

# Zimbabwe's Lessons for South Africa

The revolution in Zimbabwe, by overthrowing white minority rule, has inspired oppressed and exploited people throughout Southern Africa, particularly in the heartland of racism, South Africa itself.

Events in Zimbabwe, both before and after independence, have been weighed and tested to find lessons there for our own struggle.

Great sacrifices were made in the Zimbabwean struggle to achieve better conditions in the factories, mines, townships and farms. With independence, working people looked forward to the end of all the abuses and hardships of life under the Smith regime.

But has this happened? Lately, wages have been frozen while prices soar. The trade unions are being brought under tight control. Large farms remain in the hands of the whites and big companies while peasants and former guerillas can find neither land nor jobs.

While white minority rule has been overthrown, only a few have won significant new benefits from independence: a handful of black petty bourgeois with their big houses, farms and flashy cars. The capitalist mine, factory and farm owners have lost nothing.

The workers and peasants continue to suffer because capitalism maintains its stranglehold on society. Smith has gone, but the rich exploiters who supported him remain.

So long as capitalism exists, the working people will be cheated of the gains promised by independence and

majority rule.

The revolution in Zimbabwe was sidetracked before capitalism was overthrown. This explains the instability in the country now.

The government zig-zags between open support of capitalism on the one hand, and, on the other hand, appeals to the youth and working class to check the extreme greed and corruption among those in government and outside.

Frustrated by the unsolved problems of Zimbabwe, many former guerillas have returned as 'dissidents' to the bush. Not understanding where the solution to these problems lies, they have turned to blind terrorist action against the regime and against whites.

The Mugabe government, having itself no solution to offer, has replied with simple repression and counter-terror by the 5th Brigade.

The South African ruling class has looked on the situation in Zimbabwe with glee. "Look," they say, "this shows you what happens with majority rule—chaos, and murder." Meanwhile they assist right-wing subversives to help cause maximum disruption.

The Mugabe government calls itself 'socialist', yet capitalism has not been overthrown. This allows the capitalists to use the mounting problems of Zimbabwe to argue that "socialism doesn't work."

What does Zimbabwe really show? That the struggle to overthrow white rule cannot lead to stability, democracy and a decent life UNLESS

## CAPITALISM IS OVERTHROWN AS WELL.

In SA, immense struggle and sacrifice will be needed to take on and defeat the monstrous regime of white privilege. The revolutionary effort unleashed in this struggle will achieve its aim of genuine liberation only by crushing capitalism, the root of our oppression and exploitation.

As South Africa is much more industrialised than Zimbabwe, this struggle will be decisive not in the countryside but in the towns, led by the mighty working class which capitalism has created.

Far less than in Zimbabwe will any room exist for a popularly elected government to be consolidated on a capitalist basis.

The Freedom Charter, programme of our movement, which puts forward minimum conditions to improve our lives, cannot be implemented under capitalism.

Democracy, the right to work, to a living wage, to a house and decent education are necessities capitalism cannot afford. Only socialism can guarantee these things.

The future of Zimbabwe and South Africa lies in the hands of the working class, which has the task of destroying the basis for capitalist exploitation and oppression throughout Southern Africa.

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