

A Journal of Southern African Class Struggle Anarchism ★ No. 9 ★ September 2008

ZABALAZA



FROM EACH ACCORDING TO ABILITY, TO EACH ACCORDING TO NEED!

NO BORDERS!

NO NATIONS!

**STOP
DEPORTATIONS!**

**SHUT DOWN
LINDELA!**



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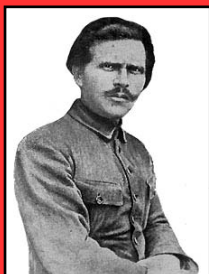
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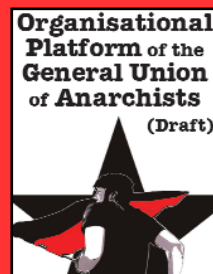
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ORGANISATIONAL PLATFORM OF THE GENERAL UNION OF ANARCHISTS (DRAFT)

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WORKERS, BOSSES AND THE 2008 POGROMS

BY STEFANIE KNOLL, JONATHAN PAYN
AND JAMES PENDLEBURY



Only 14 years after the end of apartheid some say that this is a new apartheid. Only 14 years after the genocide in Rwanda some say that this is a genocide South African style. But this time it is not just about the still existing economic gap between South Africans of different skin colours, nor about a war between different ethnopolitical groups like in Rwanda. It is about nationality and the fight between those who have the minimum security of being born in South Africa, and the unlucky ones who have no such security – who have, in many cases, had to flee to South Africa from violence or starvation elsewhere. The events of May 2008 show a deep xenophobic sentiment in South Africa that is largely due to social and economic circumstances. It is a poisonous cocktail of nationalism mixed with lack of service delivery.

Pictures went around the world in May that we are used to seeing from Rwanda or Liberia, but not from South Africa, at least not since the 1980s. Some, like one of a burning man, won't be forgotten quickly. Even though the police could extinguish the flames, the Mozambican man died a few hours later. Some said he became a victim of a cruel method from apartheid days: necklacing, the setting alight of a living person with a tyre around their neck, although no tyre was used in this case. Necklacing was also used in the genocide in Rwanda.

For more than 100 years Johannesburg, the "City of Gold", has drawn people from all over the world who were looking for a better life. Many would say that South Africa, the "rainbow nation", is known for being a hospitable country. Since colonialism, people from all over the world have settled here. Until the end of apartheid it was mostly Europeans: Germans, Serbs, Greeks, Italians, Portuguese, British etc. Since the end of apartheid it has mostly been people from other African countries, especially from those that are in a war or crisis. The number of immigrants in South Africa cannot be stated exactly, but it is estimated to be between 5 and 6.5 million, most of whom are from Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

But for all the long history of immigration, surveys have shown that South Africans are among the most xenophobic people on earth (*The Times*, 24.5.08). This hostility is especially common among younger people, those that have grown up being indoctrinated to be "proudly South African". Many older South Africans also think that they should be the first to enjoy the fruits for which they have fought so long and hard.

In recent years, attacks on foreigners from other African countries have happened again and again. Four hundred and seventy-one Somalis alone have been killed in the past 11 years (*Cape Argus*, 17.5.08). But xenophobic attacks took a leap forward in May 2008. Many observers aptly characterised them as pogroms, referring to a form of racist mob violence against Jews that was common in Europe for many hundreds of years. As pogroms happened in Europe, so they happened in South Africa. Instigated by a few provocateurs, a mob would form, which would go from house to house and attack individuals who were different, mostly because their skin colour was darker, or because they did not speak a particular language (usually isiZulu). They would rape, loot, kill and set houses alight. They would even attack children. In such circumstances, some South Africans fell prey to the violence. As shack-dwellers' movement Abahlali baseMjondolo said: "A war against the Mozambicans will become a war against all the amaShangaan. A war against the Zimbabweans will become a war against the amaShona that will become a war against the amaVenda." (see

page 10) Also, on May 10, the very first night of the violence, a South African was allegedly killed in Alexandra for refusing to take part in the attacks. But most of the targets were immigrants, largely from Zimbabwe – just at the time when Zimbabweans needed help and solidarity from South Africans, whom they helped during apartheid and took in when they had to flee into exile from oppression. (See interviews on pages 14 - 17 for more on Zimbabwe and its relation to the violence in South Africa.)

Many South Africans who live in slums; who don't have enough to eat because of food prices that, in line with global trends, have rocketed 81 percent in three years; who have lost their jobs – if they ever had jobs – because of neo-liberal programmes and privatisation; and who live in shacks without running water and electricity, blame foreigners for stealing their jobs, houses and women, and for crime. But they just want to find a scapegoat and blame those

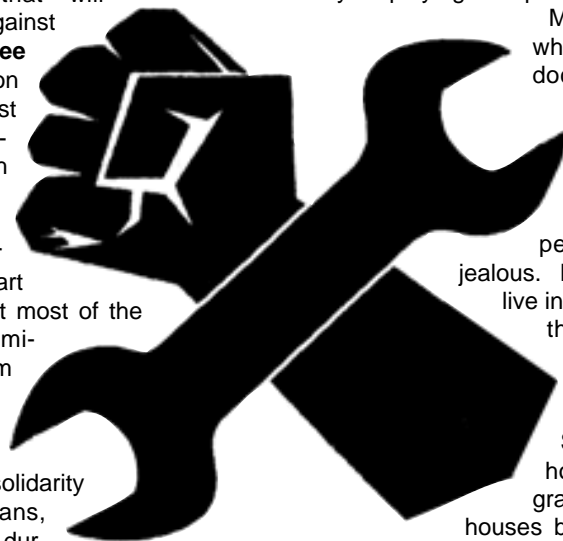
that are most vulnerable, instead of blaming the ones really responsible – the government and the capitalists. When you don't know who your enemies are, when you don't see that the government that says it's on your side is really working for the capitalists, when you don't understand how the global business cycle creates a downturn that makes poor people suffer all over the world, it is easy to misdirect your anger.

Myth and Reality

But this anger is based on myths. Foreigners in South Africa are often unemployed. Some are paid lower wages than South Africans, a sad result of capitalism that can be observed around the world. We should note that such divisions among workers help the capitalists to keep wages down for everyone. If immigrants are not with South Africans in unions, employers can hammer South African workers by employing cheaper immigrants – just as, in the past, they hammered white workers by employing cheaper blacks, and male workers by employing cheaper women.

Many foreigners who don't have documents and thus cannot get jobs set up small shops. If they run well then people become jealous. Most immigrants live in slums and send the little money they earn back to their families at home. Sometimes, however, immigrants live in RDP

houses built by the government. Some rent these houses from South Africans; others, no doubt, get them from the government by bribery. But as Abahlali says: "Oppose corruption but don't lie to yourself and say that people born in South Africa are not also buying houses from the councillors and officials in the housing department." It is also not true that immigrants are responsible for high crime rates. Even statistics issued by the government say that out of all crimes only 3 to 4 percent are committed by immigrants. This includes arrests for not having papers – which strongly suggests that immigrants are responsible for an even smaller proportion of real destructive anti-social crime.



The Bosses' Nationalism...

But even if government statistics do not support hostility to immigrants, still the government, the media, and politicians of all parties are united in promoting this hostility. Nearly every day we hear how Zimbabweans steal and how Nigerians deal drugs – and the newspapers add to these rumours, always being sure to mention when a crime is committed by a “foreigner”. In particular, the “Daily Sun” – South Africa’s most widely read daily paper, aimed at the black working class – has been blamed for inciting xenophobia and reporting inappropriately about the attacks: its headlines have repeatedly referred to foreigners as “aliens”. But the *Sun* is not alone, even if other papers are more subtle. A 2005 study by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa showed that anti-immigrant coverage was widespread in the South African press. This included derogatory references to immigrants and calls for tighter border controls. There were exceptions, notably in the business press. But the study noted that business and the newspapers that cover business tend to support immigration because “we need foreigners’ skills or investments”. There may be some truth to this view, but it is not a view informed by concern for immigrants themselves.

Xenophobia in South Africa starts at the top, at the infamously incompetent department of home affairs, which is known for mistreating foreigners and which is often corrupt. Former minister of home affairs Mangosuthu Buthelezi blamed immigrants for high unemployment years ago. Since then deportations have increased. Buthelezi, the leader of the Zulu-chauvinist Inkatha Freedom Party, is no longer in government; but he is not alone in his views. The Democratic Alliance, the right wing liberal opposition, which takes pride in calling for an “open opportunity society” – meaning a society based on the “free market” – confines its “openness” to South Africans. It says the answer to the attacks is tighter border controls. This is also the view of the South African Institute of Race Relations, of many journalists and academics, and of many ANC politicians. Practically all these distinguished ladies and gentlemen condemned the May pogroms; but it is clear that they do not have a problem with violence against immigrants. They simply want this violence to be carried out by the state: the problem arises when disobedient poor people in the townships do for themselves what they are supposed to leave to their betters. And they are happy, not only with the state carrying out violence, but with the even more devastating consequences of closed borders: with the absence of any escape from war, oppres-

sion and starvation; with all the lives that are lost by those who, in desperation, still make the attempt to cross the border in the face of the state’s forces.

And this is how it works in practice. The South African police are hardly known for being nice to immigrants. It happens quite often that immigrants get threatened by the police and illegal immigrants are made to give them money – or face deportation. Even in the May attacks police have not been interested in helping immigrants. They have been filmed playing soccer in townships struck by xenophobic violence; on another occasion, they didn’t help a man who slowly died in front of their eyes. Foreigners complained that police not only incited violence, but did not intervene to prevent it. In the refugee camps to which immigrants fled after the pogroms, there have been problems between refugees and police. In some incidents, police have shot at foreigners. (*Mail & Guardian*, 22.5.08) In at least one,



they used abusive language, saying: “Fucking kwerekwere go back to your country, this is our country.”

Long before the May pogroms, police attacked immigrants at the Central Methodist Church in the centre of Johannesburg in January 2008. This church has been home to over 1 000 immigrants for years and it is also a centre for various social projects, such as Aids help. The police stormed the church heavily armed, without a warrant, and arrested, without good reasons, about 1 500 immigrants, 200 of whom were women, some of them pregnant. But the church is still a place of refuge. During the pogroms, hundreds more refugees came to the church, which means that more than 2 000 people now stay there.

Many illegal immigrants are brought to the Lindela Repatriation Centre – or rather, concentration camp – in Krugersdorp. Immigrants without documents are held here for many months until they get deported. Again and again, gross human rights violations have been reported; people have

died in Lindela. There are reports that South Africans get deported to Zimbabwe because they “look Zimbabwean” and because they didn’t have papers with them (*Citizen*, 14.11.06). Without papers, money and contacts they somehow have to find their way back to South Africa. It is certainly common for South Africans with darker skin than the average, or those who speak Shangaan or Venda rather than Zulu or Xhosa, to be harassed by the police. The method used during the pogroms for identifying targets – testing potential victims’ knowledge of obscure Zulu terms – has been favoured by the police for many years. This insistence on papers and judgment due to skin colour recalls the dark days of apartheid and pass raids.

The police are building a new detention centre near Musina for Zimbabweans found crossing the northern border, from where they will be deported without being offered the opportunity to apply for asylum.

(It is worth noting that many would have trouble getting asylum, since even after yet another faked election in which Robert Mugabe held on to power by force against massive popular opposition, the Mbeki regime continues to cover up for the tyrant in Harare and deny that he is a dictator. As for the economic ruin in Zimbabwe, the fact that many people can’t afford a loaf of bread is not accepted as justification for claiming refugee status. (See interviews, pages 14 - 17)

The police have probably killed more immigrants since 1994 than were killed in the pogroms of 2008; but these crimes get far less mention in the media. Politicians might condemn some “excessive” actions of the police – as if murder and brutality were anything other than the cops’ job! But in general, they want the violence to go on. Immigrants are not welcome, unless they bring something the South African ruling class needs. Their interests and hopes and dreams are not considered. The politicians and the press may support “black economic empowerment” and condemn anti-black racism; they may say women deserve equality; many of them support gay and lesbian rights; most at least say they want better conditions for the poor, even if they obviously don’t mean it. But hardly any will support equal rights for immigrants. The “liberal” position is that they can come here if we need their skills. Imagine the outcry if someone said that about blacks! But the border is absolute; those on the other side of the fence do not enjoy the same rights.

This is the poison of nationalism (see pages 24 & 25). It is the ideology that tries to tell us who we are and what our rights are on the basis of states and borders. It is an ideology that says a South African work-

er has more in common with a South African boss than with a Zimbabwean worker. It is an ideology that divides the workers in order to rule and exploit us. It has overwhelming support in the ruling class: from the ANC, from the Communist Party and the Cosatu leaders who give the ANC left ideological cover, from opposition parties, from the media. All these forces promote such initiatives as the "Proudly South African" buy-local campaign. This campaign undermines international working class solidarity by promoting the illusion that what workers need, rather than joining in solidarity and struggle across borders, is to create jobs inside South Africa by supporting the local economy. It fosters nationalist pride and patriotism for South Africa, the most industrialised country on the continent, as opposed to solidarity across artificial colonial borders – borders that the ANC, indeed, accepts uncritically. Not surprisingly, the campaign enjoys the overwhelming support of local capitalists: after all, it is they, not South African workers, who benefit from the campaign.

But although nationalism may be the greatest force of division, hatred and violence in South Africa, it is not alone. Racism and sexism continue, and showed themselves to be particularly dangerous in the months leading up to the May pogroms. In these months we saw the cruel racist pranks of white students at Free State University; the sexist violence at Noord Street taxi rank in Johannesburg; and many other incidents of chauvinistic violence, notably against women, and, in particular, black lesbians. According to People Opposing Women Abuse, 10 lesbians have been killed by homophobic violence against women since 2006, an estimated one every three months.

The times are hard, and it would seem that the culture of chauvinism is growing, or at least showing itself more clearly, throughout South African society. This may be linked to the ANC's new president, Jacob Zuma, who is on the way to the presidency of South Africa. Zuma is a notorious homophobe and a sexist, as revealed in the statements he made during his rape trial, which have surely fomented the spread of sexist and chauvinist attitudes. This aspect of his politics is far more significant than his supposed commitment to the working class, which has never revealed itself in action or even in any serious words. Like any politician, Zuma is out for his own power, and he has played on frustration and anger against the neo-liberal Mbeki regime to win working class support. In fact, his views scarcely

differ from Mbeki's, except in his blatant chauvinism: if he has broken with Mbeki, his break is to the right, no matter what Cosatu's opportunistic sellout leaders might say. It is telling that, although Zuma publicly condemned it, the mobs carrying out the pogroms in May often sang 'Mshini Wami' ("bring me my machine gun"), Jacob Zuma's signature song. This was originally a progressive song, a song of the anti-apartheid struggle; but Zuma's supporters have turned it into a song of personality cult, of Zulu chauvinism, male chauvinism, and, perhaps, reactionary chauvinism in general. Anger that could have been directed into working class resistance against capitalism is being diverted into division of the class on gender and national lines.

Another song that was sung during the pogroms is the national anthem, "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" (God bless Africa). The message of this song, ironically, is not exclusive to South Africa; it is pan-Africanist and religious. This does not make it a song of the working class struggle, which knows no borders of continents any more than of countries. The exploding costs of food and energy, which have added fuel to the fire in South Africa, are not an African crisis but a



global crisis, a consequence of the global capitalist system, which hammers the working class everywhere. But some irony appears in Africans singing "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika" as they attack their fellow Africans. Evidently the message of the song has been forgotten. And this is no surprise, for since 1994, the song has become a symbol of the South African state, a device to rally the people around the flag, to make us follow the bosses and stop thinking for ourselves. Nationalism and the state are killers of thought; they demand not understanding but obedience; and from the death of thought emerges the misdirected violence of ignorant chauvinism.

...and the Workers' Internationalism

But rational thought and solidarity are not dead in South Africa. Working class internationalism has a long history in this country (see Pages 7 - 11). Internationalism lives on in the social movements of the popular classes, which are built on the struggle for better services in the townships. We know that this very struggle was one factor that motivated the pogroms; but we cannot join the bourgeois commentators who declare "Today's service delivery protest is tomorrow's xenophobic attack." For the social movements were almost alone in presenting an internationalist response to the pogroms: the first statement of such a view came from the centre of the storm in Alex, from the Alexandra Vukuzenzele Crisis Committee (AVCC), an affiliate of the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF). The ruling class characterises the social movements as criminals and barbarians; we know they are no such thing. This is not to say they are perfect. Before the pogroms, xenophobic sentiment was publicly expressed by members of the AVCC itself, and we know that such confusion, such poison, is not easily eliminated. But in the crisis, the internationalist tendency came to the fore, informed to at least some extent by class analysis. While politicians, journalists and intellectuals, the Institute of Race Relations, members of the DA and the ANC, were calling for tighter border control, the APF was saying "no one is illegal". Social movements joined with religious organisations, NGOs and middle class liberals to co-ordinate relief for victims of the pogroms.

What seemed to be lacking was a link between relief efforts and efforts to create safe havens and organised self-defence. Not that efforts at defence were altogether absent. Refugees at the Central Methodist Church watched the doors; some prepared to defend themselves from the roof. In some other places victims started to organise themselves because the police were overstrained. In a particularly eloquent statement of working class internationalism, Abahlali declared its intention to prevent any attacks in Durban (see page 11). In Cape Town the Anti-Eviction Campaign announced its mobilisation to prevent at least one attack. Similarly, social movement activists from Gauteng expressed their support for defence, some trying to mobilise people living in Johannesburg's inner city slums to defend immigrants in their communities. Nonetheless, much remains to be done.

A notable expression of internationalism was a march in Johannesburg on 24 May, organised by the Coalition Against

Xenophobia, which comprises social movements, NGOs, immigrants' organisations, church groups, and left political groups including the ZACF. Thousands attended the march, but it had serious flaws: in particular, little attention was given to the underlying class conflict. Moreover, participation by the APF's grassroots affiliates was disappointing. Some stayed away because of intimidation; but xenophobic sentiment within the fighting organisations of the class may have been a factor.

On the other hand, it was interesting that many of the demonstrators were white South Africans, largely middle class, usually not seen at marches. Further, some middle class whites – as well as some middle class and working class blacks – made extensive donations to refugees. No doubt these actions were motivated by sincere solidarity and horror at the pogroms. But we must wonder how this crisis came to attract so much more attention from the white middle class than the daily horrors of poverty. It is too easy for the relatively well-off to see something terrible and think it is extraordinary, a remarkable explosion, an isolated event to be dealt with in isolation. This is an easier line of thought than understanding the roots of the violence in the mighty and pervasive forces of nationalism, statism and capitalism. There are other escapes: no doubt many whites (but probably not those who came to the march) said "Look at these terrible blacks and how they're killing each other; oh for the good old days when we were in charge." Others condemned the pogroms, but were filled with fury when the state proposed to establish refugee camps in their own neighbourhoods. Like the perpetrators of the pogroms, they wanted the foreign barbarians to stay away; unlike them, they felt that the state could and should do the job, out of sight and out of mind; they felt no need to take violent action themselves. Here we see the mentality of relative privilege, of those who would hate to get their own hands dirty, but will turn their eyes away from violence as long as it is done quietly and routinely by the state. It is akin to the mentality that regards the pogroms as an extraordinary thing that came out of nowhere, and it is close to the attitude of nearly all the organs of the ruling class, that the way to prevent the pogroms is better control of the borders.

Still, the demonstration was a success. It moved through Hillbrow, a quarter in the centre of the city in which many immigrants live. Most of them supported the marchers. The demonstration also marched past the Central Methodist Church. It was an important sign of solidarity. Like the relief sent to the refugees, it was a hopeful sign that there is more to human beings than hatred and violence.

It stands in contrast to the attitude of the ruling party, which refused to face the roots of the violence. Politicians first blamed the pogroms on a sinister "third force", then attributed them to mere "criminality", denying any political or economic roots. The notorious political opportunist Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, no stranger to violence, apologised for the attacks and said that not all South Africans were like that. But she also said publicly that these attacks were done by criminals and *not* South Africans (*The Star*, 15.5.08). With this she indirectly says that criminals are not South Africans and leaves it up to us to speculate if she means immigrants or not. She puts herself, as usual, in the ranks of the nationalists, saying that being South African is good and not being South African is bad, and setting herself up as the great leader who knows who is a true South African.

Hidden Agendas

We can see that the government was better at coming up with absurd excuses for the crisis than at doing anything about it. In their customary fashion – in contrast to when the working class is demanding its rights – the police responded slowly and inefficiently when people's lives were in danger, their presence doing little, at least at first, to prevent further violence. It's no wonder, given that the state is the world's major agency of violence, that it would respond so slowly to prevent further violence. But why did President Mbeki choose not to heed the warnings given to government by the National Intelligence Agency, as early as January this year, that this kind of trouble was brewing, "especially in Alexandra"? It seems plausible that elements in the state either fomented the violence or deliberately refrained from intervening as some sort of experiment to see how far it would go, to see to what extent the popular classes could be whipped up in mass hysteria against 'the other'. After all, this is a tried and tested state strategy for misleading the masses, keeping them under the thumb of the leaders and dividing them among themselves.

Ruling class politicians and media have added to the confusion by using the word "anarchy" to describe the attacks. This is a familiar response in times of turmoil. We even hear that "anarchists" are responsible. Even less intelligent observers used the word "anarchism" – which stands for an ideology. Anarchy is again a word used as a threat, as if these attacks were made by anarchists. Anarchy, a social system without a state, is not chaos but it is order without authority. It is merely a term to describe a society without a government.

To quote one anarchist communist who lived 100 years ago, Alexander Berkman:

"The word Anarchy comes from the Greek, meaning without force, without violence or government, because government is the very fountainhead of violence, constraint, and coercion ... Anarchy therefore does not mean disorder and chaos ... On the contrary, it is the very reverse of it; it means no government, which is freedom and liberty. Disorder is the child of authority and compulsion. Liberty is the mother of order."

The pogroms in May were chaos resulting from capitalism, the state, and the misery that necessarily goes along with them. Politicians maintain that we live in a ordered system of capitalism, when really it is chaos. It shows yet again that chaos comes not from anarchy, but from capitalism, which necessarily creates poverty and thus frustration. The state is necessary to uphold capitalism and therefore also responsible for chaos. And we have seen that in this chaos, the greatest call for order came from the internationalist working class movement, of which anarchism is a part. Anarchists have warned about xenophobia and the threat of nationalism in South Africa over the years. Anarchy would be a society without borders, nations and capitalism, thus no fence to divide us, no ruling elite to incite us and no bourgeois class to exploit us.

But we have a long way to go. The pogroms have ceased, but violence against foreigners continues, particularly from the state. On 16 July David Masondo, the chairman of the Young Communist League, was arrested and beaten up by the cops, and insulted as a "foreigner", because his home language is Shangaan. If this can happen to a prominent political figure, how much more must be happening to ordinary South Africans and immigrants every day? And we must note that, while Masondo's own organisation condemned the assault, along with the Communist Party and Cosatu, none of them noted that this sort of violence is *what the police do*. Hardly surprising, since these supposedly revolutionary working class organisations are in alliance with the capitalist and statist ruling ANC. Indeed, Charles Nqakula, the minister in charge of the police, is a senior member of the very same Communist Party.

Worse still, the pogroms succeeded. After the media has lost interest, the victims are still too scared to go home – and thousands have no home to go to. Some immigrants think that there have been hundreds of deaths, and that the government wants to keep the number of deaths low for fear of scaring investors, or of undermining that glorious project of the South African state and capital, the 2010 Soccer World Cup. The Mozambican government has declared a state of emergency and built refugee camps. At least 30 000 people

have fled to Mozambique alone. The government of Malawi has transported hundreds of its nationals home with buses. Before the phony election on 29 May, the Zimbabwean leader of the opposition, Morgan Tsvangirai, visited victims in Johannesburg and called on them to come back home with him and vote for a better future. (This was before Tsvangirai pulled out of the election, coming to the reasonable conclusion that President Robert Mugabe's lies and terror left him with no hope.) Mugabe publicly declared that returnees will be given land and he organised buses for them – and many left, willing to risk the economic ruin and terror in Zimbabwe to escape the terror in South Africa.

The perpetrators have reached their goal: a few thousand immigrants less. Perhaps this will make more houses and jobs available to South Africans: who can tell? But with 62 lives lost, what remains is poverty, which will lead to more violence in the future. The government has said, yet again, that they intend to fight poverty – but why should this be taken any more seriously than before? A capitalist government remains a capitalist government, concerned with the interests of the few. And the success of the pogroms could encourage more of the same, and worse. European anti-semitic violence began with pogroms and ended with the mass slaughter of six million Jews by a powerful nationalist state. In Rwanda a million were slaughtered by the same pogrom methods that we now see in South Africa. It has happened before; it has happened again; it could happen anywhere. Such violence is often manipulated by political forces in an attempt to foment poor-on-poor violence as a means of deflecting anger over lack of jobs and service delivery away from government and local leaders. If this happens in South Africa, the worst could be yet to come. It is not inevitable, but it is possible, and the rise of Jacob Zuma is an ominous sign. The only sure path to preventing mass slaughter is solidarity of the working class, solidarity across borders, solidarity against the real enemy: cops, bosses and politicians.

BA SEBETSI BA AFRIKA INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF AFRICA, JOHANNESBURG, 1917

**MANIFESTO OF THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF AFRICA,
ISSUED IN JOHANNESBURG, SEPTEMBER 1917, IN
SESOTHO AND ISIZULU**

LISTEN, WORKERS, LISTEN!

Workers of the Bantu Race:

Why do you live in slavery? Why are you not free as other men are free? Why are you kicked and spat upon by your masters? Why must you carry a pass before you can move anywhere? And if you are found without one, why are you thrown into prison? Why do you toil hard for little money? And again thrown into prison if you refuse to work? Why do they herd you like cattle into compounds?

WHY? Because you are the toilers of the earth. Because the masters want you to labour for their profit. Because they pay the Government and Police to keep you as slaves to toil for them. If it were not for the money they make from your labour, you would not be oppressed.

But mark: you are the mainstay of the country. You do all the work, you are the means of their living. That is why you are robbed of the fruits of your labour and robbed of your liberty as well.

There is only one way of deliverance for you Bantu workers. Unite as workers. Unite: forget the things which divide you. Let there be no longer any talk of Basuto, Zulu, or Shangaan. You are all labourers; let Labour be your common bond.

Wake up! And open your ears. The sun has arisen, the day is breaking, for a long time you were asleep while the mill of the rich man was grinding and breaking the sweat of your work for nothing. You are strongly requested to come to the meeting of the workers to fight for your rights.

Come and listen, to the sweet news, and deliver yourself from the bonds and chains of the capitalist. Unity is strength. The fight is great against the many passes that persecute you and against the low wages and misery of your existence.

Workers of all lands unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains. You have a world to win.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ATTACKS

By STEFANIE KNOLL

On 15 March 2008 a xenophobic mob attacked shops of immigrants in Mamelodi, the township with the most immigrants in Tshwane (Pretoria). Fifteen shops were looted and burnt down; in one of them a nine-year-old girl died in the flames. Residents of the township publicly declared that immigrants burnt their own shops (*Pretoria News*, 16.4.08).

On 18 March two immigrants were killed in Atteridgeville near Tshwane, more were hurt, and shops of immigrants burnt down. This led to more attacks in the area. Hundreds fled to the local police station, others to a school, to save themselves. In the following weeks more attacks happened and four more people were killed. Out of the hundreds of refugees at the school, only the legal ones could stay. Many illegal immigrants and victims of attacks were deported.

These are only two of many attacks in recent years. The events that have been reported all over the world have happened since 10 May, when attacks started in Alexandra. Many immigrants and a South African were attacked and killed in Alex, their shacks burnt down and shops looted. A few days after the events in Alexandra, pogroms started in Diepsloot, north of Johannesburg. This was not the first xenophobic attack there. Only one month before, South Africans had attacked immigrants and about 100 people had lost their homes within a short time. Police only arrived hours later even though they had known about the attack before it happened. It was the police that told a

meeting of the Community Policing Forum the night before that immigrants were the ones responsible for crime. Only a few hours after the meeting took place the attacks started. This time the attacks were even worse, a Zimbabwean living in Diepsloot tells us. He still can't believe what he has seen with his own eyes. In only two days, six people were killed and hundreds wounded. This time it was mostly Zimbabweans who were attacked. The Zimbabwean thinks that many victims would like to return to Zimbabwe, but the situation there is as bad. Many have lived here for many years and even have families here. Nevertheless many now return because they would prefer to die in their own country.

Diepsloot is a huge township but when the attacks started the police only sent in two vehicles. Our informant thinks that the police are not interested in helping immigrants. Too often they are victims of the police themselves. The perpetrators are mostly school children whose parents are unemployed, he thinks. That's why they loot shops and immigrants' flats.

On 17 May the attacks spread to the East Rand. Five people died in Cleveland, two of them burnt alive. There was a massacre in a hostel in Reiger Park in which a 71-year-old South African was beaten to death. Shops in the centre of Johannesburg were attacked and immigrants attacked on the streets. A few days later the attacks spread to the West Rand, then to Mpumalanga. On 20 May they reached Durban, where there were also deaths. Pictures from Cape Town that went around the world are shocking, not because they show dead bodies but "ordinary people", even older women, who looted shops and laughed when immigrants drove past them to flee.

NINETY YEARS OF WORKING CLASS INTERNATIONALISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION BY JAMES PENDLEBURY (ZACF)

For decades, nationalism – African or Afrikaner – has been the dominant ideology in South Africa. It has drawn the working class into unity with the bosses, and divided workers from their fellow workers. It has promised freedom and delivered oppression; it has promised bread and delivered starvation. Nationalism can play a progressive role when in opposition to an oppressive regime, but in power, it invariably becomes a weapon against the working class. The pogroms of May 2008 are the latest disaster to arise from nationalism.

Many will say that the African nationalism of the ANC – or the PAC, or black consciousness – is the only force for liberation in South Africa. The Communist Party claims to be socialist, but it allies itself to the ANC, and says we must have “national democracy” before we can move on to socialism. When will we move on? We must wait until the leaders tell us.

But it need not be so. There is another tradition of liberation in South Africa, a tradition that draws South African workers closer to workers in the rest of the world, instead of separating us.

Revolutionary working class internationalism appeared in South Africa in the 19th century, but it first became a major force in the 1910s. At this time, the South African state was newly established, and its boundaries did not define people's identity. The working class, in particular, was international. White workers were immigrating from many parts of Europe, North America and Australia; black workers came from all over southern Africa to work in the gold mines of Johannesburg. There were ethnic differences, but among many workers, these seldom coincided with the state boundaries that had recently been introduced by British, German and Portuguese imperialism.

Revolutionary internationalism was introduced mainly by European immigrants, who brought with them the principles of revolutionary anarchism and syndicalism (revolutionary unionism), which was then the main revolutionary movement of the workers of the world. Their most important

organisation was the International Socialist League (ISL), launched in Johannesburg in 1915, and born from a wave of militant strikes and from workers' opposition to the outbreak of World War 1 the previous year. In rejecting the war, the syndicalists of

Johannesburg – such as Bill Andrews, SP Bunting, Andrew Dunbar and David Ivon Jones – emphasised their internationalism; and explicitly recognised that internationalism in South Africa meant reaching out to the racially oppressed African workers, who, as the majority, as well as the Indians and Coloureds, would play the central role in revolution. They recognised white racism as a major

obstacle to militancy for whites and as a heavy burden on blacks.

In 1917 a series of political discussions was held in the evenings in the centre of Johannesburg, between ISL militants and black workers. From these discussions was born the Industrial Workers of Africa (IWA), the country's first black union, inspired by the Industrial Workers of the World, a revolutionary syndicalist organisation that had spread across the seas from its birthplace in the United States. Through the ISL and IWA, militants such as Thomas William “TW” Thibedi, Reuben Cetiwe and Hamilton Kraai laid the foundations of revolutionary class struggle among black South Africans.

The first statement of the IWA was “Ba Sebetse Ba Afrika” (To the Workers of Africa), also known as “Listen, Workers, Listen”, which we reproduce here. It points out that

black workers are oppressed as workers, for the profit of capitalists; that workers produce the wealth of society, and should enjoy the benefits; that this requires defeating the capitalists and the state; and that to

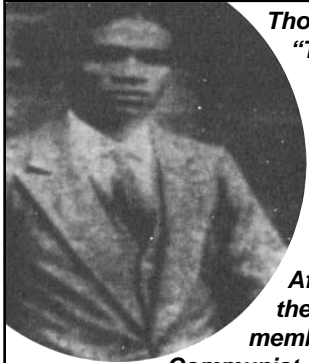
defeat the capitalists and the state, workers must unite as workers, crossing the boundaries of ethnicity and nationality. It makes no mention of the boundaries of the South African state, which were then new and less important than they afterwards became; but the words “Let there be no longer any talk of Basuto, Zulu or Shangaan” show that the struggle included workers from outside the Union of South Africa. “Basuto” included workers from Basutoland (now Lesotho), a British colony; “Shangaan” firmly included workers from Mozambique, controlled by Portugal. The IWA in the Cape later merged into the syndicalist-influenced and region-wide Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), which defined its goal as One Big Union “south of the Zambesi [sic.]”, that is, including all southern Africa.

Many other syndicalist organisations were formed in South Africa around this time, mobilising black, coloured, Indian and white workers. All were agreed that workers must organise in mass movements against capitalism and the state; that black workers, as the majority, must play a key role; and that racial discrimination and prejudice must explicitly be fought and defeated by the multiracial, multinational working class movement. As anarchists and syndicalists, all rejected the goal of taking state power, holding that only the workers could free the workers. All rejected nationalism as a statist ideology, serving the interests of privileged classes; all insisted that the state, capital and racism must be defeated *at once*, in direct action by the workers in their unions, rejecting any idea of national

liberation first and socialism later. The struggle against all forms of (divisive) social oppression was inextricably bound up with the (unifying) class struggle. In this sense, the syndicalists sought a *revolutionary road to national liberation*, advocating *proletarian anti-imperialism* against the *bourgeois anti-imperialism* of nationalism.

The syndicalist movement faded in

the 1920s as militants moved closer to statism and nationalism. This happened in many ways; but we must note that the Communist Party, inspired by the Bolsheviks in Russia, was launched in



Thomas William “TW” Thibedi was a leading member of the revolutionary syndicalist Industrial Workers of Africa, one of the first black members of the Communist Party of SA, and leader of its 10 000 strong Federation of Non-European Trade Unions. He was later expelled on questionable charges, and established the first African Mineworkers' Union, and the Communist League of Africa.



Johnny Gomas of the Clothing Workers' Industrial Union and the International Socialist League

South Africa by former syndicalist militants such as Andrews, Thibedi, Bunting and Jones. Some syndicalist ideas remained in the early Communist Party; but in 1928, at the insistence of Moscow, it turned to a two-stage strategy: first "national liberation" in a (bourgeois) "black republic" and socialist working class revolution only much later. Eventually, this strategy would bring the party into alliance with the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. The ideals of working class revolution and of internationalism lost influence, although they never completely died. Nationalists took the lead; and when the apartheid-capitalist regime fell in 1994, it was the ANC and the Communist Party that held in their hands much of state power.

We should note that the ANC and the Party did not defeat the racist regime through armed struggle, their major strategy from 1961. The regime was undermined by the mass working class insurrection of the 1980s, which, unlike the centralised and exiled ANC, was organised at the grassroots, from the bottom up, in organisations like the UDF. Its practices were closer to those of anarchism than to those of nationalism or Leninism; but it lacked clear anarchist ideas; and most of its militants were drawn into supporting the ANC as it negotiated a compromise with the racist regime and white capital.

The end of apartheid was a great victory. But it did not mark the end of poverty, capitalist exploitation, or police brutality. It left the workers subject to the bosses and to the bosses' state. It promised houses, water and electricity, but it insisted that everyone must pay, regardless of whether they had the money.

By 2000 a new working class movement was emerging. Grassroots struggles began again in the townships, to win houses, water and electricity by demands or by direct action. New organisations appeared, many of them outside the ANC alliance, informed by ideas of revolutionary class struggle, including internationalism. Many militants sought to ensure that these movements were run from the bottom up, not the top down. Anarchism had reappeared as an organised force in South Africa in the 1990s; and while the anarchists of the ZACF are a small minority in the new social movements, we are committed to building their revolutionary potential. Elsewhere in this edition, we note how

nationalism has divided the workers and led to the horrifying xenophobic pogroms of May 2008. We note that the new working class social movements were almost alone in South Africa in making an internationalist response to this violence.

One of these movements is Abahlali baseMjondolo, the shack-dwellers' movement in Durban. Here we reproduce Abahlali's statement on the pogroms, **U n y a w o Alunampumulo**. It is a statement that calls for working class unity and rejects divisions of nationality and ethnicity. It criticises the government for oppressing the people at home and supporting tyranny abroad. It notes how big capital exploits the poor, and how the New Partnership for Africa's Development is helping South African companies to spread their exploitation elsewhere on the continent. It calls for solidarity, for strong unions, for standing up to the cops. It proclaims Abahlali's readiness to defend immigrants against attack. Across the decades, it echoes the call of *Ba Sebeti Ba Afrika*.

The ZACF has some criticisms of Abahlali's statement. When we distributed it in Johannesburg, we included the following comments in our introduction:

We cannot join in their call for "a police force that serves the people".

No police force can be anything other than a force of repression, a force for the state to keep itself on top and the masses at the bottom, a force for the defence of the rich against the poor. Again and again the police have shown this against the movements of the poor, arresting, torturing and murdering us. Not to mention their attacks



Masotsha Ndhlovu, general secretary of the syndicalist influenced ICU yase Rhodesia (1926-1950s), at Bulawayo in 1930



The key figure in the South African IWW (1910-1913), Andrew Dunbar, blacksmithing at 80 years of age in 1960

on immigrants. When the politicians condemn poor South Africans for attacking foreigners, it is because they wish to preserve this power of violence for themselves and their forces alone.

We can and do fight to stop the worst police repression. And any of us, in fear of our lives, will seek the help of the police when there is no alternative. We cannot blame anyone for seeking refuge with the police, or for calling them in to prevent imminent attacks.

But we hope for something better. If there is no alternative, let us try to create one. Let us build our movements to the point where immigrants – or women facing rape, or gay and lesbian people facing chauvinistic violence – do not need to seek the dubious help of the police. Let us build strong, organised working class communities that can defend themselves and their comrades against repression and chauvinism.

No organisation is perfect. We believe Abahlali is mistaken in its view of the police. But in its commitment to grassroots organisation, class struggle and solidarity across borders, Abahlali shows the way for South African workers and poor people to cure themselves of the poison of nationalism. It is returning to a tradition that began in South Africa with the syndicalists many years ago. In this tradition lies our hope for freedom and solidarity, for an end to oppression and violence. We anarchists are striving to complete the break with nationalism and bring victory to the internationalist tradition. Join us.

For more on the early history of anarchism and syndicalism in southern Africa, see our pamphlet *Sifuna Zonke*, available online at

www.zabalaza.net/pdfs/sapams/sifuna_zonke.pdf

A very detailed study is a recent PhD thesis by anarchist researcher Lucien van der Walt, *Anarchism and syndicalism in South Africa*, available at

<http://witsetd.wits.ac.za:8080/dspace/handle/123456789/4506>

On the class character and programme of the ANC, see our pamphlet *Class struggles in South Africa*, at

www.zabalaza.net/pdfs/sapams/class_sa_bmc.pdf

or a more in-depth discussion in *Fighting privatisation in South Africa*, at

www.zabalaza.net/pdfs/sapams/fightingprivatisation.pdf



There is only one human race.

Our struggle and every real struggle is to put the human being at the centre of society, starting with the worst off.

An action can be illegal. A person cannot be illegal. A person is a person where ever they may find themselves.

If you live in a settlement you are from that settlement and you are a neighbour and a comrade in that settlement.

We condemn the attacks, the beatings, rape and murder, in Johannesburg on people born in other countries. We will fight left and right to ensure that this does not happen here in KwaZulu-Natal.

We have been warning for years that the anger of the poor can go in many directions. That warning, like our warnings about the rats and the fires and the lack of toilets, the human dumping grounds called relocation sites, the new concentration camps called transit camps and corrupt, cruel, violent and racist police, has gone unheeded.

Let us be clear. Neither poverty nor oppression justify one poor person turning on another. A poor man who turns on his wife or a poor family that turn on their neighbours must be opposed, stopped and brought to justice. But the reason why this happens in Alex and not Sandton is because people in Alex are suffering and scared for the future of their lives. They are living under the kind of stress that can damage a person. The perpetrators of these attacks must be held responsible but the people who have crowded the poor onto tiny bits of land, threatened their hold on that land with evictions and forced removals, treated them all like criminals, exploited them, repressed their struggles, pushed up the price of food and built too few houses, that are too small and too far away and then corruptly sold them must also be held responsible.

There are other truths that also need to be faced up to.

We need to be clear that the Department of Home Affairs does not treat refugees or migrants as human beings. Our members who were born in other countries tell us terrible stories about very long queues that lead only to more queues and then to disrespect, cruelty and corruption. They tell us terrible stories about police who demand bribes, tear up their papers, steal their money and send them to Lindela – a place that is even worse than a transit camp. A place that is not fit for a human being. We know that you can even be sent to Lindela if you were born in South Africa

but you look 'too dark' to the police or you come from Giyani and so you don't know the word for elbow in isiZulu.

We need to be clear that in every relocation all the people without ID books are left homeless. This affects some people born in South Africa but it mostly affects people born in other countries.

We need to be clear that many politicians, and the police and the media, talk about 'illegal immigrants' as if they are all criminals. We know the damage that this does and the pain that this causes. We are also spoken about as if we are all criminals when in fact we suffer the most from crime because we have no gates or guards to protect our homes.

We need to be clear about the role of the South African government and South African companies in other countries. We need to be clear about NEPAD. We all know what Anglo-American is doing in the Congo and what our government is doing in Zimbabwe. They must also be held responsible.

We all know that South Africans were welcomed in Zimbabwe and in Zambia, even as far away as England, when they were fleeing the oppression of apartheid. In our own movement we have people who were in exile. We must welcome those who are fleeing oppression now. This obligation is doubled by the fact that our government and big companies here are supporting oppression in other countries.

People say that people born in other countries are selling mandrax. Oppose mandrax and its sellers but don't lie to yourself and say that people born in South Africa do not also sell mandrax or that our police do not take money from mandrax sellers. Fight for a police service that serves the people. Don't turn your suffering neighbours into enemies.

People say that people born in other countries are amagundane (rats, meaning scabs). Oppose amagundane but don't lie to yourself and say that people born in South Africa are not also amagundane. People also say that people born in other countries are willing to work for very little money bringing everyone's wages down. But we know that people are desperate and struggling to survive everywhere. Fight for strong unions that cover all sectors, even informal work. Don't turn your suffering neighbours into enemies.

People say that people born in other countries don't stand up to struggle and always run away from the police. Oppose cowardice but don't lie to yourself and say

that people born in South Africa are not also cowards. Don't lie to yourself and pretend that it is the same for someone born here and someone not born here to stand up to the corrupt, violent and racist police. Fight for ID books for your neighbours so that we can all stand together for the rights of the poor. Don't turn your suffering neighbours into enemies.

People say that people born in other countries are getting houses by corruption. Oppose corruption but don't lie to yourself and say that people born in South Africa are not also buying houses from the councillors and officials in the housing department. Fight against corruption. Don't turn your suffering neighbours into enemies.

People say that people born in other countries are more successful in love because they don't have to send money home to rural areas. Oppose a poverty so bad that it even strangles love. Live for a life outside of money by fighting for an income for everyone. Don't turn your suffering neighbours into enemies.

People say that there are too many sellers on the streets and that the ones from outside must go. We need to ask ourselves why only a few companies can own so many big shops, why the police harass and steal from street traders and why the traders are being driven out of the cities. The poor man cutting hair and the poor woman selling fruit are not our enemies. Don't turn your suffering neighbours into enemies.

We all know that if this thing is not stopped a war against the Mozambicans will become a war against all the amaShangaan. A war against the Zimbabweans will become a war against the amaShona that will become a war against the amaVenda. Then people will be asking why the amaXhosa are in Durban, why the Chinese and Pakistanis are here. If this thing is not stopped what will happen to a place like Clare Estate where the people are amaXhosa, amaMpondo, amaZulu and abeSuthu; Indian and African; Muslim, Hindu and Christian; born in South Africa, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Pakistan, Namibia, the Congo and India.

Yesterday we heard that this thing started in Warwick and in the City centre. We heard that traders had their goods stolen and that people were being checked for their complexion, a man from Ntuzuma was stopped and for being 'too black'. Tensions are high in the City centre. Last night people were running in the streets in Umbilo

looking for 'amakwerkwere'. People in the tall flats were shouting down to them saying 'There are Congeese here, come up!' This thing has started in Durban. We don't know what will happen tonight.

We will do everything that we can to make sure that it goes no further. We have already decided on the following actions:

1. We will resuscitate our relations with the street traders' organisations and meet to discuss this thing with them and stay in daily contact with them.

2. We have made contact with refugee organisations and will stay in day to day contact with them. We will invite them to all our meetings and events.

3. We have made contact with senior police officers who we can trust, who are not corrupt and who wish to serve the people. They have given us their cell numbers and have promised to work with us to stop this immediately if it starts in Durban. We will ask all our people to watch for this thing and if it happens we'll be able to contact the police that we can trust immediately. They have promised to come straight away.

4. We will put this threat on the agenda of all of our meetings and events.

5. We will discuss this in every branch and in every settlement in our movement.

6. We will discuss this with our allied movements like the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign and the Landless People's Movement so that we can develop a national strategy.

7. In the coming days our members are travelling to the Northern Cape, the North West, Johannesburg and Cape Town to meet shack dwellers struggling against forced removal, corruption and lack of services. In each of these meetings we will discuss this issue.

8. We are asking all radio stations to make space for us and others to discuss this issue.

9. In the past we have not put our members born in other countries to the front because we were scared that the police would send them to Lindela. From now on we will put our members born in other countries in the front, but not with their full names because we still cannot trust all the police.

10. If the need arises here we will ask all our members to defend and shelter their

comrades from other countries.

We hear that the political analysts are saying that the poor must be educated about xenophobia. Always the solution is to 'educate the poor'. When we get cholera we must be educated about washing our hands when in fact we need clear

water. When we get burnt we must be educated about fire when in fact we need electricity. This is just a way of blaming the poor for our suffering. We want land and housing in the cities, we want to go to university, we want water and electricity – we don't want to be educated to be good at surviving poverty on our own. The solution is not to educate the poor about

xenophobia. The solution is to give the poor what they need to survive so that it becomes easier to be welcoming and generous. The solution is to stop the xenophobia at all levels of our society. Arrest the poor man who has become a murderer. But also arrest the corrupt policeman and the corrupt officials in Home Affairs. Close down Lindela and apologise for the suffering it has caused. Give papers to all the people sheltering in the police stations in Johannesburg.

It is time to ask serious questions about why it is that money and rich people can move freely around the world while everywhere the poor must confront razor wire, corrupt and violent police, queues and relocation or deportation. In South Africa some of us are moved out of the cities to rural human dumping grounds called relocation sites while others are moved all the way out of the country. Some of us are taken to transit camps and some of us are taken to Lindela. The destinations might be different but it is the same kind of oppression. Let us all educate ourselves on these questions so that we can all take action.

We want, with humility, to suggest that

the people in Jo'burg move beyond making statements condemning these attacks. We suggest, with humility, that now that we are in this terrible crisis we need a living solidarity, a solidarity in action. It is time for each community and family to take in the refugees from this violence. They cannot be left in the police stations where they risk deportation. It is time for the church leaders and the political leaders and the trade union leaders to be with and live with the comrades born in other countries every day until this danger passes. Here in Durban our comrades to stand with us when the Land Invasions Unit comes to evict us or the police come to beat us. Even the priests are beaten. Now we must all stand with our comrades when their neighbours come to attack them. If this happens in the settlements here in Durban this is what we must do and what we will do.

We make the following demands to the government of South Africa:

1. Close down Lindela today. Set the people free.
2. Announce, today, that there will be papers for every person sheltering in your police stations.
3. Ban the sale of land in the cities until all the people are housed.
4. Stop all evictions and forced removals immediately.
5. Do not build one more golf course estate until everyone has a house.
6. Support the people of Zimbabwe, not an oppressive government that destroys the homes of the poor and uses rape and torture to control opposition.
7. Arrest all corrupt people working in the police and Home Affairs.
8. Announce, today, a summit between all refugee organisations and the police and Home Affairs to plan how they can be changed

radically so that they begin to serve all the people living in South Africa.

For further information or comment please contact:

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www.abahlali.org





XENOPHOBIA, NATIONALISM AND GREEDY BOSSES - AN INTERVIEW WITH ALAN LIPMAN -



Alan Lipman served as an early member of the underground SACP, which had been re-established in 1953 after its predecessor, the CPSA, was outlawed in 1950. He and his wife Beata worked in an SACP front organisation planning the Congress of the People, which adopted the Freedom Charter in Kliptown in 1955, and Beata beautifully hand-lettered the official version of the Charter. But after intense disagreements over Soviet imperialism with SACP leader Michael Harmel, the couple split with the Party in 1956. Alan engaged in an act of sabotage against the records office of the hated new pass system for black women. The couple fled into exile in 1963, narrowly avoiding being swept up in the Rivonia Treason Trial. In exile, Alan became involved with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and later shifted towards a libertarian socialist position. The Lipmans returned to South Africa in 1990 and although he initially ran as an ANC ward candidate, he became disillusioned with the neo-liberalism of the ANC and later became associated with the ZACF with whom he conducted a well-received workshop in Orange Farm in May 2006.

As far as I understand, xenophobia means dislike, even hatred, suspicion of strangers. And it's been an instrument of oppression used by those in power for centuries. When people are angry, starving, impossibly housed, can't get health services, can't get education for their kids, can't get education for themselves, they're angry. And where do they turn that anger? Ideally they turn that anger against those who benefit most from their misery but, in actuality, that's quite difficult; and when that does happen that's a revolutionary situation. But mostly people turn their anger against strangers in their midst or foreigners.

The Brits have hated the French for centuries, and vice versa; and the French and the Germans and vice versa; the Brits and the Portuguese and vice versa and you can go on and on and on and on; the Scots and the English; and the Welsh and the English. It's not a phenomenon that has to do only with colonialism, although it's intense when it's in a colonial or ex-colonial situation, as we know from the history of India, the history of China, the history of South America and the history of Africa.

So it seems to me that this word xenophobia which the press has picked up, whilst it's an accurate description of the hatred, dislike and suspicion of strangers, is also a useful concealment of what the real misery of the South African masses is: a lack of opportunities for employment, for housing, for education, for health services and for all the other things that we know about, and that they know about all too clearly in their daily lives. So the word xenophobia has been picked up and used as a kind of smooth covering of something which is misdirected anger. It's anger directed at their most obvious strangers in their midst, instead of anger directed at what I would call the ruling class, which in SA has been rich whites, like you and me, because we are rich in comparison – I'm sorry to say that to you – and certainly an ANC upper clique which has promised the world. Every elec-

tion it has been "A better life for all", hasn't it? And every election it's been "A better life for my mates, and for me". So it seems to me that what xenophobia is, or the term xenophobia, is a cover-up for misdirected anger which should have been directed at the ANC, the ANC top leadership – and that goes quite far down in the ANC. Where else in the world would you get a minister talking about the Chinese people in South Africa in the way that our minister recently spoke about Chinese people? Which was racist, insulting, abusive and what the hell, there's not even been an apology, no attempt to understand it. You know why? Because she belongs to the upper clique, which has been lining its pockets and lining its homes with smart furniture, and the motor cars and all the other things; all the copying of the white ruling class habits.

So xenophobia to me is an attempt, not consciously necessarily, but an attempt by some consciously, to divide the people and to direct their anger in an entirely false direction. There may be a few people from Zimbabwe, or the Congo, or Malawi or from other countries, who are better educated than most of the poor in South Africa and who had a better chance to get jobs or small businesses as a result of that – but that isn't a whole group of people. It certainly is not the Zimbabweans who fled from the best pal of our President, you know, fellow gangsters.

So on the question of xenophobia I'm deeply suspicious and terribly hostile. While there are serious problems facing the world: problems of escalation of fuel prices (and that's another question of why fuel prices have escalated); problems of serious climate change caused by human actions (not your action, not my action, except we drive motor cars – I presume you're here by car, and so would I be) which is accelerating whatever natural processes are going on. So those are serious issues; the fact that there's not going to be enough fuel for your car or my car at the prices that we can afford

to pay. It may be five years away, it may be three years away, it may be even less. It's going to change all sorts of things in our lives. The fact that climate is changing, and that's happening quicker and quicker and quicker. The Arctic bloody ice is melting, and the sea is beginning to rise; I don't know how long cities like Durban will exist. Those are serious issues which our governments – if we call them governments; our rulers – should be paying attention to. But they don't even pay attention to xenophobia, the top rulers. What does Mbeki do? He went off to some bloody conference in Japan.

Oh and by the way, just the other day it was published in the paper about the meal that the delegates to that conference in Italy about food shortage; the meals that they had and the food shortage that is going on. It's cartoon copy-book nonsense: pheasants and caviar and all sorts of crap – probably tastes good, I don't know I haven't tried it – fed to these guys by something like 35 chefs from all over the world. That was their meal, and the next minute they're sitting down discussing food shortages. There's no food shortage. There's food profits making food shortage, yes. Okay, so those are the real issues, or the real international issues that we should be confronting. Or we should be confronting South Africa's behaviour at the United Nations recently in supporting what's been going on in Burma. These are the sort of things we should be talking about. South Africa's actions in not allowing the Zimbabwe issue to be discussed. Now whether the Zimbabwe issue is as bad as it's painted, and I think it's probably worse, is another discussion all together. But these are the things that attention should be paid to, but we whip up a call about xenophobia and what happens?

Our ministers say it's 'criminal elements' as though there aren't criminal elements in all popular uprisings. Of course criminals will take advantage of that. And another issue; what makes them criminals? How come they're criminals? So I'm not impressed with the xenophobia charge at all. I'm impressed that the anger that people have shown has been again channelled in another direction.

It's the displacement of the genuine, profound, legitimate anger of the people; who have had no promises fulfilled, who are poor and worse off, despite what the polls tell us; I was just reading about some poll or other that tells us that the working classes think



SACP veteran turned anarchist Alan Lipman

they are better off in South Africa – bullshit, they're worse off. And they're worse off under the leadership of a Communist Party that isn't communist, and a trade union organisation that is barely trade unionist.

What do you think about government allegations of third force involvement in whipping up the xenophobic violence in order to destabilise the country ahead of next years presidential elections? Was it just an attempt to shift the blame and avoid accepting responsibility?

If I was a member of a third force, and I wish I was an active member of a civil society third force, I would take advantage of popular unrest as well. I've been called an agitator for most of my adult life, my father called me an agitator when I was 10 years old and I've been called an agitator ever since. That could be a third force of course. I would agitate, I would agitate against this government. If that's called third force, okay, I'm a member of a third force. I welcome anger and opposition against oppressive conditions. The government will say 'third force', 'criminal elements', 'our political enemies', all sorts of things. Of course they'll say that. Our government behaves exactly like my three decades of experience in Britain and Europe, how governments do there. When Tony Blair says things the next minute you'll hear it coming out of the mouth of Mbeki. They're the same. There should be more than a third force opposed to our government, there should be a popular uprising.

With Jacob Zuma's ascendancy to power within the ANC there seems to have been a correlating increasing attitude of chauvinism through the country, with an increase in hate crimes and attacks being perpetrated primarily against poor black lesbians. Do you think the xenophobic pogroms could have anything to do with Zuma's rise and the culture of chauvinism associated with him?

I think it is something to do with Zuma's probable ascendancy. What does Zuma offer? He offers the actions. Okay, let's agree he wasn't guilty of rape, and I reserve my opinion on that. Let's say he didn't rape that young woman; he certainly took advantage of a young woman who was the daughter of his best friend, so there's something strange about that. He certainly paraded his sexism, he paraded his dislike, his hatred, his fear of gays; and that goes for male gays and woman gays. So, Zuma's no choice, we're faced with a very strange situation. We either support the smooth, sophisticated, hypocritical Mbeki or we support the very likely crookery of Zuma, and that he had something to do with the arms deal – and who didn't in government – is not disputed. What's in dispute is whether he is guilty of a technical crime or not. That he was an associate of Schabir Shaik he doesn't argue against, and the Shaiks don't argue against that. So yes, Zuma is a poor choice of a leader – if we need leaders, and that's another question, as you well know.

Zuma's a poor choice of a leader. We had the choice of either the smooth sophistication of Mbeki or the rather crude homophobic allegiances of Zuma. So it's a pretty sad situation.

A minister was quoted on the radio a while back as saying that, in the Freedom Charter, when it says that South Africa belongs to all who live in it what is actually meant is that South Africa belongs to all who were born here. This obviously could lend itself to xenophobic interpretation. You and your wife were involved in drafting the Freedom Charter; can you tell us what the tone and the sentiment and understanding were at the time of writing it?

The sentiment and understanding at the time, and the sentiment and understanding since then for people who supported the ideas, or some of the ideas of the Freedom Charter, was that South Africa belongs to the people. The people who are in it, who are alive in it. All the people. Not the people who were born here. I was born in South Africa, my father and mother were born in South Africa. So bloody what? What does that make me? And different from anybody else? And my wife was born in Germany. So I'm a better South African than she? It's crap. It's bullshit. It's divisive talk that comes from the top. You've just given me a better example than the ones I've cited of the sort of non-communist, non-socialist, non-democratic ideas that are being spouted by our cabinet members.

Could you tell us what you think has been the role of nationalism in perpetuating the kind of thought that leads to xenophobic attitudes?

Nationalism is a disease. There were circumstances, during occupation of the Nazis, that right-wing nationalists joined in the opposition against the Nazis, and that would apply to most imperial situations. Opposition against the British occupation of and exploitation of India, came also from right-wing Indians. So there have been cases where nationalists have supported popular movements, or been party to popular movements, but nationalism is a disease and xenophobia is just the worst symptom of that disease. I don't need nationalism, I'm not a patriot. What have I got to be patriotic about? Of course I love South Africa. I love the climate, I love the people, I love the beauties of South Africa, of course. But when I was living in Britain I loved the people and beauties of Britain as well, but that doesn't make me a British nationalist or a South African nationalist. Nationalism is the polite term for xenophobia, they're the same bloody thing. And when business people and top ANC spokespeople talk about nationalism what they're really talking about is xenophobia, because it's the same thing.

I think you touched on the role of nationalism in the ANC, as a bourgeois-nationalist cross-class party that hijacked the struggle and diverted it away from what

could have been a popular revolution into the two-phase National Democratic Revolution. The first phase already having been reached and the second phase looking like a distant dream on the horizon. What do you think about the role of this class collaboration in the NDR?

I've learned to become very suspicious of nationalism. I've learned to become very suspicious of the people who spout nationalism. Earlier on in my life I was taken in by that, I've been taken in very badly; I'm a gullible old man. I even went to Israel in 1948 and took part in the murder and the displacement – I only lasted six months there – of the Palestinian people, and I'm deeply ashamed about that. I'm also ashamed about supporting, earlier on, the ANC: African National Congress, about supporting nationalism in the Congress. I'm now, not only guilty but hostile and immediately suspicious of people who talk in national or nationalist terms. They don't need to. And as I said, I'm proud to be human. It's difficult enough to be a human being in an alien society, and this society is alien to me, in a humanistic way. This society is not humane, it's exploitative down to the core. So I strive, in my own personal life, to be human; because we're not human, we're divorced from ourselves, we're alienated from ourselves, from what we really are.

The ANC is actually a nationalist party, so why do they talk at the same time about African Renaissance and that Africa must unite?

The talk about African Renaissance is largely down to people like Mbeki who, I think, had dreams – and I think they were imperialistic dreams – about Africa rising against the Western dominance. That Africa was colonised by the Western powers is history, it's absolutely so. But also the people he thought would support him in this renaissance, where he propagated the ideas of renaissance, were at meetings of the African leadership. Now the African leadership, as Fanon rightly pointed out to us, that leadership is corrupt as hell. It's deeply deeply corrupt. It's almost endemic in its corruption. What they mean by renaissance in actual terms is making more money for themselves, more power for themselves. Power is the important thing, power brings money. And that's what the African Renaissance is. You've noticed he's stopped talking about the African Renaissance over the last few years, because African Renaissance doesn't have any appeal to anybody any longer; except a few so-called intellectuals. Don't be taken in by the African Renaissance. It's a weird term anyhow: if he's talking about African Renaissance why does he take the 'renaissance'? Which was a bourgeois expression three centuries ago. Why does he take that phrase, why doesn't he take a phrase that comes out of Africa? Like ubuntu. Don't believe a word Mbeki says, if Mbeki says "I want to go to the toilet" I don't believe it.



INTERVIEW WITH TWO LIBERTARIAN SOCIALIST ACTIVISTS FROM ZIMBABWE



This year's phony elections in Zimbabwe showed yet again the lengths to which dictator Robert Mugabe is prepared to go in his efforts to hold on to power. He has faked votes, intimidated voters, and arrested, tortured and murdered opponents. And while he denounces his imperialist enemies in Britain and the US, he has eagerly sought the support of his imperialist friends in China.

In April, just after the first round of presidential and parliamentary elections, it was exposed that a shipment of arms from China was destined to travel through South Africa to Zanu-PF in Harare, arms we feared would be used against the Zimbabwean people. The ZACF played a small part in trying to mobilise people in South Africa to prevent the shipment from reaching its destination. Although certainly not as a result of our efforts, the South African Transport and Allied Workers' Union refused to offload the shipment in Durban harbour, and a court ruling caused the ship's captain to raise anchor and leave South African waters before the interdict could be served. The weapons are believed to have arrived in Harare after being unloaded and transported through another southern African country. Despite the arms unfortunately reaching their destination, the solidarity shown by South African workers is commendable, and the attention it drew just might have made Mugabe think twice about using them at that time.

These are among the issues we raised with two Zimbabwean comrades visiting Johannesburg, in an interview on 21st June 2008, the day before Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) leader Morgan Tsvangirai announced his withdrawal from the presidential run-offs on the grounds that it was unfair to expect his supporters to suffer the violence being meted out against them in order to vote.

Since this interview took place, the presidential run-offs, 'contested' by only one man, have come and gone, leaving no change in regime. Hundreds of opposition supporters have been victimised, arrested and murdered. Thousands more have fled the country.

Despite South African President Thabo Mbeki's dismal attempts as SADC-appointed mediator, the ruling Zanu-PF's Robert Mugabe and MDC's Morgan Tsvangirai have since entered into power-sharing talks along with the leader of the MDC's break-away faction Arthur Mutumbara. These talks, however, seemed to have reached a stalemate over who would get executive power, and who would have control of the police, prisons and armed forces. Arthur Mutumbara accepted the conditions of power-sharing handed down by Mugabe, while Tsvangirai said he needed "more time to think".

INTERVIEW WITH BIKO, ANARCHO-COMMUNIST FROM THE UHURU NETWORK AND FACILITATOR FOR THE TOYI TOYI ARTZ KOLLEKTIVE; AND COMRADE FATSO AKA SAMM FARAI MONRO, STRUGGLE POET, ARTISTIC FACILITATOR FOR MAGAMBA! THE CULTURAL ACTIVIST NETWORK, ZIMBABWE. CONDUCTED IN JOHANNESBURG ON 21ST JUNE 2008 BY THE ZACF.

ZACF: *Can you tell us something about conditions on the ground in Zimbabwe, the extent of repression etc?*

Biko: The arrests of senior MDC leaders comes in the wake of Zanu-PF's realisation that this time around the MDC leadership is prepared to call upon the masses of Zimbabwe to rise up and defend their vote using people's power. The specific incident that gave rise to this awakening in terms of Zanu-PF's realisation was Tendai Biti's announcement of the parallel voter tabulation result on 30th March. The arrests are merely a signal that Zanu-PF is going to incapacitate the higher MDC leadership and later decimate the middle-layer MDC leadership – community organisers – so that there is no organised resistance in the wake of Zanu-PF's rigging of elections. But also, which is much widespread, there have been very serious instances of Zanu-PF militia in the rural areas mutilating the bodies of murdered MDC activists. A case in point is a very close friend of mine, Comrade Tonderai Ndira, who was a community organiser in Mavuku but also – in the wake of what is happening – was agitating for the armed self-defence of the oppressed communities, particularly in the rural areas. He was murdered in the rural

area of Murewa by the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) in the remote rural district. His brother could only recognise him



by a wrist band that he wore. That is the extent to which Zanu-PF is prepared to deal with ordinary people. There are so many numerous names of people that have been murdered by Zanu-PF.

Fatso: What's going on on the ground is

the abduction, torture and murder of grass-roots activists from across the board. Mainly MDC activists are being targeted but also those from Women of Zimbabwe Arise (Woza), from the National Constitutional Assembly. Four bodies of MDC activists were found a few days ago. They were from Chitungwiza, which is the biggest township in Harare, and they had been abducted, tortured, beaten and murdered. And there are also political prisoners. Woza's leadership has been arrested and is being held until after the elections. What Zanu has now started is that dictatorial trend of taking political prisoners, which it didn't necessarily do in the past. Those are some of the things that are happening.

ZACF: *And the economy: hyperinflation, availability of food and other basic necessities, unemployment are common knowledge. Perhaps you have some comments on the origin of the economic crisis.*

Biko: The Zanu-PF regime came into power masquerading as a socialist party. It had as part of its ideological tradition the Stalinist conception of revolution. By 1991 even workers rose up against the Zanu-PF dictatorship but by then it had consolidated

its power. By 1990 Zanu-PF had ceased to even act as a pseudo-leftist party and it outrightly embraced the right wing policies of the Bretton Woods institutions, the IMF and the World Bank, by adopting the economic Structural Adjustment Programmes. The revolution that is currently under way in Zimbabwe is a revolution that has been sparked by the people's reaction to the adverse effects brought about by the economic Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1990s. By 1999 we see the formation of the MDC, and the rest is history.



ZACF: *What is the role of the MDC? Have they handled things well or badly? Again, historical comments on how they've blundered in the past might be helpful.*

Biko: The MDC emerged in 1999 from the initiatives of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions as a workers' party, but by the year 2001 it had been hijacked by middle class intellectuals and capitalists, and therefore became a cocktail of ideologies. There have been a big number of mistakes that have been committed by the MDC. The MDC has not aligned itself towards the working people in terms of its economic policies. The MDC continues to look outwards towards foreign direct investment from imperialist nations and multi-national corporations as the way forward for rebuilding the decimated Zimbabwean economy. But in terms of strategy and tactics I believe that this time the MDC has learnt from its mistakes of not agitating for people's power, but what remains a very serious weakness at this particular point is the inability to prepare the masses for an uprising. Yes, it's good to have the leadership calling for people to get into the streets, but it's not good enough because you need to have the people prepared through training, through regular actions with regards to bread and butter struggles that people are going through, because only through action can people attain confidence in using action as means to liberate themselves, which is the only way for Zimbabwe.

ZACF: *Can you tell us a little about the current state of resistance and prospects for the future; whether resistance is organised primarily or only by MDC or whether there's other resistance; the trade unions movement, civics etc.?*

Biko: The Zimbabwean pro-democracy movement has been infected by a disease that we call the 'commodification of resistance syndrome'. There are a lot of NGOs getting a lot of money from imperialist nations but they are not organising con-

cretely where the masses of the working people are. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions remains a militant organisation but it has been weakened by the high rate of unemployment. Our belief as the Uhuru Network is that the key focal point is organising in communities where the majority of working people are, and here we see the very significant role of the combined Harare residents associations, but we feel that the hierarchical structure of most of these organisations organising in the communities is an impediment to the workers and poor people organising themselves in a manner that actually embodies the new forms of organisation that we envision for a new Zimbabwe.

Fatso: I think there's various types of resistance, MDC's is one form. Amongst the civics I think the most powerful movement is Women of Zimbabwe Arise, a very powerful social movement made up of women, which focuses on social justice issues, takes to the streets where necessary, believes in direct action and is a national movement that has got sections all over the country. And then there are other forms of resistance. There are the civics, and there's those like ourselves that use arts and culture in the struggle. We've got our network Magamba! The Cultural Activist Network, and we put on different resistance shows as ways of keeping people's inspiration high, giving people that food for resistance. I think there are different forms of resistance that happen and no,

its not at all exclusively the MDC.

ZACF: *Please tell us a bit about the regime's methods of repression. How far does it depend on firearms; how important is the Chinese connection in terms of arms trade? Can you confirm whether or not the infamous arms shipment got through to Zimbabwe?*

Biko: The shipment was actually confirmed to have been received by a minister in the regimes cabinet, so the shipment is in Zimbabwe now. It is also another thing though that the fascist regime is prepared to use all means of violence, firearms are central to that to suppress any resistance. So firearms are key. Zanu-PF years ago trained youth militia under the National Youth Service Training Programme. Those militia are currently on standby and will be unleashed after the elections for the cleansing of activists. What they are using are the youth structures of their party which are, by and large, very active in all the various wards of the country. The police and the army were the first to perpetrate repression and violence and this we saw in the pre-29th March period. Also of significance is the large number of activists who have been murdered, middle layer leaders within the MDC, who were actually murdered by members of the army during Operation Command which is in charge of running the country. The army, the police and the CIO.

ZACF: *What about the repressive forces receiving training in Korea? Is there something people in countries like Korea could do against this?*

Biko: It is very key because I'm in fact aware of a number of (training centres), particularly in Harare's Milton suburb that are being used as training centres by not only Korean but also Chinese military personnel to train Zanu-PF cadres in methods of torture. This I can confirm because I've witnessed it with my own eyes.

ZACF: *How long is it actually going to take to get rid of Mugabe, and what happens then? A government of national unity or the MDC? What kind of policies will such a government adopt? Is there a danger of a return to neo-liberalism; and what can be done to resist this?*

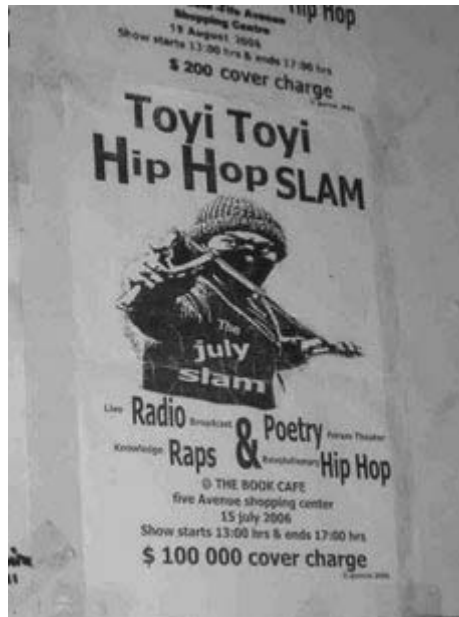
Biko: Frankly, I am not a firm believer in parliamentary politics as a tool for the liberation of the working and poor people, so I'm pretty much indifferent to what is going to happen after Mugabe because what is clear to me is that the working and poor

people in Zimbabwe are not ready to take control of their lives because they have been brainwashed by the ideology of the ruling class. The MDC, if assumes in power – which I would say will happen in the next year or so if people's power and the resistance is organised properly – will pursue neo-liberal policies. The only positive thing that I can see about an MDC government is slightly broadened democratic space, within which I think revolutionary organisations, activists and movements can operate much more flexibly to fight neo-liberalism.

Fatso: One never knows how long it will take to get rid of Mugabe, but I do think it's the final days of Zanu-PF. I don't think they can go on much longer. I think a form of government of national unity is what would come about, even MDC have talked of this; that there is such polarisation in Zimbabwe that the MDC alone may not be able to take all the

people with it. So there is likelihood that if the MDC was to form a government of them bringing in certain elements of Zanu-PF, more reformed so-called progressive elements. There are progressive aspects to what MDC wants to put in place; they talk a lot about a people-based economy and people-centred constitution, but it needs to be seen in practice because one problem with Zimbabwe is that there's a big likelihood that, in a new, independent and free Zimbabwe, that in order to get foreign investment a lot of the country and its resources will be sold off to foreign investors and foreign corporations.... So I think that's one thing to look out for, and another is getting into debt. We have a huge illegitimate foreign debt that we should not pay. Some of it was incurred by Rhodesia and the rest was incurred by Zanu-PF and none of that should be paid back; its illegitimate. The policies that should be put in place should be policies that focus more on social and economic justice, and I think that if those kind of policies don't start to be put in place then people, because the democratic space would technically be larger under the MDC one would hope, people will still have that

knowledge and tradition of the basic struggles for water, the basic struggles for food that formed a lot of the core struggles during our struggle for democracy today and would hopefully be able to continue the struggle for social and economic justice. I don't think it ends with MDC being in power, I think freedom is never fully attained and a lot of the movements will morph into new movements and new movement will be born and the struggle for peoples basic socio-economic rights will continue.



Thabo Mbeki's role as the mediator of the SADC-initiated dialog. Thabo Mbeki I think is by and large motivated by the South African state's sub-imperialist interest in the economy of Zimbabwe. I think also key to understanding his relationship to Zanu-PF is the relationship between the ANC, as a party, to Zanu-PF. We must also understand that Comrade Mbeki, if I might call him a comrade, was educated – or his education was financed – by Zanu-PF, he was staying in Harare at the hospitality of Robert Mugabe, and when he goes to meet Robert Mugabe he meets him as his superior in terms of the nationalists as a movement. The role of the West and the UK is motivated by the failure of the Zanu-PF regime to resolve the land issue in Zimbabwe and also the question of ownership of means of production, which is central to the struggle. The UK, as a state, harbors a hope that they might be able to reverse the loss of the estates and perhaps companies or economic interests in Zimbabwe as a result of Mugabe's pseudo-leftist parties if an MDC government comes to

power. The US is an imperialist nation whose motives around "resolving" international problems is purely economic. They would want to open up the economy of Zimbabwe to the multinational corporations that come from that particular state. So they do not have the interests of the Zimbabwean people at heart. In terms of the international community helping with the resolution of the crisis, it can only be people-to-people solidarity; poor and working people, revolutionaries and organisations – similar minded – in various countries all over the world rendering solidarity to the Zimbabwe people with the interests of the empowerment of poor and working people in Zimbabwe.

ZACF: What can you say about Thabo Mbeki, and do you think that Jacob Zuma will be any better when he comes to power?

Biko: The relationship with the Zimbabwean state if Zanu-PF is in power will clearly be acrimonious because Jacob Zuma appears to be the new favourite puppet of the West in light of his ability to hoodwink the trade unions – Cosatu as a movement – into supporting him. It has become clear I think to most of the imperialists that Jacob Zuma has the popular support of the people, but he is clearly another puppet in terms of his relations with companies, the capitalists, and arms dealers, and he won't have anything to offer the people of Zimbabwe, the ordinary masses; but he will be, after Mbeki, the imperialists' next favourite puppet in terms of how their strategies are implemented within the Southern African region.

ZACF: In terms of international solidarity, what can we do? Who is helping in SA and elsewhere? For example stopping the weapons shipment...

Biko: The transportation workers union I think signaled the direction that workers need to take, unlike what we have seen –



even though Cosatu has been militant at times – but we have seen a lot of talk-shops around what's going on in Zimbabwe. But I think concrete action along the lines of what Satawu did in stopping the shipment of arms is the next direction.

Fatso: I think a lot of Zimbabwean people were very empowered by the regional solidarity that came about from the civics especially in South Africa around the arms issue, Cosatu-affiliated trade unions refusing to offload, refusing to transport the shipment. The South African Litigations Centre taking the boat to court. I think that was very powerful civic solidarity; the South African government had nothing to do with it. That was showing how social movements and civics can be a powerful force for good within society. So I think actions like that where social movements take the forefront, don't wait for governmental action, I think that's important.

ZACF: Any comments on the recent so-called xenophobic pogroms in South Africa? Anything about Zimbabweans who fled the pogroms back across the Limpopo? How significant is this from a Zimbabwean point of view and what does it say about the South African government and people?

Biko: Firstly I'd like to register my understanding of the fundamental causes of the xenophobic attacks, which I think are primarily rooted in the rate of unemployment in South Africa, which is a direct result of the capitalist economic structure that the South African state is pursuing, and also the artificial food shortages which are created by the global capitalist complex in order to initiate a hike in prices. I think those particular causes resonate with the situation obtaining in Zimbabwe and do point to us having a common enemy, which is capitalism. It is particularly disappointing, though, that the xenophobic attacks also point towards and indicate to us the lack of understanding of each other's struggles that we as working people face, which we have to overcome in order to be

able to overcome the system. The impact of people fleeing the xenophobic attacks and coming back to Zimbabwe has on one hand the effect of bolstering the vote of the



MDC, because clearly those people are people who are disaffected by the Zanu-PF regime. But it has also tragically had the effect of worsening their plight because the violence that did obtain in that short period in South Africa is incomparable to the violence being perpetrated by the Zanu-PF regime back home, and these people are primary targets because most of them did flee after some resistance activities and it is like throwing these activists back into the lion's den, and this is the tragedy of our situation.

ZACF: There are rumours that MDC agents could actually have acted as provocateurs and brought about these attacks in order to cause Zimbabweans to flee back home and therefore bolster their support during the elections. Do you think this is a possibility, or do you think it's the South African government trying to divert responsibility?

Biko: While I cannot really comment with confidence about what really happened in South Africa as I was in Zimbabwe, I am inclined to believe that third force conspiracies are really something to drive us away from the responsibility that the ANC government has towards the poor and working people in South Africa which is the fundamental cause. Like I said before, the MDC is actually a cocktail of ideologies and is a party that cuts across class; most of the influential people in the MDC are not really pro-working people so

it is actually possible that people whose interests do not lie with the working people might be able to have their buddies to influence this. But I would much rather focus on the role that the police pursued by the ANC government have had on the xenophobic attacks.

ZACF: What role do you think nationalism might have played in these attacks?

Biko: Capital is globalised, the capitalist in Joburg is able to send huge amounts of money to Harare in seconds whereas the people's movement is restricted by these borders, and that people are forced to recognise these ideological constructs limited to the ruling classes' propaganda with these geographical zones. I think that has been key to shaping the thoughts that we have seen manifest in this very tragic way during the xenophobic attacks. And I think that our role as progressives and revolutionaries is then to try to share the ideas that we uphold of a world that has no borders, and I think that is the way forward in addressing xenophobia across the world.

ZACF: Any messages to the international anarchist movement? Any appeals or suggestions for how the international anarchist movement can support the struggle in Zimbabwe and help the advancement of anarchist ideas there?

Biko: Firstly, ahoy comrades and we appreciate the efforts that the movement has been receiving so far. We as the Uhuru Network have significantly benefited from our relationship with the ZACF in terms of the literature that we have managed to get and also the experiences that we share with comrades. Currently the realisation that we need to remind each other that the anarchist movement is a very small movement within the broader leftist movement but also within the pro-democracy movement, and that our true anarchist comrades are at risk, especially when we have levels of repression such as are obtaining in Zimbabwe. We need to constantly communicate, interact, share experiences and also information about



actions happening because when shit hits the fan it is only an anarchist that will be able to give appropriate solidarity to a fellow anarchist comrade.



ONLY THE KENYAN PEOPLE CAN HEAL THE RIFT IN THEIR SOCIETY TORN BY SQUABBLING ELITES



The widespread violence which marred Kenya earlier this year was seen by many commentators – especially in the wake of the 1 January Eldoret church massacre of refugees from the killings – as having dire parallels with the Rwandan Genocide of 14 years before. It was Kenya's worst bout of violence since the Mau Mau Revolt of 1950-1962, and indeed, did acquire some "ethnic cleansing" overtones as Kikuyu and Luo murdered each other. This was echoed somewhat in the South African xenophobic killings where in some areas, mobs of Zulus took advantage of the general chaos to "hunt" Shangaans (Zabalaza has to decry the inflammatory comments of some commentators who claimed "anarchists" were responsible for the violence – this puts our comrades lives at risk in the townships). The bloodletting in Kenya and South Africa stunned the world, especially as both took place in what were widely viewed as stable, "Westernised" democracies. "We don't do this in Kenya," a shocked security official told Daily News journalist Tracy Connor; "It is what happens in Yugoslavia and Sudan."

But for some time, Zabalaza would argue, both countries' ruling parties have cynically disguised their anti-poor policies behind a smokescreen of chauvinistic emotions which they have encouraged to run unchecked among their constituents. Both have played to the mob's narrow ethnic prejudices, sowing dragon's teeth that they have now reaped where it hurts them most – a tailspin of investor confidence. This analysis was kindly written for Zabalaza by Kenyan journalist Juliana Omale-Atemi. She's not an anarchist-communist, but we felt it was vital to have an experienced in-country view of the riots and killings which marred Kenya earlier this year. And Zabalaza can only agree with her conclusion that the solution to Kenya's problems rests not with either international interventions, nor in elitist compacts, but in ordinary Kenyans deciding to refuse party and ethnic factionalism in order to embrace their neighbours – and build a new society dedicated to righting the wrongs of decades of corrupt mismanagement and callous social engineering.

Michael Schmidt (ZACF)

KENYA'S TROUBLES ARE FAR FROM OVER

BY JULIANA OMALE-ATEMI IN NAIROBI,
WRITTEN FOR ZABALAZA

Kenya's troubles are far from over. Nairobi's current veneer of calmness can be misleading. It is difficult to imagine that just seven months ago, this was the epicentre of the turmoil that eventually engulfed large swathes of the country following President Mwai Kibaki's disputed election victory. The breakdown in the rule of law and order was further fuelled by the public lack of confidence in the country's institutions. But harder still, for Kenya, is the breakdown of social relationships and trust among Kenyan communities further exacerbating Kenya's raw class and ethnic tensions.

It is five months since Kenya's Grand Coalition Government was sworn in – negotiated by an international team of mediators led by the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The two principles in this negotiated arrangement for power-sharing are President Kibaki and Raila Odinga the Prime Minister. Even then, the new government in Kenya faces enormous challenges necessitated by promised nationwide reforms and a new constitution – notwithstanding the fragility of the arrangements within the Coalition that could very well undermine its survival as the principals' lieutenants and foot-soldiers jostle for vantage positions within and outside the Coalition.

There is also the sticky issue of whether or not to grant blanket amnesty for mainly youthful gangs and militia groups from both sides of the political divide that took part in the post-election violence which claimed over 1 200 lives. The worst-hit areas were

the towns and settlements in the Rift Valley, Western and Nyanza provinces and parts of Nairobi and its environs. It is no secret that there are serious divisions within the Coalition regarding how to deal with hundreds and possibly thousands of people arrested by police in connection with the violence that convulsed the country in the six weeks after the disputed election results were announced.

The calls for blanket amnesty have come mainly from the Prime Minister's Orange Democratic Party, a notion that is rejected by the key players in President Kibaki's Party of National Unity who want them to face the full force of the law. However, the former argue that the arrests were targeted disproportionately against Odinga's supporters while pro-Kibaki groups got off with little more than a rap on the knuckles. Closely intertwined with the calls for or against amnesty for perpetrators of the violence is issue of resettlement and compensation for an estimated 350 000 displaced people and returnees following the government's aggressive move to shut down 176 camps for internally displaced persons around the country.

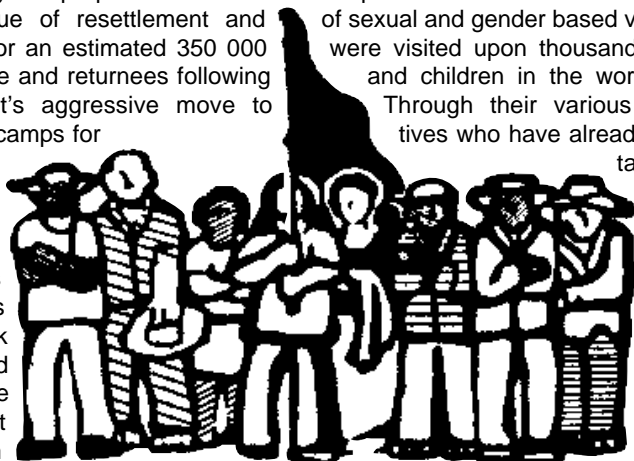
Returnees find themselves between a rock and a hard place, with the government prodding them

to reclaim their farms and homes on the one hand and the hostility of former neighbours demanding the unconditional release of their youth before anything else can be discussed. Even then, the long-awaited Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence began its hearings in July and public expectations were high that the Commission will shed light on what really happened.

The Commission is mandated to investigate the facts and circumstances related to the post-election violence and investigate the action or omissions of state security agents. It will also make recommendations to prevent a repetition of electoral violence in the future and suggest measures to bring those responsible for the violence to justice and eradicate impunity. Women are particularly keen to see how the all-male commission, led by Kenyan Justice Philip Waki will treat the distressing issue of sexual and gender based violations that were visited upon thousands of women and children in the worst hit areas.

Through their various representatives who have already made contact with the

commission, they are emphatic that they have no room in their hearts for granting amnesty to



the perpetrators of violence.

Meanwhile, the Independent Review Commission, headed by retired South African

Justice Johann Kriegler has been traversing the country to seek the views of Kenyans on the recent political turmoil.

The Kriegler team is expected to assess the Electoral Commission of Kenya's (ECK) efficiency of and capacity to discharge its mandate to investigate the post-election violence. The reputation of the ECK was largely discredited following the announcement of the controversial election results in early January leading to the eruption of violence around the country. The commission is expected to recommend elec-

toral reforms, including constitutional, legislative, operational and institutional aspects as well as accountability mechanisms for ECK commissioners and staff to

improve future electoral processes. Justice Kriegler chaired South Africa's electoral commission in 1993 ahead of the elections that ushered Nelson Mandela as

the country's first black president in 1994. He resigned in 1999. It is hoped that he will bring his experience to bear in the case of Kenya's transition to internal peace and the strengthening of democracy. Both the Waki and Kriegler teams are the products of the international community's intervention through Mr

Kofi Aanaan, who brokered the power sharing arrangement between Kibaki and Odinga.

Ultimately, only Kenyans can determine how to heal the deep social and economic rifts that exploded into the violence witnessed in early 2008. This calls for ruthless honesty and the courage to deal with decades of historical injustices and systematic impoverishment and displacement of entire groups of Kenyans by years of bad governance and skewed economic and social policy with the historical injustices led to the displacement of thousands of people and in some cases, entire communities from their ancestral land. Millions were impoverished after years of misrule and economic mismanagement. It is the prayer of many that the current leaders will put aside their personal interests, party affiliations and ethnicities to enable Kenya heal and grow. Kenya can only emerge victorious if it avoids the temptation to grant those suspected of arson, rape and murder blanket amnesty. Leaders should instead fight for fair and speedy trial. Kenya has the capacity to rise up from the ashes victorious.



WILL EU TROOPS STOP THE CENTRAL AFRICAN CYCLE OF VIOLENCE?

RONAN McAOIDH,

WORKERS' SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT (IRELAND)

The deployment of an EU military force to Chad and Central African Republic (CAR) was widely spun as a humanitarian intervention, to protect refugees and humanitarian workers from attacks by Darfur-based militias, but can we really expect them to play a positive role in these countries' politics?

The first point that we need to make is that the main influence behind the deployment of the EUFOR force was France, the former colonial power in Chad and CAR, which still maintains an active military alliance with both countries' governments. Any look at a history of the French state's involvement in Africa should soon dispel any belief in their commitment to human rights. Since the ending of colonial rule (itself a constant parade of injustice) the French state has supported brutal regimes in Chad, CAR and Rwanda and elsewhere in Africa, engineering coup d'états and military intervention in its bid to ensure that 'their men' in Africa remain in power.

At present, French troops and aircraft continue to offer support to the governments of Chad and CAR, outside of the EU deployment. Recently, they have offered intelligence and logistical support to the Chadian army, even airlifting militia from their positions in Darfur back to Chad to defend a city under attack from Chadian rebels. For Bozize's brutal regime in CAR

they have been even more active, bombing and occupying rebel areas as well as providing unconditional political support. It is necessary therefore, to see France's role in the current EU deployment as merely part of a long process of supporting 'their men' in Chad

and CAR, whatever the human cost of these regimes.

What France gets back from this is profit: while France props up these states French corporations get first preference for many contracts; in 2006 French companies supplied nearly 20 percent of Chad's imports and 15 percent of CAR's. Furthermore, CAR has major reserves of uranium which serve as a back-up source for France's nuclear powered economy. In Chad France have a strategically important base in Central Africa, with three airbases, a thousand troops, and a squadron of fighter jets ready to be deployed wherever they are needed.

The Chadian state has also received backing from the US government, receiving military training as part of the US 'Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Initiative', and

being supported from IMF sanctions after defaulting on an expenditure agreement. This may well be related to the joint US-Malaysian exploitation of oil fields in the south of Chad.

But if all this is the case, why have the French pushed the EU to get involved rather than acting alone? After all, the French have been quite happy to use their military to fight wars in these countries in the past, so what's different now? The

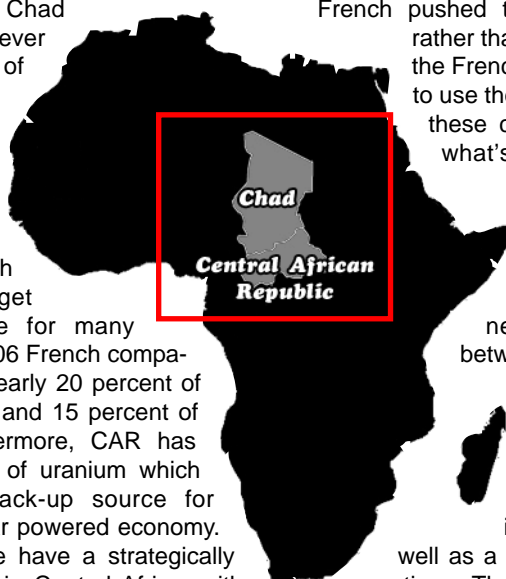
answer lies in France.

The new French president, Sarkozy, has frequently pledged to end the longstanding neo-colonial relationship between France and repressive regimes in Africa.

At the same time, he is interested in developing the EU as a political force, strongly pushing the Lisbon Treaty as

well as a common treaty on immigration. Thus, the present interven-

tion allows the French elite to simultaneously develop the military practice of the EU, while maintaining their privileged relationship with these regimes. Not only this, but sending troops under an EU flag rather than a French one provides the intervention with a coat of respectability.



It is hard to tell whether we will see a significant increase in EU military intervention in Africa; certain sections of the European elite are keen for the EU to develop its use of military force in order to secure energy resources. However, the slow and contradictory development of the European project means that the EU are far outpaced by China in the new 'scramble for Africa'. It is also worth remembering that the positions of the dictators in Chad and CAR are by no means secure; in the past France has had no problem with replacing one tyrant with another when their man begins to pull at

the leash. It could well happen that the combined French and EU forces will allow rebels to overthrow the government if they lose faith in the current regimes.

Overall we can conclude that this EU mission does not mean that peace will come to Chad or to Central African Republic. The cause of the conflicts is not an absence of force, if this were the case these conflicts would have ended many years ago. The cause of these conflicts is deeper; it is rooted in the ongoing poverty and neglect of the people, as well as the opportunism of would be strong men, who

see a chance to put themselves into power, and use the resource riches for themselves. Western corporations and their political elites maintain this dreadful state of affairs, despite their 'humanitarian' rhetoric, they are only interested in serving themselves and will use whatever means necessary to preserve their pillage of these countries' resources. Those who are genuinely interested in peace and social change face a real struggle, against the state, against the power seeking militias, and against Western neo-colonialism, whatever face it wears.



BRUTAL REPRESSION IN SIDI IFNI (MOROCCO)

BY NORTHEASTERN FEDERATION OF
ANARCHIST COMMUNISTS (USA/CANADA)



For a while now, the Ait Baamran, an Amazigh tribe from the area, have been protesting their marginalisation, the delayed operation of the new port and all the promises of development, widespread unemployment and favoritism in public sector hiring for the city government. In September of 2007, the boycott of the Parliamentary elections was practically unanimous, in response to the call made by the coalition of associations.

On May 30th, 2008, a large march headed toward the port, deciding to set up an encampment to block the entrance and stopping the refrigerated fish trucks from leaving. Since that day, the protests continue. And frequent acts of repression: persecutions, beatings, inspection and destruction of the shelters..... there are also deaths.



Background

On Sunday, May 15th, the caravan in solidarity with the people of Sidi Ifni left from Guelmine and Tiznit en route to Sidi Ifni with people from all over Morocco, from the North, South, East and West, and with the support of the Amazigh (Berber) movement, from all human rights organisations and Left parties, more than 500 participants.

At the entrance to the city, its residents, who have maintained their struggle despite military occupation and isolation of the besieged city, (women's demonstration on May 8th, savagely repressed, general strike on May 12th, deserted streets, walked only by military boots) came out to welcome the caravan, breaking the police fence that kept them isolated.

The march went around the entire city, more than 10 000 people joined. (Sidi Ifni has around 20 000 inhabitants). The march went by the neighbourhoods that suffered the police attack, the sacking and violation of homes, the signs of these attacks could still be seen.

The breaking of the city police barrier has been a great victory of the solidarity caravan. Some comrades, refugees from the mountains due to police persecution, joined in the march, taking advantage of the caravan's entrance and gave their testimony of what occurred on June 7th. Chants were heard demanding to cease the police persecutions, their withdrawal from the city and to begin dialog with the authorities.

The arrival of the march near the Moulay Ali Abdellah School and the provocative presence of the police nearby motivated the combative response of the youth, who have been at the front of the

struggle at all times. The violent response of the police forces firing tear gas, resulted in serious injuries to one young man. He was hit on the head by a tear gas bomb, and was taken to Agadir hospital where he remains in intensive care.

Finally the march coincided with the burial of Mohamed Chafai, who died of a heart attack when the police invaded his home, arresting his son. His burial inspired another mass march, denouncing his death as a murder, the repression and demanding punishment for those responsible.

In spite of all the abuses of power, of the repression against the media (Aljazeera director, Al Massae...), of the police fence around Sidi Ifni, of the establishment of military tent hospitals where there is no possibility of ascertaining any information about the state of the injured, of the restriction of information in the civil hospitals, the truth continues opening the way and each time it looks more certain that the brutal repression of June 7th caused several deaths. In addition to the four bodies that appeared on the beach and are yet to be identified, King Hassan's old tactic of the "disappeared" is returning. The deaths are denied and the bodies don't appear so that there is no proof. There are disappeared comrades whose whereabouts nobody knows: they've fled, are in hospitals or maybe even dead.

The caravan and the march on Sunday has lead to, not only the breaking of the fence around the city, but also a great dose of motivation and of morale for the population that came back en masse to take the streets. Now more than ever they need solidarity and support.

The Northeastern Federation of Anarchist Communists (Nefac) would like to express its maximum solidarity and support to the struggle and the resistance of the Ait Baanram people of Sidi Ifni against unemployment, the lack of social rights and the marginalisation of the area.

Demands:

- ★ The immediate withdrawal of the Public Order forces from the city.
- ★ The immediate and unconditional release of the detained.
- ★ An independent investigation of the facts and prosecution of the culprits of these abuses.
- ★ The acceptance of the legitimate grievances of the residents of Sidi Ifni.
- ★ No more marginalisation of the Ait Baamran.

OBAMA AND LATIN AMERICA: A FRIENDLY IMPERIALISM?

BY JOSÉ ANTONIO GUTIÉRREZ D.

With the official nomination of Barack Obama as the Democrat candidate for the next US presidential elections, there are many who are rejoicing in the hope that this will bring an end to the imperialist and aggressive foreign policy of the US.¹ A wise traditional saying states that it really does not matter what colour a cat is as long as it can catch mice. Turning their backs on popular wisdom, many on the Latin American left are full of expectations about Obama, who is almost certain to follow Bush as the White House leader.

What's the difference between a Black Democrat and a White Republican?

"Oh, but he's a black candidate" we are told. As if the presence of one - 1! - black man in a racist institutional machinery was going to make any difference to immigrants and the residents of US ghettos. Obama has, by the way, already been forced to distance himself from his pastor Jeremiah Wright, who denounced institutional racism in the US and had to embrace fully the discredited rhetoric of the "land of opportunities". Being a black man, with fresh roots in the African continent and thus an alien body in the traditional US spheres of power, Obama has on his shoulders a pressure none of his political rivals have in order to demonstrate that he is trustworthy for the Yankee plutocrats. So there he goes, adhering with greater fervour than anyone else to the values and project of the American Way. With the fanaticism of the religious convert, he proves his credo to his associates, in a way that those born into the faith do not need to.

There also those who believe that the colour of the skin, due to some curious intellectual and emotional effect of melanin, would make the potential US head of State more sensitive to the sufferings of the Third World and of its neo-colonies. But has Condoleezza Rice's presence in the govern-

ment meant any change in the policy of the US towards the Middle East or Latin America? If anything, we could say without much hesitation than it's been for the worse. Did Colin Powell make a difference in Bush's government or stop the invasion of Afghanistan, Iraq or Plan Colombia?

"Ah, but he is a Democrat" we are now told. And do they forget that it was Kennedy, the Democrat, who pushed for the invasion of the Bay of Pigs (Cuba) and that it was he who, applying the theory of

the Carrot and the Stick, carried the developmentalist bluff of the Alliance for Progress, while on the other hand he implemented the "National Security Doctrine" towards Latin America? Do they forget that it was Clinton who bombed Iraq (1998) and Somalia (1994)? Not to mention all of murderous blunders in the Balkans... Do they forget the criminal embargo that Clinton imposed on Iraq, which, according to UNICEF, cost the lives of at least 500 000 children? Do they forget it was Clinton who started with the rhetoric of the Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction?

Obama and the (Old) New World Order

Obama certainly is a critic of the Iraqi invasion, but he is not for an end to the occupation, only for the reduction of military personnel, which will remain necessary to guarantee the loyalty of the Iraqi regime, to train the Iraqi army and to "fight the threat of Al-Qaeda".² His main criticisms of the Iraqi war are of form, not of substance; they are not about the human cost on the Iraqi people, and certainly he is not to question the ravenous logic of the oil interests behind the occupation, but only criticises its excessive costs on the US budget. It seems that, when it comes to Iraq, differences between Democrats and Republicans are more of a quantitative

than of a qualitative nature. It seems that we can have a Yankee praetorian guard perpetually in the Middle East...

On the Palestinian question, Obama has been more than clear: in March, he criticised the "view that sees the conflicts in the Middle East as rooted primarily in the actions of stalwart allies like Israel, instead of emanating from the perverse and hateful ideologies of radical Islam".³ Can anyone point out to me what the difference is between this view of the Middle East and that of the Pentagon's hawks? Just like Bush, he fails to "see" the link that the Palestinian conflict has with "minor details" such as the Palestinian occupation, Israeli State terrorism (a State founded on forced displacement and violent land expropriation of Palestinians, it has to be said), the institutional racism in Israel, similar in many aspects to the South African apartheid and worse in some respects, or the strangling of Gaza. If he sees these factors, he quite convincingly plays the fool...

But what about his positions towards Latin America? He has made clear what his programme towards Latin America will be, starting with a criticism of Bush's politics towards the region. "We've been diverted from Latin America. We contribute our entire foreign aid to Latin America is \$2.7 billion, approximately what we spend in Iraq in a week. It is no surprise, then, that you've seen people like Hugo Chavez and countries like China move into the void, because we've been neglectful of that".⁴

A New Alliance for Progress? Do we need it? Do we want it?

What is Obama offering to us Latin Americans? Something maybe worse than Bush has already given us: more intervention, more domination, more interference in our own affairs, more death. The lesser-evil politics turn into a cruel paradox with the imperial grandeur that Obama adopts when talking of his "backyard". Now that the US is being displaced from Latin American markets by China and the EU,⁵ who are making a triumphal entrance with their own Free Trade Agreements, as well as by the new emerging regional power of Brazil (not to mention the shivers that the regional unity projects led by Venezuela cause in Washington, as they also represent a further threat to its hegemony), Obama states openly that he is about to turn our land into a battlefield for the US to recover its lost ground. Competition for our markets is out there, and no matter which global power is to win, we know who will be the certain loser: our people.



And not to leave the slightest shadow of doubt about his imperial pretensions over our America, on May 23rd at a meeting with the Cuban American Foundation, the FNCA (in Miami, where else?), he set out his complete programme towards Latin America: ⁶

1. Direct diplomacy with Cuba, but maintaining the embargo;
2. He stated his intentions to isolate Venezuela and its allies in the region, with the argument that they are FARC-EP supporters;
3. The FARC-EP gets exactly the same role as Al-Qaeda in the Middle East: the perfect excuse to justify any intervention in the region. In fact, he goes as far as to declare that he will not tolerate members of that organisation looking for sanctuary beyond Colombian borders nor any local regimes giving them any support, in a clear follow-up to the media harassment of Ecuador and Venezuela;
4. Absolute support for Plan Colombia and for the fascist regime of Uribe in Colombia – he, however, remains opposed to the Free Trade Agreement with that country, so as not to contradict his own supporters in the US who remain staunchly opposed to any more trade liberalisation with that country. Let's see if he remains opposed after the elections;
5. To increase the budget for the Merida Plan, which under the excuse of the "War on Drugs" (local variant of the War on Terror), is nothing but the latest mechanism of social control over Latin America. He went further to declare that he was going to expand its current area of operations in Mexico and Central America southwards ... maybe he will expand it to the Andean axis which runs from Venezuela down to Bolivia?

So, there's not much of a novelty in this. Unless it is the deepening of an aggressive intervention policy, which is a US tradition in our region, and the continuity of a dated paternalism, though in more of a blatant form.

His view of Latin America is not very different to that of Bush in relation to the Middle East, save for the fact that the vil-

lains of the story are adapted to local circumstances: the FARC-EP replaces Al-Qaeda, War on Drugs replaces War on Terror, Chávez replaces Saddam Hussein and Venezuela replaces Iran. The independent regional projects of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador, which are drifting away from the Washington Consensus, constitute the new "Axis of Evil".

Obama describes Venezuela as an authoritarian regime, with a wallet-led diplomacy and full of Anti-American jargon that reproduces the "false promises" of those "failed ideologies of the past".⁷ But what is it that Obama has to offer instead? Unconditional support for authoritarian regimes such as that of Uribe,⁸ dollar-led diplomacy – plus more economic intervention, microcredit offers, and some other filthy handouts to increase our dependency – and hollow promises from failed ideologies such as the Washington Consensus. All of his platitudes are, indeed, stained with the old-fashioned National Security Doctrine. And in an attempt to recycle failed intervention programmes, he even literally calls for a New Alliance for the Americas,⁹ suspiciously similar to the discredited fiasco called Alliance for Progress that Kennedy promoted in the '60s.

Obama go home!

It is only natural for Obama to increase the virulence of the imperialist politics towards Latin America; after all, he knows that he will be in command of a sinking ship, of an empire stuck in a swamp of political, economic and military troubles. The depth of the US crisis is not, this time, a result of the hallucinating desires of a bunch of utopian leftists – tycoons such as Soros or economists such as Stiglitz are turning into the main prophets of the new crisis. And every single empire in crisis has to resort to higher levels of violence, in a similar fashion to a drowning man who tries to remain afloat by blindly slapping the water's surface. In the same way, Obama is already threatening Venezuela and Iran.

Every worn-out project needs to refresh its image, to display some renewal on its facade in order to conceal its exhaustion. This wearing out of the "American Way"

made it possible for something unthinkable to happen... a black candidate! The perfect chief for this crisis, a cosmetic change for the substance of the domination system to remain untouched: imperialism has never been an issue of melanin.

The imperial politics of the US are not up to each US president to decide: it is a well ingrained element in the Yankee State apparatus, in the social forces which shape the life of that nation, and the single force that can alter this order of things is the grassroots, bottom-up, struggle of the people. For let us remember something that we Latin Americans frequently forget: in the US there are also people. There is also a working class. Change depends on them. A US president, at most, can decide what version of imperialism he wants to apply, be it a Neanderthal version of imperialism, or a "forced consensus" version.

Let us hold no false illusions. Imperialism cannot be reformed, neither will it be defeated in the ballot box. It will be defeated in the streets, in the workplaces, in the schools and universities, through the struggle we lead in the countryside and in the urban centres, the struggle we take to every corner of this world. Difficult as this struggle may seem, is the only realistic option left.

Let me repeat: in the US, there are also people. But just as the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal needed that push from the African anti-colonial struggles (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau) to fall, and needed that stimulus for the blossoming of the Carnation Revolution to happen, US imperialism and its global dictatorship will fall with that little push of our anti-colonial struggles in the Middle East and Latin America. But that struggle belongs to the people themselves, to the working class, and it will have no other unconditional allies but their own solidarity: if Ayiti (Haiti), if Colombia, if all of America, if Palestine, if the Middle East, are to wait for the answers to their deep problems to arrive from the White House, they will have to remain waiting for millenia to come, forever and ever...

José Antonio Gutiérrez D.
05 June 2008

Notes:

1. A sample of optimism that is a single step away from delirium can be found at http://espanol.news.yahoo.com/s/ap/080604/latinoamerica/aml_pol_eeuu_elec_latinoamerica
2. www.barackobama.com/issues/iraq/www.ontheissues.org/Celeb/Barack_Obama_War+_Peace.htm
3. <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article9427.shtml>
4. www.ontheissues.org/Celeb/Barack_Obama_War+_Peace.htm
5. www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story_id=8809
6. <http://espanol.news.yahoo.com/s/23052008/54/latinoamerica-obama-permitir-viajes-familiares-cuba-mantendr-embargo-econ-mico.html>, <http://espanol.news.yahoo.com/s/23052008/54/internacional-obama-considera-necesaria-nueva-alianza-latinoam-rica.html>, http://espanol.news.yahoo.com/s/ap/080523/eeuu/amn_pol_obama_latinoamerica
7. <http://espanol.news.yahoo.com/s/23052008/54/internacional-obama-considera-necesaria-nueva-alianza-latinoamerica.html>
8. www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story_id=8977 and also www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story_id=9006
9. http://espanol.news.yahoo.com/s/ap/080523/eeuu/amn_pol_obama_latinoamerica



ANARCHISM & IMMIGRATION



**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO LIVE WHERE
YOU CHOOSE.**

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO WORK WHERE
YOU CHOOSE.**

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO TRAVEL WHERE
YOU CHOOSE.**

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASSOCIATE WITH
WHOM YOU CHOOSE.**

**YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK ANY
LANGUAGE YOU CHOOSE.**

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY.

Anarchists Believe In Free Association

This means that everyone has the right to live where they choose, work where they choose, and have social relationships with whom they choose.

Anarchists Are Anti-Racist

We do not believe in differentiating between people because of their ethnic ancestry. We believe that all privilege, discrimination, and segregation based on ethnicity, national origin, or cultural group must be eradicated.

Anarchists Are Anti-Nationalist

This means that we do not recognise the right of any government to legislate citizenship. We do not recognise the territorial sovereignty of any nation or the legitimacy of any national borders.

Anarchists Are Anti-Authoritarian

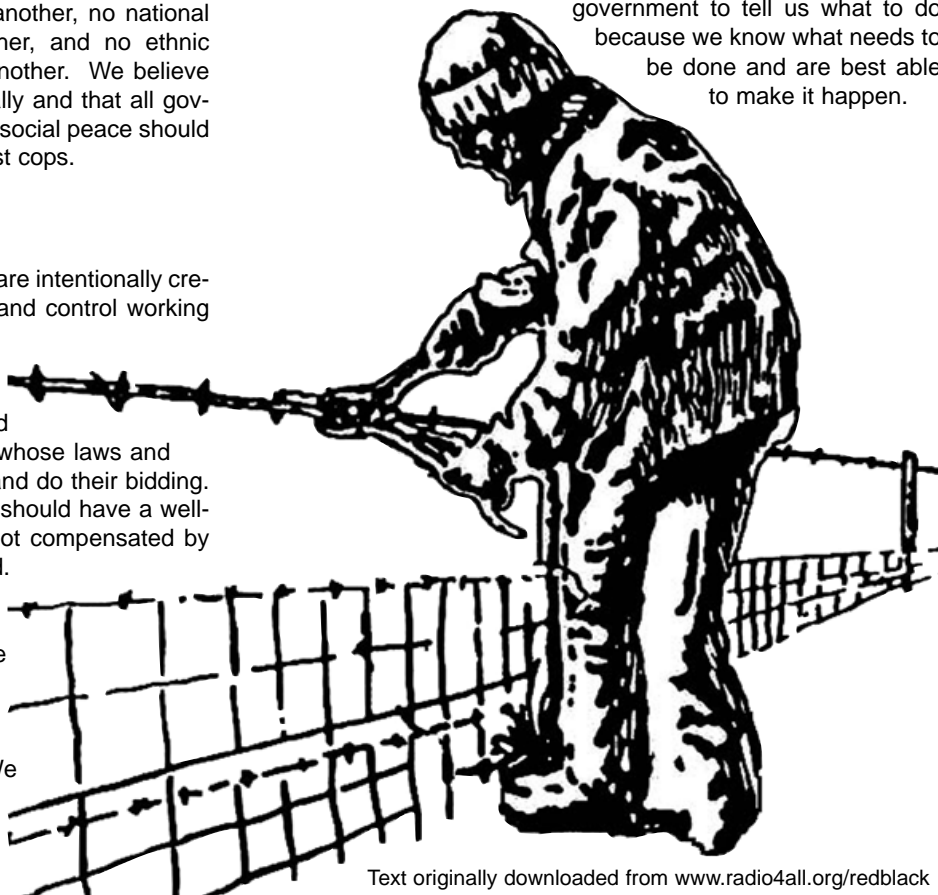
We believe that no one should dominate another, no national government should seek to dominate another, and no ethnic group, caste, social class should dominate another. We believe that society should be organised democratically and that all governments must be abolished. We believe that social peace should be maintained by the community and not racist cops.

Anarchists Are Anti-Capitalist

We believe that poverty and unemployment are intentionally created by capitalists as threats to use against and control working people. They are not caused by immigration which is simply the migration of people from areas of the world where land and labour are exploited by the capitalists to areas of the world where capitalists own powerful governments whose laws and military forces protect them and their wealth and do their bidding. We believe that everyone who wants to work should have a well-paid job and that jobs like raising children, not compensated by capitalists, should be financially supported. Under capitalism 80 percent of all wealth produced by a worker is stolen by capitalists, bosses, or government before they are paid for their work. We believe that it is possible for everyone who wants to work to have a job where they can earn more but work only half as much as under capitalism. We believe that people should not be restricted in moving across national borders to work to feed their families because it is possible for there to be plenty of work for everyone.

Anarchists Believe In International Labour Solidarity

We believe in Syndicalism, Industrial Unionism, and the use of Direct Action including the Stay-In General Strike where workers occupy their work places to deprive the capitalists and their police state governments the resources to attack us. We believe that the people who do the work should own the work place and share the benefit of what they produce and that wage slavery, where capitalists steal the value of what we produce and call it "profit," must be abolished. We believe that capitalists and bosses who produce nothing and exploit our labour should be done away with and replaced with co-operative work places that are run democratically. We believe that working people of all nations should co-operate to insure that everyone has an equal standard of living and that transnational capitalist corporations can no longer force us to accept wage slavery, dangerous and inhumane working conditions, and the poisoning of our communities by pollution to avoid the threat of poverty, unemployment, or death by starvation or disease. We believe that we working people can take control of our lives without any need for leaders or a government to tell us what to do because we know what needs to be done and are best able to make it happen.





THE POISON OF NATIONALISM

By STEFANIE KNOLL



Some of the people attacked were born in South Africa or have a South African passport. Aren't they South Africans? What makes a South African? How many generations must one have lived here to be accepted? What skin colour does one have to have? When thinking about this it quickly becomes clear that who is a South African and who is not is not a scientific decision. It is about what people *think* and *want* and this changes over time.

We as anarchists - and therefore internationalists - say that no one is illegal. We do not accept borders of any kind. For us, everyone is only human, not South African, nor Zimbabwean nor any other nationality. Every person on earth has the right to live wherever he or she chooses. Borders are only a recent creation to keep working class people around the world divided and to bring some opportunists to power because they have a whole country behind an imaginary idea. Not only are borders a recent creation; so is nationalism. We only make one distinction: between oppressors and oppressed.

Nationalism is a belief that we somehow belong together just because we were accidentally born in a certain place. It is a belief that seeks to connect millions of people, even though they don't know each other and might have nothing in common. Everyone within certain borders is supposed to be similar and everyone outside the borders is supposed to be different. This necessarily leads to the forced assimilation of minorities within one state which includes the wiping out of cultural diversity and of people who are not seen to be "true Germans", "true French", "true Americans" or "true South Africans". It necessarily leads to the exclusion of the majority of the world and represses those who seek shelter from oppression or starvation at home. A nation has to be created artificially, it is not natural, and the people have to perceive themselves as a national community. Nationhood is a state of mind based on common myths and memory, regardless of whether it is true or not.

It is nationalism that makes up the myths of Zimbabweans taking our jobs or stealing South African women. It is nationalism that would have us believe that a poor woman living in a shack in Alexandra has more in common with a wealthy businessman living in a mansion in Sandton, simply by virtue of the fact that they are both South African,

than she does with an unemployed worker living in a shack in Harare.

Nationalism came about only in recent centuries. It has led to hundreds of wars ever since, to fascism and Nazism. It has killed millions of people, raped millions of women (a nationalist strategy to wipe out



foreigners used all over the world) and tortured not only those from other nationalities but also people fighting against nationalism. It has discriminated against immigrants and nomadic people; it has justified racism, ethnicity and genocide. Nationalism is therefore directly related to racism. It is directly related to fascism and genocide.

Nationalism is a bourgeois invention of the ruling class to win the loyalty of the working class. The working class has a history of internationalism; frequently rulers, or those who wish to be rulers, have had to trick the workers into following the nationalist banner. Without nationalism, we might now have a system without artificial borders, a system that is not based on the exploitation of the vast majority of

the people by a small national elite. We might have that very system we struggle for: a world without borders and capitalism.

Nationalism, the idea that everyone within artificially drawn borders is the same, is absurd. Even more absurd is to speak about nation-states, a goal most states in the world work towards. There is not one state in the world that is made up of only one nation, or only one culture. In every state there are minorities, whether they are traditional minorities, nomadic people or immigrants. As such, nationalism will *always* violate certain people's rights; it will always exclude people who are different.

Nationalism divides people on a false basis. National borders solidify the sovereignty of the ruling classes over working and poor people - nothing more. The state and capitalists use the borders against us. They themselves can move their money and goods across borders, but they prevent normal people from having the same freedom as they do.

They tell us that immigrants come and take away our jobs when at the same time millions of jobs are exported by our capitalist compatriots, to countries where they can pay workers lower wages and where workers are not allowed to unionise. Many things decrease local employment levels but ultimately the system is to blame. It's

the plain old greed of those who own land, companies and the means of production which causes a bigger problem. Instead of looking at the root of the problem, people are conditioned to find someone to place the blame on. So-called foreigners are one of the scapegoats.

It is important to point out here that internationalists are against liberal conceptions of a world without borders to establish free trade. We are against free trade because it only

means the freedom of the wealthy to further exploit us, unhindered by state regulations. Our aim is a world without trade and



exchange and money and private property, where goods are produced and distributed for the needs of all and not for profit. Trade is always about profit and therefore about exploitation.

Nationalism originated in Europe and was imported to Africa via colonialism. African nationalisms are based on European colonialism, since they inherited colonial boundaries and continued to use colonial languages for administration. Most of the time it was better educated and thus also wealthier people in the cities who started nationalist movements. Nationalism can thus be regarded as an urban elite phenomenon.

While nationalism can help a people to rid themselves of alien domination such as colonialism, it is also clear that it can result in the elimination of certain minorities within a territory to create a homogenous nation. The genocide in Rwanda is only one example of many. In South Africa, Afrikaner nationalism played a similar role: it was an anti-colonial nationalism that tried to root out black South Africans. And now, the dominant black nationalist ideology is doing the same thing in relation to foreigners. Much of this disaster is the legacy of colonialism and colonial ideas. Nationalism has become an easy way for the ruling class to make the oppressed turn against other oppressed people.

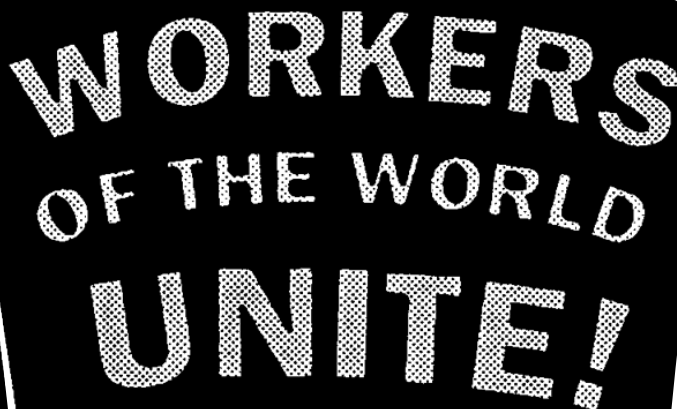
Chauvinistic violence in South Africa is on the rise. This can be easily explained with a psychological example that is probably quite universal throughout the world. Frustrated at work and from being shouted at by his boss, the husband goes home and shouts at his wife because of a simple mistake she made – perhaps overcooking the meal. The wife, frustrated by her husband being righteous, shouts at the child because she didn't wash her hands before eating. The girl, frustrated by always getting told what to do by her parents, can only get rid of her frustration by hitting the dog or her doll.

Coming back to South Africa, we see that frustrated people turn against those that are more vulnerable, like women in general, lesbians in particular and immigrants. They are more vulnerable and one thus sees one's power more immediately. The struggle against the ones that are really responsible for our frustration, our bosses and the government, is seen as harder to

achieve and is thus not immediately rewarding. However, in the long run, this is the only way to get rid of our frustration. Turning on our weaker brothers and sisters only helps the bosses.

Proudly South African

The same that can be said in most countries in the world is also true for South Africa. Born out of colonial interests and with no respect for local conditions, borders were artificially constructed and defended. South Africans were first united in their common subjugation, which was based on race. To succeed, opposition to this racist rule had to be united. The ANC – which, from the beginning, was a bourgeois or petty-bourgeois party – sought the loyalty of the workers through nationalism, seducing them away from more progressive



WORKERS
OF THE WORLD
UNITE!

movements. Since the end of apartheid this nationalist unity has had to be reproduced.

Crucial to this is the slogan "Proudly South African", a slogan with which we have been indoctrinated for seven years. Proudly South African is a slogan the national elite needs in order to be backed by the majority, the working class, which actually has much more in common with poor Zimbabweans than it does with South African millionaires. It's also a campaign supported by all major South African companies to get people to buy South African, supposedly to create jobs and economic growth. But Proudly South African also implies that there is something to be proud of our borders that have been artificially drawn, that there is something to be proud of our common history. And most importantly, that we have to be proud to be South Africans as compared with anything else, that we are something better.

Given this fact a horrible question arises: did South Africans act 'proudly South African' when they attacked foreigners? We hope not but such slogans certainly lead to xenophobia. Mix these slogans

with poverty, exploitation and starvation, with fear and confusion, and murder is likely to follow.

Leaders

Another drop of poison is added to the mix by the cult of leaders. There seems to be a deep mistrust among the majority of people living in South Africa in themselves. People always look for leaders and leadership; they only dismiss leaders if they don't act quickly or strongly enough – not because they don't need them, but because they are looking for stronger leaders. As has been seen throughout history, from the earliest recorded history up until now, leaders have most (if not all) of the time betrayed the people, especially poor and working class people. They lie to us and use us, persuade us with nationalist

sentiments to fight and die for a country that does not support us, for which only we have to give even if we don't have enough.

We cannot rely on any leaders. If we follow them blindly we will be lost, we will follow them onto the battlefields and die for their personal issues and gains. We will gain nothing for ourselves; our family does not gain dignity because of their fallen sons, brothers and fathers. They are not heroes as our leaders want us to believe. They are victims who have been tricked into blindly following leaders into war, after having not stood up against them.

Killing people because they are different, because the leaders condemn them, or because the nationalist ideology of the bosses says they don't belong here, is in no way heroic and in no way a solution to our problems. Our fight is not against Zimbabweans and Mozambicans and Somalians; it is against the capitalists, against the bosses, against the politicians, against the leaders. When we, the working class, rely on ourselves, collectively, and not on leaders; when we organise from the bottom up rather than the top down; when we act on understanding rather than prejudice, and on solidarity rather than chauvinistic hatred – then we will be able to rid ourselves of capitalism and the state, of poverty and starvation, of nationalism, imperialism and colonialism; then we will be able to build a world where all are free and equal comrades.



NOSTALGIC TRIBALISM OR REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION?

A CRITIQUE OF ANARCHISM & REVOLUTION IN BLACK AFRICA

MICHAEL SCHMIDT (ZACF)

Whenever internecine warfare breaks out in Africa, claims of “tribalism” are not far behind. From the false distinctions imposed between the Nguni nations of the Zulu, Swazi and Xhosa under apartheid to the deadly ethnic stratification imposed on Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda by the Belgians, the suggestion is that African conflict is precipitated by primordial savagery – while similar bloodletting in Europe (during the wars in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Chechnya for example) is by comparison, modernly nationalist, ethnic cleansing notwithstanding. And yet tribes, their varied social organisation – and inter-tribal factionalism – are a fact of socio-political life in Africa.

Some anarchists, both Africans and westerners, noting the slender presence of libertarian socialism on the continent have sought to establish an organic basis for its (re)establishment as an indigenous, non-alien socialism by celebrating libertarian forms of traditional African social organisation where these were found to exist. Some have done so informed by the true nature of the African political economy, while others have embarked on exercises in wishful thinking. Among the latter appears to be Stephen P. Halbrook’s *Anarchism & Revolution in Black Africa*.

Halbrook wrote this article, which forms part of our *African Resistance History Series*, in 1971 at a time when he was completing his PhD in philosophy at the Florida State University (attained in 1972). It appears that Halbrook went on to become a leading legal figure in defence of the American constitutional right of its citizens to bear arms, basing his arguments on Switzerland’s “armed neutrality” stance during the Second World War. He has written extensively on the issue, but it is not easy to determine at a glance whether his defence comes from a Right- or Left-wing perspective as both camps in the US have embraced the right to bear arms for defensive reasons and Halbrook speaks in the “neutral” tone of the lawyer. Nevertheless, if Halbrook subsequently defected from libertarian socialism to the Right, we would say we’d had the best of him while he was with us.

And that best, perhaps reflected in this pamphlet, is flawed by two interlinked hopes that the indigenous insurgencies of the Mau Mau of 1950-1962, the liberation struggle of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) of 1963-1974 in Guinea, and the Biafran Secession from Nigeria of 1967-1970 had – not unreasonably given the euphoria of the era – raised in his mind for

more libertarian socialist outcomes.

His one flawed hope was to overzealously apply libertarian socialist intentions and even programmes to the actors in these insurgent dramas. This is least excusable in terms of the Mau Mau Uprising because it was sufficiently far in the past for Halbrook to have gotten a better grasp of its nature – although to be fair, the full extent of the brutality of the British colonial regime and of the Mau Mau resistance itself has only recently been adequately documented.¹ Nevertheless, for Halbrook to hail the Mau Mau as “the expression of centuries of anarchism” was both ahistorical and a misinterpretation of the true mobilising intent of the historicising of the likes of Mau Mau leader Jomo Kenyatta (an error he replicates regarding PAIGC leader Amílcar Cabral). The mere fact that the Mau Mau slogan “Land and Freedom” echoed that of the Mexican, Ukrainian, Spanish and other anarchists, or that a PAIGC leader extolled the virtues of the peasantry electing their own removable, non-hereditary leaders is insufficient proof of their libertarian socialism.

There is in addition – and this is remarkable for a writer supposedly hailing from the anti-statist tradition – no understanding of the imperialist interest and role played by the suppliers of arms and other support to the rebels: the USSR, Cuba and China supplied the PAIGC, while Biafra was clandestinely supplied by France, Portugal, white Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa (against an unusual Cold War triumvirate of British, American and Russian backing for Nigeria). She who pays the piper calls the tune, so the Stalinist funders of the PAIGC determined in it an authoritarian tendency to the same extent as the ethnic separatist funders of Biafra determined in parts its narrow ethno-nationalist outlook. It begs the question of in what way these realpolitik positions could be considered genuinely liberating by Halbrook.

Halbrook’s other, closely linked, flawed hope was to assume that an ill-defined “anarchism” was fundamental to many traditional African cultures – stating wrongly, given that anarchism only arose as a modern, internationalist, mass-based practice in the First International in 1868, that “Black Africa has a centuries old anarchist tradition,” and uncritically echoing Kenyatta’s statements about the historic libertarian practices of his own tribe, the Kikuyu (against whose ethno-

centric, patrimonial rule, in part, the 2008 Kenyan Uprising was tellingly aimed). Whether the Kikuyu indeed once in the distant past had a system that could be equated to a libertarian social order as anarchists understand it – democratic decision-making power decentralised through horizontal federations of councils of recallable delegates – is debatable (and the same goes for whether the Ballantes of Guinea or the Ibos of Nigeria can make a same claim).

Despite the apparently remarkable and worthy communitarian nature of Kikuyu society as spelled out by Barnett and Njama, the other experts cited by Halbrook, they and he do not appear to critique the inescapable, non-free-associative basis of this tribal system, nor of its ageist hierarchy, so common to African traditional cultures, or its ethnocentrism, and do not appear (in Halbrook at least) to discuss ownership of land, livestock, goods and services, landlordism and other aspects of what was still a feudal economy however one may appreciate some progressive aspects of its social organisation.

Lastly, as with much sentimental outsider support for nationalist politicians like Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma today, or Nelson Mandela of South Africa in the past, there is a marked shyness to engage in any substantial critique of either the leadership cult that is so assiduously cultivated by their supporters, or of the exact form of economy and class society envisaged by the “liberators” after their despised enemy is supplanted. These errors-by-omission are commonly committed by the statist Left, but also recall the rose-tinted view of national liberation struggles by, for example, a faction of the Love & Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation’s pro-national liberation stance on the Zapatistas in the 1990s (which contributed to the RAF’s dissolution) and by much of the International of Anarchist Federations regarding Cuba in the 1960s (against the legitimate protests of the Cuban Libertarian Movement in



A Mau-Mau resistance group (note the home-made rifle held by the man on the far right)

Exile).

The cellular structure adopted by the Mau Mau rebels, the “bottom-up” decision-making process of the PAIGC, and the voluntaristic “people’s army” form of Biafran resistance were in my view less related to libertarian tradition than to the obvious demands of clandestinity – and the loyalty given by their irregular fighters to individual charismatic leaders is not in itself indicative of libertarianism; for fascist militancy makes similar claims. Similarly, it is a stretch of the imagination to claim for Biafran leader Chukwuemeka Ojukwu the right to assume the mantle of the great Ukrainian anarchist revolutionary Nestor Makhno on the basis that Ojukwu consulted with an assembly of “all the professions” – including no doubt, the businesses and the parasitic classes (Makhno’s RIAU was by contrast controlled policy-wise by mass Congresses of Peasants, Workers and Insurgents and it is out of this directly-democratic experience that the “platformist” political line is derived).

Yet on these slender bases, the evidence of the nationalists Kenyatta, Cabral, Ojukwu and a few other admirers, Halbrook believed traditional culture could provide a communalist model for political action in the era of decolonisation, centralising national liberation struggles and import-substitution-industrialisation modernisation.

Halbrook is far from alone among anarchists in this rather romantic view of the relationship between African national liberation struggles and tribal societies – and I’m not even considering the so-called primitivists here, whose anti-modernist tendency is at complete odds with the progressive, industrial origins of the anarchist movement. But this retro tendency occurs in strange places: former Black Panther turned anarchist Ashanti Alston, whose definition of anarchist thinkers is over-generously broad, including the libertarian mutualist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (a proto-anarchist at best), and mystics who fall totally outside even the broader libertarian socialist tradition, such as Gandhi and Tolstoy. Which is perhaps why he can hail a study by Joseph Walunywa into Wole Soyinka’s mysticism as evidence of an “anarchism” defined as “the desire on the part of the individual concerned to deconstruct the social, economic and political institutions which reflect the values of ‘modern civilisation’ as conceptualised through the prevailing ideologies in order to pave the way for the recuperation of ‘primordial culture’”.²

But anarchism was never anti-modernist and primordialist – and however intriguing Halbrook and Alston’s perspectives may be, we need to turn to the views of African anarchists themselves to shed some more light on the matter. In Zambia in 1998, the

late Wilstar Choongo of the Zambian Anarchist and Workers’ Solidarity Movement (AWSM) related to me in some detail the anti-authoritarian tendencies of his own southern tribe, suggesting this could advance the anarchist cause.³ He said his tribe was in essence a flattened, chiefless hierarchy.

A similar claim was made in the founding statement of the Anarchist Party for



A fortified Home Guard Post, with Mau Mau ‘suspects’ detained behind the barbed wire awaiting interrogation

Individual Liberties in the Republic (Palir), established at an anarchist congress on the old slave-deportation island of Gorée, off Dakar, Senegal, in 1981, shortly after the regime of Abdou Diouf declared for political pluralism. It is worth quoting: “The anarchists of Senegal decided to pass from the stage where they were evolving like a fish in the tank of the Senegalese universe, to the stage of organisation. The major preoccupation of the anarchists of



A mass trial of Africans - they were usually tried and often later executed in batches of up to fifty

Senegal is not to take power but to struggle persistently against all the manifestations of power and against the private appropriation of the means of production. We are struggling for the establishment of a decentralised and federalist self-determining socialism, which has nothing to do with imported ‘socialisms’. We are struggling for the advent of a society in which the means of production will be communally exploited by Senegalese workers organised in associations of direct democracy.

“Our projection of society takes its inspi-

ration from the organisation of the Lebous village federations and from the social formation of the Ballante people of Southern Senegal and Guinea Bissau. These social formations, which were by no means primitive, were organised in such a way that the societies concerned had neither dominant classes nor exploiter chiefs. There prevailed a type of direct democracy which was not imposed from above. This form of organisation could be perfectly well adopted even with the current state of our productive forces, if only the exploiting classes could be unseated and if the possibility of the appearance of totalitarian leaders could be removed. This is a model where passivity and blind obedience to exploiting anti-democratic bosses would not figure”.

What is interesting about this account, however, is that while it takes its inspiration from village federalism and earlier tribal social formations (echoing Halbrook’s approval of Ballante tradition), it applies them to the modern economy and argues for a form of decentralised, directly democratic worker organisation that is not at all out of step with the modernist impulse that drives anarchism – and they specifically stated their implacable opposition to “chauvinist nationalism”.

Sam Mbah and I.E. Igariwey, of precisely such an organisation, the anarcho-syndicalist Awareness League in Nigeria, in their ground-breaking *African Anarchism* (1998)⁵ argued for anarchic tendencies in the “stateless” (in the modern sense) societies of the Ibo, Niger Delta people and the Tallensi, stating: “To a greater or lesser extent, all of [...] traditional African societies manifested ‘anarchic elements’ which, upon close examination, lend credence to the historical truism that governments have not always existed. They are but a recent phenomenon and are, therefore, not inevitable in human society. While some ‘anarchic’ features of traditional African societies existed largely in past stages of development, some of them persist and remain pronounced to this day.”

Despite these societies being decentralised, having communal production systems, participatory decision-making and a relatively flat social hierarchy, they cannot in any real sense be called anarchist. Rather it is best to describe them as communalist with some marked libertarian practices. It appears likely that Mbah and Igariwey were forced to fall back on communalist examples to legitimise the Awareness League trade union⁶ simply because, though they were aware of early 1990s anarchist organisations in South Africa, they were unaware of the significant syndicalist trade unions in southern Africa and north Africa in the 1910s/1920s.⁷

The resistance of, for instance, the Zulus during the Bambaata Rebellion of 1906 against the imposition of hut-taxes by the

British was indeed among the last of a long series of anti-colonial actions aimed at preserving traditional culture, and at preventing the enclosure and outright theft of tribal lands and the impression into bonded servitude of the black majority – but they were also last-gasp reflex actions of a peasantry that was rapidly being eclipsed by modernisation (in South Africa at least, where they have been reduced to a minority unlike the rest of Africa). And much as one might dislike it, anarchism with few exceptions arose in industrial (not craft or peasant) environments – such as the Witwatersrand during the emergence of organised black labour in the late 1910s and early 1920s, not among the Sekhukhuneland or Pondoland peasantry, regardless how communitarian or insurgent their traditions.⁸

While anarchists can and should indeed build on any traditional libertarian conventions within the society in which they live – ably demonstrated by the successful anarchist penetration of the indigenous population in Bolivia, or of agricultural labourers in Bulgaria, from the 1920s to 1940s – tribal societies also tend to have strongly sexist attitudes, ethnic chauvinist practices and demagogic power-structures enforced by fearful superstition and brute force. These reactionary tendencies are at least as strong as the communalist tradition and we find similar contestations between vertical and horizontal power in traditional tribal structures in Asia, the Americas and Europe. Also, the communalism of many African tribal societies is not at all ruled by the anarchist concept of free association: one is forced by one's ethnic origin, tribal loyalties, locality and family ties into the communalist mode, with no choice in the matter other than self-imposed exile (which then renders one vulnerable as an unacceptable outside in another tightly-knit communalist, or even hierarchical, exclusivist enclave). Let us also not forget that slavery among African tribes was (and remains somewhat) widespread, the institution only being formally outlawed in Mauritania in 2007.⁹

None of this, however, detracts from the clear existence of a real and unalloyed historical anarchist and syndicalist movement in Africa, so present in organisations such as People's Free University and the International League of Cigarette Workers and Millers of Cairo (Egypt) and the Revolutionary League (Mozambique) in the early 1900s, the Industrial Workers of Africa and Indian Workers' Industrial Union (South Africa) in the late 1910s/early 1920s, and the Algerian section of the General Confederation of Labour – Revolutionary Syndicalist in the 1930s. And let's not forget the fact that the former Durruti Columnists who seized the honour to be the first to liberate Paris in 1944 came

together in exile in Chad – nor the old post-war anarchist strongholds of Tunis and Oran, nor the anarchist cells in the Canaries, Egypt or Morocco.

None of this makes it into Halbrook's analysis (but then there was precious little study of such movements at the time he wrote, and he could not have been aware that within a decade of his paper, new anarchist and syndicalist organisations would rise in Africa: Senegal (Palir, 1981), Nigeria (Awareness League, anarcho-syndicalist from 1991), Sierra Leone (Industrial Workers of the World, 1996), South Africa (Anarchist Revolutionary Movement, 1993, Workers' Solidarity Federation, 1995, the ZACF, 2003, and others), Zambia (Anarchist Workers' Solidarity Movement, 1998), Swaziland (ZACF, 2003), and Kenya (Wiyathi Collective, 2004).

Materials from and about these movements are available to a greater or lesser extent on the Internet so I will not detain the reader with an analysis of them. Suffice to say that Halbrook's flawed work raises more questions – including the red herring of "libertarian" nationalism – than he answers, but as these debates are still somewhat skewed by wishful thinking, especially among the African anarchist Diaspora, it is worth reading with a critical eye.¹⁰

A more recent anarchist analysis of the libertarian potential of African tribal federalism is presented by the Moroccan activist Brahim Fillali, who examines the traditional Berber federalism of the Ait Atta tribe whose territory extends from the Sahara to the Atlas Mountains¹¹. In his exploration of the tribe's federalism, Fillali details how each neighbourhood mandates immediately-recallable delegates of a tribal faction to a district committee, which committees are federated and in turn elect a broader committee which is then the public face of the tribe with its neighbours. The central government was forced to create a religious proxy body, the Zawia, to try to act as a bridge of authority between the state and the "lawless" tribes – both to enable the ascendancy of the Arab-Islamic elite, and to facilitate the imperialism of France and Spain for which this elite played a comprador role.

Fillali explains the subsistence-farming, nomadic lifestyle of the tribes, in which property could be jointly owned and there was no wage slavery – but he is not wearing rose-tinted spectacles when he views tribal federalism and its economy. "To draw a comparison between Berber federalism and anarchist federalism," Fillali wrote, "I can say that the first one comes out of a tribal society and is based on the ethnic factor and localism, and a subsistence economy alongside nomadism."

He recognises the libertarian elements of Ait Atta society: "The tribe has 'enjoyed'

neither police nor prison, nor all those other forms of repression. Its federalism ensured that the society was neither militaristic nor autocratic. I raised this issue of the federation to say that federalism as a conception of social organisation is not strange to Moroccan society – despite its nature... If we take two concepts – anarchist federalism and liberal democracy – and try to explain them to an Amazigh [a Berber], it is easy for him to understand anarchist federalism but difficult with liberal democracy because in his history he practiced some sort of federalism, and his culture is close to the federalist logic."

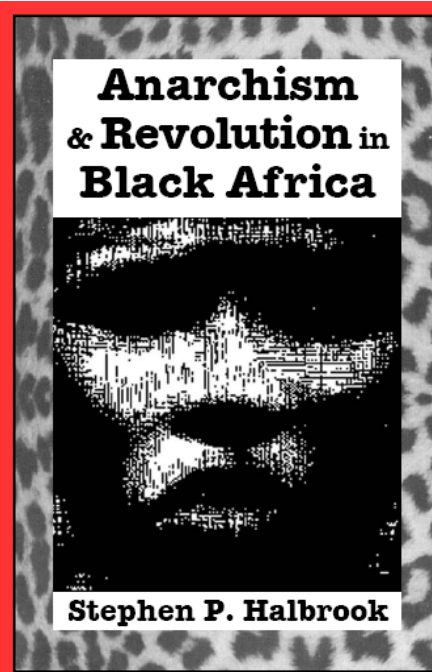
But Fillali also highlights the parochial and ethnic limitations of this nostalgic approach within "a patriarchal society, in which mythology and religion dominate the cultural field. This is what characterises agricultural and semi-nomadic societies. This is federalism local or regional and not international. It is not an achievement of a societal project; it can not be. In its development it cannot exceed the ceiling of the tribe, its limits. It's a tribal federalism in an agricultural and semi-nomadic society."

In Alston's article, she concludes that in pursuit of "a broad and vibrant African-based anarchism," the writings of Mbah and Igariwey and Walunywa offer "insights that anarchists and revolutionaries in general are missing. Together they offer a combination of culture and class analyses that take in the whole of peoples' lives: their ritual everyday lives and their class-based, post-colonial lives." While it is certainly true that the anarchist movement has, like much of the Left, ignored the vitality and durability of cultural traditions, we as African anarchists cannot simply embrace fetish, totem, and chiefly fly-whisk as somehow advantageous to our struggle. Yes, the libertarian communalist instinct is



to be found in African societies – precisely because this is a universal instinct – not exclusively African – and it is to be celebrated as such. But if we speak of anarchism, then we speak of a revolutionary, organisational project for the fundamental socio-political transcendence of traditional society, capital and the state.

Fillali, in his turn, concludes that what is needed is a project that transcends even the libertarian elements in African tribal society, in essence, an anarchist project for an entirely different society. African anarchism is indeed able to draw on elements of libertarian communalism in many tribal societies, but must of necessity reject tribalism's reactionary and hierarchic elements. The result should be an anarchism that, informed by the tradition of African cultural egalitarianism and diversity against which so many comprador and imperialist elites have waged war, nevertheless is at one with the universalism of the global anarchist movement in its strategy and ideology, especially regarding ethnicity, nationalism, culture and race.



Anarchism & Revolution in Black Africa has been published in pamphlet form as part of the Zabalaza Books African Resistance History Series.

The ARHS aims at rescuing key libertarian socialist texts on African issues from obscurity

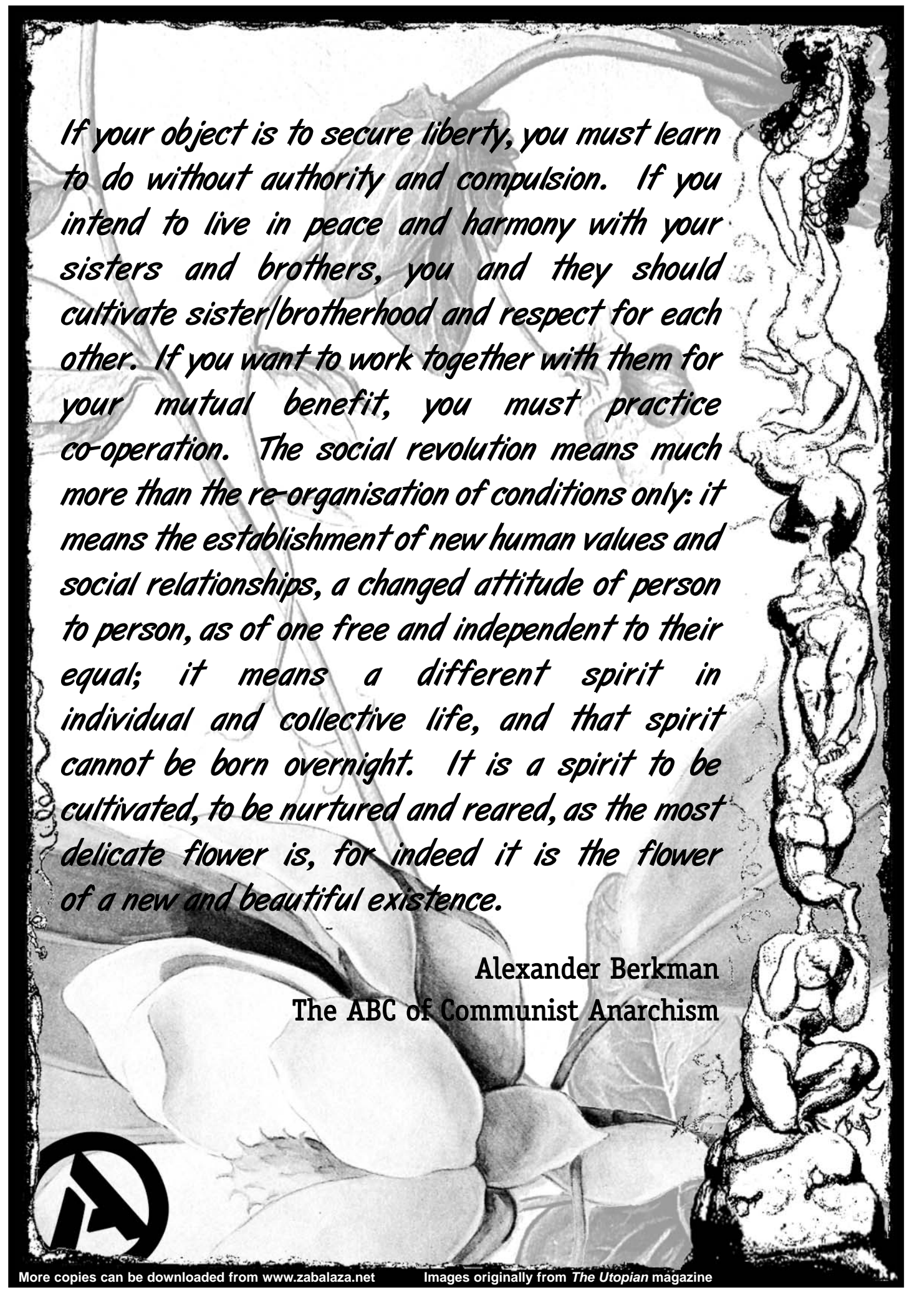
For ordering a copy, see contact details on the inside front cover of this journal.



Pictures on Page 27
from www.troopsoutmovement.com

Notes:

1. More than 1 million suspected rebel sympathisers were put in concentration camps, a bestial strategy the British had perfected during the South African War of 1899-1902. Starvation and disease killed thousands, while 1 090 were hanged by the colonial regime. Despite the common use of summary execution and torture by white British and black Kings African Rifles proxy forces, no official was ever prosecuted for any atrocity. The Mau Mau on their side killed only 32 whites – but some 1 800 fellow Kenyans. See *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya* and the *End of Empire* by David Anderson (Weidenfeld & Nicholson) 2005 / *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* by Caroline Elkins (Jonathan Cape), 2005.
2. *Towards a Vibrant & Broad African-Based Anarchism*, Ashanti Alston, 2003, online at: www.newformulation.org/3alston.htm. This article combines reviews of *African Anarchism* (see note 5 below) and the PhD dissertation from which this quote is taken, *Post-Colonial African Theory and Practice: Wole Soyinka's Anarchism*, Joseph Walunywa, Syracuse University, 1997. Alston may wish, as she hints in her article, to divorce anarchism from its "European-based anarcho-syndicalist, anti-metaphysical perspective," but the anarchist tradition is, with few exceptions (the Catholic Worker movement comes to mind), indeed militantly anti-metaphysical, being based solidly on rationality and mass organisation. Simply because anarchism originated in Europe does not equate to it being Eurocentric – indeed, only one of its four major revolutions and a handful of its strongholds were to be found in Europe.
3. The AWSM was founded in 1998 by Choongo, an anarchist librarian at the University of Zambia (UNZA), and young members of the youth of the UNZA – Cuba Friendship Association and of the Socialist Caucus. The anarcho-syndicalist Workers' Solidarity Federation of South Africa was instrumental in establishing the AWSM, but it appears to have collapsed the following year with Choongo's death by meningitis. His obituary is at: <http://libcom.org/history/choongo-wilstar-1964-1999>
4. According to a 1981 report in the Vancouver, Canada, libertarian socialist journal *The Open Road*, which published excerpts of the Palir manifesto (replicated from a publication called *Agora*, No.7), noting that the "libertarian movement has never managed to exist easily in the countries of black Africa," the Senegalese anarchists had met in June 1981 and had published their manifesto in the "more or less satirical journal *Le Politicien*".
5. *African Anarchism: The History of a Movement* by Sam Mbah & I.E. Igariwey (See Sharp Press), 1997. The authors have allowed an identical version, *African Anarchism: Prospects for the Future* to be published online by the ZACF, and it is available at: www.zabalaza.net/theory/african_anarchism/contents.htm. Alternatively, it is now available in full online at: <http://illvox.org/category/african-anarchism/>
6. A mini-biography of Mbah by the Institute for Anarchist Studies in 1999 said he was born in 1963 in Enugu, Nigeria, and "embraced anarchism shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union while studying at the University of Lagos. Like many radicals, he entered a period of deep political reflection after the breakdown of the Eastern Block, one that prompted him to re-examine his previous Marxist commitments and ultimately led him to the anti-statist, anti-capitalist politics that is anarchism. North American publications such as *The Torch* and *Love and Rage* were especially important to this process. Mbah currently makes his living as the Lagos correspondent for Enugu's *Daily Star* newspaper. He is also very active in the Awareness League, an anarchist organisation committed to the libertarian transformation of Nigeria. The Awareness League is active in political education, various social campaigns, and environmental protection. It presently has 600 members and eleven branches throughout the country [down from a high of about 1 000 members in 15 states during the dictatorship, but including its own radio station]... Mbah cited two Nigerians when asked to recommend other African authors he finds particularly sympathetic to anarchism: Ikenna Nzimiro and the late Mokwugo Okoye."
7. *The IWW, Revolutionary Syndicalism and Working Class Struggle in SA, 1910 – 1920*, by Lucien van der Walt (Bikisha Media Collective), online at the Zabalaza Books site.
8. For an account of the Sekhukhuneland Revolt, read *A Lion Amongst the Cattle: Reconstruction and Resistance in the Northern Transvaal*, by Peter Delius (Ravan Press) 1970 / (Heinenmann), 1997.
9. See the BBC report at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6938032.stm>
10. A far better critique than Halbrook's has now also been made available in the African Resistance History Series: *Africa, Nationalism and the State*, by Sam Dolgoff (1980?). Dolgoff demonstrates the demagogic attitudes of African "liberators" like the Nazi-trained neo-fascist Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt (seen as a "democratic socialist" by Alston) and the megalomaniac Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.
11. *On Pre-Colonial Morocco*, Brahim Fillali, first published 11 October 2005, Morocco, translated into English by Pat Murtagh, Canada, 2008. Edited by Michael Schmidt, ZACF, 2008 and published as *On Pre-Colonial Morocco: Does Berber Federalism serve as an indigenous African model of Anarchist Federalism?* online at: www.anarkismo.net/newswire.php?story_id=9536



If your object is to secure liberty, you must learn to do without authority and compulsion. If you intend to live in peace and harmony with your sisters and brothers, you and they should cultivate sister/brotherhood and respect for each other. If you want to work together with them for your mutual benefit, you must practice co-operation. The social revolution means much more than the re-organisation of conditions only: it means the establishment of new human values and social relationships, a changed attitude of person to person, as of one free and independent to their equal; it means a different spirit in individual and collective life, and that spirit cannot be born overnight. It is a spirit to be cultivated, to be nurtured and reared, as the most delicate flower is, for indeed it is the flower of a new and beautiful existence.

Alexander Berkman
The ABC of Communist Anarchism



WHERE WE STAND

We, the working class, produce the world's wealth. We ought to enjoy the benefits.

We want to abolish the system of capitalism that places wealth and power in the hands of a few, and replace it with workers self-management and socialism. We do not mean the lie called 'socialism' practised in Russia, China, and other police states - the system in those countries was/is no more than another form of capitalism - state capitalism.

We stand for a new society where there will be no bosses or bureaucrats. A society that will be run in a truly democratic way by working people, through federations of community and workplace committees. We want to abolish authoritarian relationships and replace them with control from the bottom up - not the top down.

All the industries, all the means of production and distribution will be commonly owned, and placed under the management of those working in them. Production will be co-ordinated, organised and planned by the federation of elected and recallable workplace and community committees, not for profit but to meet our needs. The guiding principle will be "from each according to ability, to each according to need".

We are opposed to all coercive authority; we believe that the only limit on the freedom of the individual is that their freedom does not interfere with the freedom of others.

We do not ask to be made rulers nor do we intend to seize power "on behalf of the working class". Instead, we hold that socialism can only be created by the mass of ordinary people. Anything less is bound to lead to no more than replacing one set of bosses with another.

We are opposed to the state because it is not neutral, it cannot be made to serve our interests. The structures of the state are only necessary when a minority seeks to rule over the majority. We can create our own structures, which will be open and democratic, to ensure the efficient running of everyday life.

We are proud to be part of the tradition of libertarian socialism, of anarchism. The anarchist movement has taken root in the working class of many countries because it serves our interests - not the interests of the power seekers and professional politicians.

In short we fight for the immediate needs and interests of our class under the existing set up, while seeking to encourage the necessary understanding and activity to overthrow capitalism and its state, and lead to the birth of a free and equal (anarchist) society.

TOYI TOYI ARTZ KOLLEKTIVE

(Zimbabwe)



HTTP://TOYITOIYI.BLOGSPOT.COM

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ANARKSIMO.NET

International Multi-Lingual Site for Anarchist
Communist News and Opinion.



AFRIQUE SANS CHAINES

The website of the Confédération Nationale du Travail's (CNT's) French paper *Afrique sans chaînes* (Africa Without Chains) where you can download copies of the magazine in .pdf format.

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