

Against this background the SACP wrote in July 1992 that Hernus Kriel, the NAT Minister of Law and Order, was heard "in the corridors of CODESA " referring to this violence as "just the Sixth Kaffir War". Such sentiments from a Hernus Kriel would not surprise us. The ruling class in South Africa, of which the NATS are a dominant part, stand dripping with the blood of the oppressed in this country. Upon the sweat, blood and tears of the oppressed they have built their life-styles of luxury and decadence. The forces of freedom can stand only in direct and irreconcilable contradiction to them.

Yet it was within the very same CODESA that the SACP met with none other than Hernus Kriel to look into "political violence and intimidation". In one such session the SACP representative Ronnie Kasrils found himself in a debate with Hernus Kriel which the SACP describes as having had "its amusing side".

Having clasped the hands of the ruling class and jumped into bed with De Klerk as its negotiating partner, the SACP stands condemned by the company it wishes to keep. To be reduced to scoring debating points, amusing or otherwise, with an individual who the SACP themselves say describes the butchery of unarmed people in language reminiscent of the Nazis, shows where the betrayal politics of negotiations has led the SACP. And for the SACP, despite all this, to still declare : " We are serious about negotiations. We want negotiations to work " confirms their political bankruptcy.

ZIMBABWE, THE DROUGHT AND THE IMF/WORLD BANK

Southern Africa is in the grip of a devastating drought. North of the Limpopo, Zimbabwe is also being devastated. That the drought is severe there is no doubt. Currently South African experts are in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city, to determine how much underground water is available. Water must be found because, as the Town Clerk of Bulawayo states, "the city must not die".

In this context the 1992 harvest has been a failure. As a consequence whole populations are under threat. Children, as is often the case, are hardest hit. Already, by the beginning of this year, before the full devastation of the current drought was felt, there were reports of children fainting in class and

dropping out of school due to hunger; malnutrition in children under five had increased to over 27% in certain areas. But the drought does not explain completely the full scale of the food shortages facing Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has gone from a maize surplus of two million tons 2 years ago to being forced to rely on imports of over a million tons this year at a cost of one hundred million American dollars. According to Carol Thompson, writing in the Weekly Mail (24-29/4/1992), *"The maize shortage in Zimbabwe, and throughout the region, is not simply due to drought, but also is the result of policies pushed by the donors."* Her views are reinforced by a briefing published in "Review of African Political Economy" (Number 53) by Colin Stoneman.

The following picture, which emerges from the information provided by these two writers, is a telling description of what happens if the IMF/World Bank gets hold of a country.

According to Colin Stoneman :

1. In the 1980's Zimbabwe pursued what he calls "left nationalist" policies that were "remarkably successful".
2. These policies :
 - i. had a good record in the provision of education and health care;
 - ii. generated an annual growth rate two to three times faster than South Africa or the African average;
 - iii. saw manufacturing industry grow by over one-third and develop an overseas export market;
 - iv. scored successes in agriculture and regularly exported maize to neighbouring countries and fruit to Europe.
3. To achieve this Zimbabwe had to terminate an IMF (International Monetary Fund) programme in 1984 and pursue "go-it-alone policies".
4. Because Zimbabwe did not follow the dictates of the World Bank, in 1987 the World Bank "vetoed a loan for export promotion that it had been negotiating after the runaway success of an earlier one, and the UK and other donors began to tighten the screws and denigrate the economic record."
5. By the end of the 1980's "increasing rigidities and corruption" made economic reform urgent.
6. Buoyed by the collapse of "central planning in Eastern Europe" the right wing in the ruling bloc in Zimbabwe acted. In October 1990 they introduced a "home-grown" structural adjustment programme that has

left Robert Mugabe "not deposed, but marginalised". The aim of the programme was to lock Zimbabwe into "market policies".

7. Zimbabwe's "home-grown" programme differed from IMF programmes in degree but not in purpose. It aimed for:

i. trade liberalisation - that is opening up the country to exploitation by overseas investment but

ii. without "significant conditionalities". Conditionalities refer to the terms or conditions upon which the IMF/World Bank intervenes in a country. This involves currency devaluation, cuts in welfare spending, removal of food subsidies, privatisation of state industries and reduction of real wages.

8. The World Bank ostensibly backed the programme. At a meeting in Paris in March 1991 "donors" promised 700 million US dollars in aid.

9. The result: 18 months later Zimbabwe's growth rate was zero, inflation had trebled to 25 percent, the stock market had fallen 40 percent, de-industrialisation had begun and *food security was lost*.

10. The reasons for the failure include:

i. incompetence in implementation and

ii. the donors' refusal to release the funds promised in Paris in March 1991 until "Zimbabwe had incurred such costs that it had no option but to proceed under (a full) IMF programme". In other words, until Zimbabwe was whipped into line.

11. By 1991 Zimbabwe's capitulation was complete. The Zimbabwean dollar was devalued by 25 percent; and the country was "transferred" from the middle-income to the lower-income category.

Thus it was under policies approved of or dictated by the IMF/World Bank and foreign "donors" Zimbabwe sacrificed its food security - that is its ability to feed its own people.

The writers mentioned outline three ways in which this was done:

1. The United States refused to buy surplus maize from Zimbabwe to provide food aid for other Southern African countries such as Mozambique. The US Department of Agriculture maintained that US food aid was intended to reduce the surplus of highly subsidised American maize. Therefore American maize was dumped in Southern Africa despite the surplus maize production in Zimbabwe.

2. The European Community's (EC) plan to build "regional grain storage silos" did not get off the ground because of the EC's insistence that it

should decide who received the grain stored in such silos; and when! Without proper storage facilities storage of surplus maize production became an economic burden.

3. The US began to "pressurise" Zimbabwe to lower the price offered to its farmers for maize production in order to encourage tobacco production so as to earn "foreign exchange".

This is where the "structural adjustment programmes" played havoc with Zimbabwe's food security. In 1990/91, when they were first introduced, the price of maize was lowered and the commercial and small farmers did shift to tobacco. The result: "commercial farmers have reduced their area under maize production to 40 percent of the 250,000 acres planted five years ago". This leaves the shortfall to be made up by peasant farmers who can do so, *but are vulnerable to drought*.

Carol Thompson summarises this tragic result as follows:

"Even in the midst of drought, irrigated maize instead of tobacco would be feeding more people. And because the international demand for maize is high this year, inflated prices will consume the foreign exchange earned by tobacco".

For the oppressed in South Africa, Zimbabwe's tragedy sounds a grim warning. The World Bank and the IMF are busy re-establishing themselves in South Africa. They have already issued statements on housing policy, agriculture and education. With ANC support, they are undertaking a "study" of poverty in South Africa.

The IMF and the World Bank are the international banking thugs of imperialism. Their job is to ensure the slavery of a country's economy to imperialism. This means greater poverty for the workers - lower real wages, increased taxation and loss of any social security workers may enjoy. This is how the IMF has worked all over the world; they will be no different in South Africa. That the IMF/World Bank re-enters South Africa with ANC-COSATU backing is yet another disgrace heaped upon the leadership of those organisations. Such approval does not change the role of the IMF/World Bank.
