

The US and UK banks are the main backers of Mugabe and Tshivangerai, of Zanu-PF and the MDC! Expropriate all imperialist assets and place them under workers control!

When the MDC was formed it had members of the Zimbabwe Chamber of Commerce on its executive. The MDC was formed, being funded and supported by imperialism from the beginning. Imperialism was concerned that Mugabe and the Zanu-PF could no longer control the masses on their own- imperialism needed a new party to help chain the masses.

What are the sanctions that are in place at the moment?

The only sanctions that are in place are limited travel restrictions on Mugabe and some of his elite. It is a myth that sanctions are there by imperialism because of Mugabe's human rights abuses. When the regime killed over 20 000 in Matebeleland in the 1980's there was no concern by imperialism over this massacre so why should they be worried about the harsh conditions of the working class now? Why is Mugabe launching his 'anti-sanctions' campaign now? It is because imperialism is scared that Mugabe and his regime may be exposed as their lackey- there is real fear by imperialism that the masses may rise up against him as they are doing in North Africa and the Middle East. An uprising in Zimbabwe now would set the whole region aflame.

The imperialist banks, from the US and UK control Zimbabwe today

The commanding heights of the Zimbabwean economy are still controlled by mainly by the imperialist banks from the US and UK. For example, Zimplats is 87% controlled by Implats which has major shareholders JP Morgan Chase, the Bank of New York, Deutsche bank, Old Mutual, etc. LTA Zimbabwe is 75% owned by Old Mutual, JP Morgan Chase, the bank of New York, Liberty Life, etc. Manica-Zim is 100% controlled by Bidvest which is controlled by Old Mutual and JP Morgan Chase; Stapleford Wines is 100% owned by Distell; Makro-Zim is controlled by US union basher Walmart; Old Mutual controls 44% of the Merchant bank of Central Africa; Portland holdings is controlled by PPC; Hippo Valley estates is 50.35% owned by Tongaat Hullet; Triangle Sugar is 100% controlled by Anglo American. All the companies have major shareholdings by US banks such as JP Morgan Chase and British banks such as Old Mutual. 80% of all the local tobacco production is still sold to British American Tobacco. The US and British banks also control the cotton and diamond production.

When Mugabe talks about 'expropriation' of foreign companies, what does he mean? He means that 50% or less of the shares be given to him, his family and the ruling clique. 'Nationalization' of this kind has occurred in Zambia and elsewhere where the local elite is given a stake in running the company. Firstly it broadens the base of the ruling party- already many cabinet ministers, their wives and family members are on the Boards of the imperialist controlled companies. More 'indigenous' control of the companies is a campaign by imperialism to buy off more of the middle class- to gain their support if there is a new uprising against the regime. Secondly the advantage that imperialism then has, is that the masses think the company is locally owned and they are more hesitant to challenge them. In Zambia under such 'nationalization' under the control of the ruling elite the workers are still exploited, underpaid and retrenched at will. Imperialism maintains their huge profits of billions they take out of the country every day, they give a few crumbs to the Mugabe elite who brutally suppress any demand of the working class for improvement in their living and working conditions. Further, such huge amounts are paid as compensation for the assets that governments have to take loans from the very imperialists they are supposedly 'expropriating'. So the imperialists benefit double from such 'nationalisation' that Mugabe is planning- first they charge massive compensation; second they get huge interest so the value of the loans are often repaid over 20 years, which means that they get back double the amount they charged. If there are any losses by the company the Zimbabwean government must pay the cost- which means that they will put the burden onto the working class with lower wages and more retrenchments.

From before 1980 up to this moment, imperialism kept their assets in Zimbabwe because the masses believed in the 'Socialist' Mugabe. They made huge profits; the imperialists only started to collapse the



economy from 1997-8 when the masses were no longer prepared to tolerate the worsening conditions imposed by the IMF (the imperialist banks- the friend of Mugabe and Tshivagerai). Only when the masses rose up and imperialism was in danger of losing everything if the workers took over, then capital took out some of the money- this was the same in 'apartheid' South Africa- when the 'apartheid' regime had smashed the resistance movement, imperialism poured money into the country- they did not care about 'human rights' in fact they knew the worst human rights abuses were being implemented by the regime- still they invested billions. They only started to take their money out when the masses rose from 1985-1993. Then Mandela-Slovo signed away the rights of the masses, agreeing that imperialism still control but now there should be new black managers- to give the impression of local control. Thus the point of 'sanctions for human rights abuses' are a myth. In Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, Saudi Arabia, unions are suppressed, workers are executed and imperialism invests billions- they considered these regions safe for profits because the workers movement was smashed. They only take their money out of Libya now because of the threat that the working class may take over everything. Imperialism still controls the commanding heights of the Zimbabwean economy.

The reason why Mugabe is launching his 'anti-sanctions' campaign is for him and his elite to get a bigger share of the wealth that imperialism is plundering from Zimbabwe (and from the entire region). It is a measure by imperialism to increase the stake of the middle class in the system and to cover Mugabe's role as the main agent through which imperialism plunders Zimbabwe. That is why when a few farms are given to a section of the black middle class who support him, they have chased off the workers and where the workers have been retained, they are still exploited by the new black managers. In other words, in his role as manager for the imperialist corporations Mugabe is demanding an increase in the crumbs from the continued exploitation of the working class, which he strictly enforces. He has turned Zimbabwe into a colony of the USA- the Zimbabwean working class have become the direct slaves of the imperialist US banks- this is what the dollarisation of Zimbabwe means.

The way forward

The same US and UK imperialist banks control the entire Southern African region, from South Africa to the DRC and beyond. In South Africa millions of Zimbabwean workers are exploited as semi-slaves for the same Anglo American, US and UK banks that control Zimbabwe. The biggest danger to the working class in the region is the treacherous leadership of the workers' movement, who refuse to launch any real fight against imperialist exploitation and who keep the workers movement divided country by country, who isolate the revolutionary masses of Madagascar, who allow the continued exploitation by imperialism. The central demand which unites the working class in Zimbabwe and across the whole region is for the complete expropriation of all imperialists assets, without compensation to the capitalists and for these assets to be placed under workers control. Based on this workers should form general strike committees at all workplaces. In order to eat, to have work (to share the work among all who can work), to have housing, to have freedom the working class needs to mobilise for a general strike in Zimbabwe and across the region. We should expel the worker leaders who oppose the call for expropriation of imperialism, those who want to keep their ties with the capitalists. We demand the immediate and unconditional release of the reformist Gwisai and 51 others. Their arrest shows that imperialism is worried that 'Egyptian and Libyan fever' may reach Zimbabwe and that they will do everything to crush and pre-empt it. Only the working class can deal with imperialist lackeys like Mugabe and Tshivagerai and indeed with reformists and class collaborators like Gwisai. The working class should set up self-defence committees as part of the general strike committees, to defend themselves from state attacks.

At the same time it is necessary for the working class in the US and UK to organise and mobilise against their own imperialists.

Forward to the refounding of the Fourth International!

Forward to working class power in the semi-colonies and imperialist centres!

Forward to Socialism!

Issued by the Workers International League [Zimbabwe] and Workers International Vanguard League [South Africa] 3.3.2011 integrated into the International Leninist Trotskyist Fraction [FLTI]

www.workersinternational.org.za

