubane conveniently forgets little details like this. Instead he blames the disastrous consequences of the politics of the SACP/ANC on the African masses. His assessment of the 1946 mineworkers' strike is characteristic:

'The strike ended in disaster, doomed to failure because it was not based on a political will strong enough to carry it through. . . . The task of the ANC and its allies became that of charting a course of action that would channel energies and resources in such a way that if another revolt became necessary, it would be meaningful in creating a revolutionary situation.' (p294)

The strike did not fail because there was no 'political will strong enough to carry it through'. The African working class demonstrated its combativity throughout the 'forties. The strike failed because the SACP/ANC disarmed the African working class and directed its energies into the dead end of reforms. Betrayals like this were repeated all through the next decade. In a situation where reforms are impossible, the SACP/ANC led the African working class into a succession of bankrupt civil rights campaigns – each ending in defeat.

The strength of the African proletariat was revealed when it broke from the SACP/ANC. The Alexandra Bus Boycott, for which Magubane falsely gives credit to the ANC, illustrated the solidarity of black workers. Magubane states:

'In 1957 the people of Alexandra township boycotted the bus service for three months because of a penny increase in the fare, and other townships . . . came out in sympathetic boycotts. After extensive negotiating behind the scenes, the fare was reduced. The Africans were learning the power of united action; they were voting with their feet.' (p305)

Magubane is correct to point to the ANC's 'behind the scenes' negotiations, but he fails to mention that these negotiations went on without the consent of the boycotters' and township committees.³ It was not the negotiating skills of the ANC but working class solidarity that led to the elimination of the fare increases. Indeed, the compromise settlement which the negotiators accepted was overwhelmingly rejected by the workers. Victory was won *despite* the ANC.⁴

Magubane's rewrite of history is in the well-established tradition of Stalinism. His radical but superficial analysis glosses over the politics of class collaboration.

Charles Longford

- 1 H J Simons & R E Simons, *Class and colour in South Africa 1850-1950*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969.
- 2 ANC annual conference, December 1941. Quoted in T Karis & G M Carter, eds, *From protest to challenge*, Vol 2, Stanford University, no date, p182.
- 3 Ibid, Vol 3, pp276-77.
- 4 A leaflet published at the time referred to the ANC leadership as the 'main anti-boycott spokesmen'. Ibid, pp394-95.

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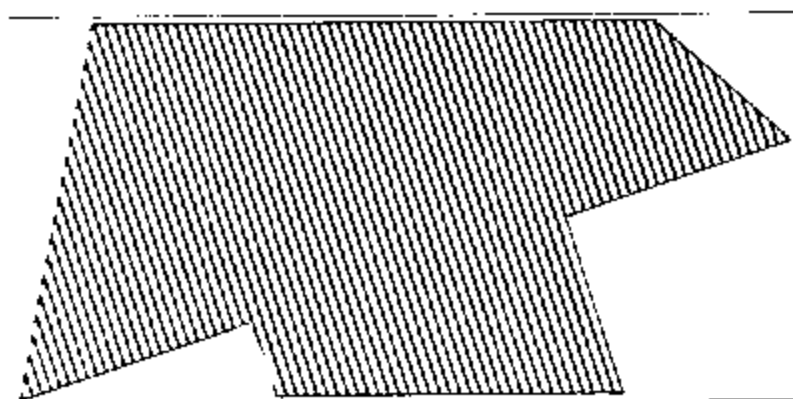
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