

**STATE AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:**

**FOCUS ON ZIMBABWE**

BY

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#### Introduction

A fundamental precondition for the establishment and reproduction of the modern 'free enterprise economic system' is that the force that is engaged in direct production, or a significant part of it, be severed from its connection with its means of existence so that it can function as a wage labour force for the force that has ownership and command of the means of material life. The National Trade Unions Survey (NTUS), Zimbabwe, 1984 Vol. One , stated thus :

"For capitalism to be possible, two core and apposed class forces had to exist. These are the two social classes embodied in the categories of labour and capital. The fundamental contradiction/opposition between these two is the fundamental contradiction/opposition in capitalism which also constitutes the dynamic of its development." (p.11).

Everywhere, the history of the development of the free-enterprise economic system (capitalism) has as its content the struggles of capital (as a social force) to establish a class with no means of existence but forced to do wage labour. This is one side. The other side is the resistance of the 'wage-labour-to-be social force to this-now predominantly termed - 'process of proletarianisation'. The development of the 'free-enterprise' political economy in colonial Zimbabwe (then called Rhodesia) is punctuated by exactly this same process. N.T.U.S. (1984) noted again that :

"This fundamental struggle becomes manifest in the concrete organizations which the two opposed social forces erect or force each other to erect during the prosecution of their historical struggles. Thus, in the Zimbabwean road to capitalism, we see the coming into the scene of such organizations of capital as firstly, the British South Africa Company (BSAC), the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB), later the Associated Chambers of Commerce, the Association of Rhodesian Industries, the Chamber of Mines etc.

We see also the development of organizations of labour such as the old all-white labour union - the Rhodesia Railways Workers' Union (RRWU), the early South African originated Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) and several others evolving into such national centres as the Trade Union Congress (TUC), the African Trade Union Congress (ATUC), the National African Trade Unions Congress (NATUC) etc." (p. 12).

Never should it be overlooked that in such historical conflicts of social forces, an institution which according to some thought is distanced and neutral between the conflicting forces emerges and plays a significant role, a role which, at the end of the day benefits one or the other of the conflicting forces. That institution is the state. The state completes the triangular transaction which we term the industrial relations system. Thus, a study of industrial relations in Zimbabwe is a study of the historical evolution of the roles of state, labour and capital in that social formation.

The state emerged to play a significant role in the formation of industrial relations in colonial and post-colonial Zimbabwe. The endeavours of capital to achieve primitive accumulation by utilization of cheap labour were completed by the colonial state, first in its very rudimentary forms as the BSAC's Native Department and the founding of provincial labour bureaux in 1895; the establishment of the Labour Board of Southern Rhodesia in 1899 and the RNLB in the beginning of the 1900s, while a more elaborate colonial state came into force to procure cheap African labour (proletarianisation of African peasants) by use of instruments such as the Master and Servants Act of 1901; the Pass Law of 1902; the Private Locations Ordinance of 1910; the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934; the Native Registration Act (1936); the Sedition Act (1936); the Compulsory Native Labour Act (1943) etc and other expropriatory pieces of Legislation such as the Maize Control and Land Apportionment Acts of the 1930s. (see Sachikonye in Mandaza, edit. 1986, p. 249; see also Sibanda in Zimbabwe Journal of Economics Vol. One No. 2, January 1985 for a treatment of the expropriation of the peasantry.

Evolution of Zimbabwean industrial relations system in pre-independence era

The tracing of the evolution of an industrial relations system must be done in the context of the evolving political economy. This is important because, as Sachikonye declares :

"The substantive character of the industrial relations of any society reveals the salient aspect of the dominant social and political relations which underpin its development. Such relations determine and underlie the 'capitalist', 'social democratic' or 'socialist' character and directions of that society. Thus, state, capital and trade unions play significant roles in varying degrees in the determination and modification of industrial relations and ultimately the social and political relations in society." (in Mandaza edit. op cit. p. 243).

The entry of the BSAC's pioneer column into the territory later known as Southern Rhodesia, then Rhodesia, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and finally Zimbabwe, in 1980 signified the formal inauguration of the 'free enterprise' system as the one system ascending to dominance in the political economy. The BSAC entered with monetary wealth which had to be transformed into capital. As the penetrated social formations were based on production systems which required the tying of the direct producer with the means of subsistence, particularly, land, this conflicted with the requirements of the incoming system which required the severing of this unity in order to build a class of dispossessed direct producers having no option but to sell their labour power to capital. I have dealt with the essence of this process in a critical essay in a journal already mentioned (Z.J.E. Vol. 1 No. 2, January 1985). The difficulties encountered by capital in building up this pool of dispossessed labour are also discussed in N.T.U.S. 1984 where it is said :

"Capitalists needed a large pool of direct producers separated from their means of production to function as wage labourers turning the accumulated monetary wealth into capital. By 1902 mining capital was facing a reproductive crisis which led to a crisis of mining in 1903. This crisis was basically

a labour crisis. The reconstruction of the mining industry then depended on the solution of the labour problem." (ibid p. 12).

Mechanisms were then adopted with the intention of turning peasant producers into wage labourers. In 1894, a hut tax was introduced forcing the indigenous population to seek work for wages. Agricultural policies were institutionalised with instruments such as the Maize Control Acts and other measures to 'reserve' peasants into barren soils and stragulate their agricultural production. (ibid).

It was precisely the mechanisms of expropriation, of turning the peasant producers into wage labourers, the imposed tax systems, the forced labour (Chibaro) system (see Van Onselen, 1976), the land and livestock expropriation etc which led to the war which overthrew the Ndebele State in 1893 and the resistance struggles of 1896 and 1897.

However, no formal organisation of labour emerged in this period. In fact just after World War I, all that could be observed were emerging associations and organisations spearheading protest and putting demands for involvement in the ruling process. These organisations of protest were not strictly working-class organisations.

I have indicated elsewhere that as early as the late 1890s and early 1900s, the nascent African middle class formed organisations like the Rhodesia Bantu Voters Association (RBVA), the Rhodesia Native Association (RNA) etc., which fought mainly for the interests of the small urban-based elite and, in a limited - perhaps even residual fashion - articulated the interests of the working population as well. (Journal on Social Change and Development No. 10 1985 p. 1).

However, it must not be assumed that because the working population did not at this time build own strictly working class organisations, there were no struggles or resistances by the working class as such. Two historians in particular have highlighted the importance of taking note of this fact,

(C. Van Onselen *ibid*, and I.R. Phimister in Phimister and Van Onselen (Mambo Press Gwelo 1978.) Phimister writes :

"Until recently, however, academic observers of Southern Rhodesian labour history were unanimously of the opinion that the African worker consciousness first began to manifest itself primarily in the 1920s. These interpretations, which assumed that the consciousness of African labourers 'should be assessed largely through the presence or absence of associations and organisations which manifestly articulate worker interests; have now been systematically exploded by Van Onselen's thorough analysis of black responses and strategies in the Southern Rhodesian mining industry between 1900 and 1933." (Phimister and Onselen 1978 p. 23).

In fact, the problems which emerge here usually arise from the orthodox analytical paradigms adopted which invariably take the ideal types of advanced West European socio-economic formations and measure the social processes' of 'backward countries' using these ideal types as the yardsticks. The presence or absence of formal labour organisation as in the West becomes an ingredient signifying the presence or absence of 'working-class' consciousness and struggle.' That this consciousness and struggle may appear in many forms and guises, submerged or articulated in a complex - perhaps even marginal - way within the discourses of struggle of the classes and strata under colonial or 'backward' conditions, inevitably escapes the eye of the orthodox analyst. Correctly, Wood has emphasised, that "the study of trade unions in 'the complex organisational and institutional realities which lie between classes and the state' is compounded by the fact that 'industrial relations' theorists, whether Marxist or otherwise, have usually delimited variables through assumptions based on an advanced capitalist, developed nation-state society. For emergent nations on the periphery of world capitalism, where class and strata relations are usually more volatile and reflect a wider variety of non-capitalist processes, the existing theory is often misleading and can appear distinctly Eurocentric." (Stoneman, edit. 1988, 285).

Resistance by the working population took many forms in the pre-formal organisation period. Ordinary loafing, mindless labour, deliberate wastefulness, slow-downs, feigned illnesses, self-inflicted injuries, abuse of equipment, desertion etc., were all strategies employed at work places, particularly in the mines at this time.

With the further development of the 'free-enterprise' system with its attendant contradictions between the two core social forces embodied in labour and capital, more formalised movements of the oppressed mushroomed around towns and mines. These took the form of ethnic-based associations, religious and cultural of movements. By 1922, the employer population was expressing concern that the 'native societies' were a prelude to 'undesirable' trade unionism.

"Indeed, in 1927, the labour unrest caused by the intolerable conditions of work and life climaxed in the Shamva Mine Strike which mobilized some 3,500 workers. The workers were made up of disparate social organisations such as dance societies; mutual aid associations and religious sects like the Watch-Tower movement. This event, lasting five days until crushed by the army, signalled that the non-workers' organisations had been a spring-board for labour's organisation and struggle."  
(Sibanda, Journal on Social Change .... 1985, *ibid*).

However, the peculiarities of the development of colonial Zimbabwe's 'free-enterprise' system imprinted an indelible mark in the development of organised labour. Arrighi has claimed that from the very beginning, the colony's political economy developed on the basis of very cheap black labour with 'a skilled white aristocracy of labour' coming in only as a consequence rather than a precursor of this political economy's development. (Arrighi, 1973 p. 338). The whole political economy and the consequent organised social forces therefore developed along very strictly 'racial lines.' The 'white settler aristocracy of labour' for example was the first to formally organise itself to confront capital under conditions of mining capital's attack on its standard of living when faced with economic

crisis. The struggle of white labour taught it the lesson that it must, as it perhaps had the experience in its own home countries, organise itself. Thus, the N.T.U.S. notes :

"... the attempt by mining capital to lower the wage bill after 1904 provoked a wave of strikes by labour which climaxed in the 1912 Wankie Colliery Strike. The state intervened on the side of capital by violence, arrests, flogging and dismissals of the strikers. By 1916, labour had learned to form its own formal organisations to confront capital. The first labour union, albeit of exclusively white labour, was formed ... the Rhodesia Railway Workers' Unions (RRWU). This union expressed labour's concern about the rising cost of living and its formation triggered strikes over pay and conditions of work, payment of War II bonuses, etc." (N.T.U.S. 1984. 13).

When the RRWU called a strike in 1919, black railway workers came out in support in Bulawayo. However, white labour was not the first to confront capital by use of the strike weapon. This social segment was probably the first to do so with an organisation already in its hand. Wood claims that the first known strikes were by black miners outside Harare in 1895 (N.T.U.S. op.cit Note 15 p. 28).

Come 1927, Labour's confrontations with capital and the state bring about formal organisation. Both the expropriation repression, and the influence of labours struggles with capital in South Africa, led to the formation of the independent Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union which was peculiar in that it was not based on the economic enclaves of mining but on industrial and urban centres like Harare and Bulawayo :

"Significantly also, labour had learned to organize both accross ethnic and economic sectoral lines. Thus, at the time of its first conference in April 1931, the ICU had close to 5,000 paid up members in 13 branches in the country. It had impressively organised workers in the agricultural, domestic, urban workshop, construction, commercial and mining spheres." (ibid p. 13).

The colonial state responded to this development with repression, incarceration of I.C.U. leaders and banning of its meetings. This, together with shortcomings of I.C.U. strategies led to failures on the part of the labour movement. The World Depression also intervened to cow down workers' activism generally. The I.C.U. declined as a workers' front and continued intermittent and localised operations until its demise : Its successes were really minimal :

"The I.C.U., in fact, never developed beyond a vigorous protest movement for workers, it never organised a strike or union." (Wood in N.T.U.S. *ibid*).

With the further development of the colonial free-enterprise economic system and its widening demand for skilled but cheap labour power, the white aristocracy of labour developed a fear of replacement by cheaper skilled black labour. This fear forced out a racist militancy of the white labour aristocracy which came to provide an important internal social base for the state. The state was forced to pass a Public Service Act banning blacks from employment in the Civil Service and other public projects. Again, having forged an alliance with the settler urban and agrarian social sectors, the white labour aristocracy forced the state to pass the Industrial Conciliation Act (ICA) in 1934 which formally recognised white labour as 'a labour aristocracy', "the only labour force covered by the term 'employee' and able to engage in collective bargaining." Black labour, which remained mainly in the unskilled category, was covered by the notoriously racist legislation - the Masters and Servants Act, the Sedition Act and the Native Registration Act. (*ibid*).

The 1930s and 40s saw some significant developments in colonial Zimbabwe's political economy. A strong manufacturing sector developed under heavy state sponsorship. The Africans engaged in wage labour increased in number from 254 000 in 1926 and 377 000 in 1946 to 600 000 in 1956. Manufacturing experienced a boom which occurred at the same time as the growth of a secondary industry that was bolstered by the establishment, via strong state intervention, of an iron and steel and a cotton spinning industry. (*ibid*).

This development signified that the economic structure had new requirements and developments in the context of the productive forces. A stable, skilled and semi-skilled urban working class was an imperative for manufacture, while the encouraged capitalist agriculture required a large pool of unskilled labour in the tobacco and cotton plantations. Mechanisms were instituted by the colonial state to further proletarianise peasants and depress the independent productive activities.

In 1944, black labour formed its first industrial trade union, the Rhodesia-Railway Employees Association (RREA), called association because the Masters and Servants Act banned black unionism. In 1945 a Milling Employees Association based in Bulawayo was formed. (ibid 15.).

The struggles of black workers, particularly the railway workers' strikes in the mid-40s led to the setting up of Labour Boards which looked into working conditions, awarding minimum wages, overtime increases and longer holidays with pay.

However, repression of the workers' movement continued, yet it could not be possible to totally eliminate it.

"While there had been concerted efforts to prevent trade unionism by legislation such as the I.C.A. 1934 and the Native Labour Boards, the further development of the economy, and particularly the establishment - via state intervention - of a manufacturing sector and the struggles of workers, led to new requirements in state and industrial relations. The liberal bourgeoisie called for the inclusion of the African in the definition of 'employee' and the allowing of 'controlled' and 'non-political' trade unionism. The policies and programmes pushed were intended to create a pro-European 'native middle-class' which would lead the rest of the Africans and help to prevent anti-European nationalism." (JSC D p. 2).

Further struggles between labour and capital, particularly in the mining sector brought about a new institution, the 'works committee as a vehicle for airing workers' grievances. 'Mining capital saw the works committees' as useful instruments for controlling labour and adopted their use extensively in the mines." (N.T.U.S. 16). Thus, as the struggles between labour and capital brought about new institutional structures, the continuing conflicts led to the transformation of these structures into instruments of control of labour by capital. This was true of both Labour Boards and Works Committees.

".... the militancy of Bulawayo textile workers was tamed by the setting up of a labour board while a threatened strike by railway workers forced the appointment of an Arbitration Board." (ibid).

At the same time as the labour capital struggles intensified, nationalism also grew. There was a clear fear on the part of the colonial state of a fusion between the 'economic struggle' of the unions and 'political struggle' of the nationalists. But, in the 1950s, trade unionism and nationalism were so inextricably married that it is difficult to disentangle their development. African nationalist leaders like J.Z. Moyo, Reuben Jamela and J.T. Maluleke were at the same time executive leaders of trade unions. The seeming fusion forced out even harsher state repression.

"The labour movement suffered greatly from state repression. Some able and experienced labour leaders escaped to foreign lands or were detained. Between 1965 and 1971, state repression of trade unionism and nationalism intensified. But the trade unions, together with the other non-directly political African organisations, assumed a para-political character." (JSCD p. 2)

The union leaders came to see that to change the condition of the African Worker, the whole political structure had to be shaken. They thus addressed themselves to such issues as housing, education, residential segregation tribal trust lands development, the 1971 political settlement proposals etc.

This alarmed the colonial state. Its labour Minister, Ian McLean declared in 1971 that :

"When ... union officials ... choose to advise Government on how to do its job, or castigate the Government on political grounds, then I would suggest that sound principles of trade unionism are being perverted for what can only be described as ulterior motives." (ibid)

The Minister went on to attack a leader of the trade union movement, Phineas Sithole, saying, "his trade union position does not qualify him to represent the African people ahead of their elected representatives in Parliament." (N.T.U.S. p. 19).

The National Trade Unions Survey notes that the dimensions of the repression of labour are revealed in the dramatic decline of the number of work stoppages recorded by the Department of Labour from 138 in 1965 to only 19 in 1971 (ibid). The problems faced by the labour movement included the following :

- (a) the repressive labour legislation and the administrative operation - both coercive and covert-of the state apparatus;
- (b) the opposition of highly centralized and well organized employers' associations which enjoyed ready access to state representatives
- (c) the resistance of the racist white labour aristocracy
- (d) lack of a check-off system, therefore financially weak;
- (e) detentions and political harrassment (ibid).

The liberal approach of the 1950s was ended by the colonial legislation in the period after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965. Arrighi correctly diagnosed the demise of this liberalism whose politics, he says, "encroached upon the interest of those very classes on which manufacturing capitalism and its political counterpart still relied heavily both economically and politically." (Arrighi op.cit. 363).

In 1967, the ICA had been amended to make possible a blocking of foreign assistance to the union movement by the state. A later change had the effect of "removing the right to strike ... when the President is satisfied that a strike ... would prejudice the public interest," as the colonial Minister of Labour put it. (N.T.U.S. *ibid*).

Indeed, there is no recorded legal strike since the passing of the ICA in 1959. The resistance and struggles by labour were dealt with by use of security legislation and emergency powers, e.g. the crushing of work-to-rule by rail workers in 1969 and the bus drivers strike in 1972. (*ibid*).

However, though mainly defeated and weakened by state cum capital repression, the trade union struggles fused with nationalist struggles for independence and the repression of the economic struggle of the unions equally fused with the repression of political struggle of the nationalists. The analysis and conclusions of N.T.U.S. and Mr Wood are proper in this context :

"That the state repression was clearly aimed at defeating the labour movement is seen in that persons who were convicted under the arbitrary Law and Order (Maintenance) Act or the Unlawful Organizations Act, to a prison term of 3 months or more were debarred from holding union office for seven years.

It should be fair to conclude that the early struggles of labour and their formalization into workers' Unions, gave rise to a dramatic mobilization of the black urban proletariat that eventually led to the era of mass nationalist politics from the late 1950s which ultimately resulted in liberation." (*ibid*).

On the eve of independence the state of the trade union movement remained unclear. In fact, to date no comprehensive research on this period exists. Nevertheless the labour movement seems to have coalesced into two broad categories in the late 70s, the skilled labour and the semi-skilled and unskilled. This was obviously the logical development of fracturing of labour into the white labour aristocracy and the black semi-skilled and unskilled. As such, the skilled unions were white-controlled and led while the latter were black organised and controlled (*ibid*).

The skilled unions of the white labour aristocracy had a national centre - the Trade Unions Congress (TUC) which, over time, had formed links with the colonial state and white settler political parties which had formed successive white minority governments. These unions were still strongly protectionist and racist in their approach. With a membership strength of between 40,000 and 50,000, they had mobilised in the mining, iron and steel, municipal administrative and commercial undertakings. (ibid p. 21).

The African unions were divided into two labour confederations, the African Trade Unions Congress (ATUC) and the National African Trade Unions Congress (NATUC). According to ILO estimates, total paid-up membership in these unions was no more than 100,000. However the ILO makes an underestimate of total unionization here since there were other unions which were not affiliated to the two confederations - e.g. - those in the municipalities (ibid.)

On the eve of independence, the African Labour Movement was seriously divided and consequently weak. In 1978, it is said, NATUC had about 13 affiliated unions, while another confederation, the African Trade Unions Congress (ATUC) had 12. A year earlier, a veteran unionist, Reuben Jamela had inaugurated his Zimbabwe Federation of Labour (ZFL) to which he claimed 35 unions were affiliated. However, in confidence, he is said to have admitted that in November 1977, only 10 <sup>of</sup> ~~to~~ 32 unions attending the ZFL Congress were bona fide. (ibid: 22).

On the eve of independence, the African Labour Movement was divided into five national centres and this was the situation of a labour movement facing a united centrally organised association of capital with strong links with the state. More than this,

"The bureaucratic emasculation of labour itself had become really effective. The colonial state effectively removed the right to strike and had established a procedure of dispute settlement (whereby) ... disputes ... had to go through a system of arbitration and mediation before a legal strike could be called. Arbitration was either voluntary or compulsory. Pre-1963 legislation provided for disputes to be referred to the Industrial Council or Conciliation Board or a single arbitrator or panel of arbitrators with an independent umpire or industrial tribunal. The 1973 amendment to the ICA eliminated the first two provisions and required all disputes to be sent to an industrial tribunal appointed by the Minister of Labour.

Once an award was made, it was binding if 'essential services were involved. (Essential services were designated by the Minister by notice in the Government Gazette). This bureaucratic procedure effectively removed the right to strike and those strikes that took place could only be illegal ones, subject to severe penalties under the Law and Order (Maintenance) Act and the Emergency Powers Act." (ibid).

### III. THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM IN THE POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

#### (i) The Political Economy Framework

The economic development of Zimbabwe during the UDI years brought about a relatively more diverse economy with a stronger industrial base than many of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) or Africa in general. Kaplinsky noted thus:

"As is clearly evident, the sub-Saharan region is one of the least developed parts of the global economy, with an especially weak historical record in the manufacturing sector. Within this region, Zimbabwe fares rather well. Considered as a percentage of GDP in 1982, only Egypt (with 27 percent) had a higher ratio than Zimbabwe's 25 percent. Moreover, largely as a consequence of being cut off from global markets in the sanctions era, its capital goods sector is particularly well developed. Thus, Zimbabwe's manufacturing sector is probably the most technologically sophisticated in independent Africa, and it has a longer industrial history than most."

(In Stoneman edit, 1988, 194).

A number of factors account for this pre-independence economic development. Writers emphasize the following: the impetus of World War II; the ill-fated federation of the Rhodesias (Northern, now Zambia and Southern, now Zimbabwe) and Nyasaland (now Malawi), which benefitted Southern Rhodesia more, and sanctions which isolated the colony from global world markets - as Kaplinsky says above - after the declaration of UDI in 1965, UDI forced the colony to develop protected industries via import-substitution industrialisation with heavy state intervention (Sibanda, July, 1988, 10-11). ~~Another~~ Added to this is 'cheap local

and migrant labour' which Mkandawire suggests was "a probably more long-lasting and far-reaching factor." (ILO-SATEP, 1985, 3).

I have indicated elsewhere that Mkandawire, like many writers, takes this last factor as a residual one and not the central issue. I suggest that the sheer political - legal repression of labour, particularly black labour since white labour constituted a protected white labour aristocracy, by institutionalised racism on top of the exclusion of black labour in the definition of an "employee", was the cornerstone of colonial Zimbabwe's achievement of the economic development mentioned above. (Sibanda, *ibid*).

World War II disrupted trade routes and imports lines, thus allowing the economy to develop under protection. One Federation eliminated trade barriers and built a 'captive market' for Southern Rhodesia. UDI's consequent sanctions caused the introduction of a quota system on an administrative allocation of foreign currency. The system provided protection for local manufacturing as imports which competed local products were not allowed any forex. Besides, as Mkandawire (ILO-SATEP *ibid*) adds, the blocking of profits of TNCs compelled them to invest locally and in a much more diversified way than before UDI.

"The point, however, is that these institutionalised arrangements at the level of the superstructure were based on the structure of the determinant economic base in which the relations of production were defined by the existence of a huge pool of cheap labour whose connection with the means of production and of subsistence, particularly land, had been largely severed, forcing this huge pool to submit itself for wage labour in return for what could be described as 'slave wages'." (Sibanda, *Ibid*, 12).

At independence, the new regime inherited this relatively developed economic infrastructure. No restructuring of this economic base took place. Although oriented to a strong domestic base, it nevertheless remained with an export-orientation which was even more encouraged after independence.

With the inherited controls, the economy seemed to progress well with real growth occurring in the post-independence period. A government official made a comfortable claim that:

"In real terms, between 1980 and 1986, the economy as a whole grew at an annual rate of almost 5 percent and a somewhat faster rate of expansion was experienced by the industrial sector." (Mabhena, see Sibanda, *ibid*, 13).

The economic system of Zimbabwe remained heavily dependent on vital external inputs. Apart from the claims of a success growth story in 1982, the new government produced a three-year 'Transitional Development Plan' which optimistically put its targets at 8 and 8.4 percent growth of GDP p.a. for employment and material production respectively. (Government of Zimbabwe, 1982). However, the opposite of this occurred. GDP growth declined from 1982 with major sectors recording negative growth rates, wage sector employment remained stagnant while unemployment grew. The 'World recession' and the 'drought' were blamed for this.

It seems that a purely economic approach to the analysis and projecting of Zimbabwe's likely achievements had been adopted. The economic targets were based on pre-independence economic achievements and the 'boom' in the first year of independence with under-utilised capacity was exploited. However, approaching the question with a political economy approach, one finds that a fundamental ingredient was ignored, and that is, the role and socio-political condition of labour-power.

"So early after independence, the repression of labour and its being paid 'slave wages' as during UDI times would have been politically hazardous. That is why, although strikes were banned in Zimbabwe (.....), it took nearly five years for the new government to enact the Labour Relations Act (LRA) 1984 ..... colonial clamping down of labour as in UDI days, immediately after independence was not politically feasible. That is why a kind of state paternalism developed in this period, eventually, of course, weakening the working class."

(ii) The Condition of the Labour Movement

Labour was divided and weakened at independence. An attempt was made to unite all the organisations of labour, but the process was marred by political animosities.

"Without a united and class-conscious leadership, the workers could not speak with one voice. Neither could they make their grievances known to capital and state at the time of independence. The new nationalist government had never prepared for this nor had the labour movement forced it onto the political agenda during the liberation struggle; yet the workers themselves had real and concrete grievances bottled up against capital." (JSCD, p. 3).

The new regime came to power with impressive socialist rhetoric, in fact, claiming to be Marxist-Leninist. The workers, though not previously mobilised for a 'socialist' struggle, took these proclamations seriously and utilised some of the positions adopted in the ruling party manifesto, particularly the right to organise, to demonstrate, and to strike. The black workers, led by semi-skilled sectors implemented the manifesto by a wave of strikes encompassing all sectors, in 1980.

Socialism was never really on <sup>the</sup> agenda in the Zimbabwe political liberation frame. Elsewhere, I have suggested that: "... the socialist project was not seriously on the agenda and could not have been, without the working class either being organised, or represented, or acting as a combatant class on the stage." (Stoneman, 1988, 275).

The response of the new regime to the striking workers is quite revealing with respect to socialist orientation. The Minister of Labour attacked the strikers with speeches of the former colonial Minister of Labour. (ibid, 289-90). Strikers at Wankie Colliery and Hippo Valley Estates experienced the moving in of the Army while 13 miners at Wankie were arrested under the ICA colonial law. Some guards

shot at strikers at the Rio Tinto Zimbabwe mines. Police were sent to disperse picket lines and 400 work seekers at Swift Transport in Harare. 1 000 workers were sacked. All but 96 were selectively rehired. The Minister of Labour, Kumbirai Kangai, proudly proclaimed:

"I will crack my whip if they do not go back to work ... They must go back now."

He subsequently assured organised capital at its annual congress that:

"There will be no major changes to the ICA",  
i.e. the Industrial Conciliation Act, a piece of colonial legislation which indeed enslaved black labour. (ibid, 291).

However, the strikes produced some concessions. The state appointed the Riddell Commission which inquired into incomes, *and* prices. Minimum wage legislation was also passed.

"In addition, the demonstrated ability of labour to act precipitated the institution of workers' committees in work places, which were a concrete realisation of the right of labour to be consulted, and its organisational instruments to exist. In a nutshell, the actions of labour in the immediate post-independence period forced out a certain paternalism of the state. This state paternalism continued to manifest itself later, in the awarding of increments to workers earning below \$300 a month - an increment which was not won by the workers' struggles 'themselves'." (JSCD, p. 4).

In fact, the negative nature of this paternalism has been resented by labour itself. The post-independence national centre - the ZCTU - declared that state paternalism was weakening it and the awarded increases were not a product of consultation with the labour movement. (Mandaza, op.cit. 258).

Apart from the institutional introductions such as workers' committees and 'works councils', the state intervened to unite

the labour movement and this materialised in the formation of the post-independence national centre in 1981. The problems involved in this intervention are discussed thoroughly by Sachikonye in Mandaza (1986); Wood in Stoneman (1988); but more exhaustively in N.T.U.S. (1984).

An important landmark in the post-independence industrial relations system was the passing of <sup>the</sup> Labour Relations Act (1985) which repealed the I.C.A. Chapter 267 and the Minimum Wages and Employment Acts of 1980.

The new Act (LRA) which was hailed by government as a 'Workers' Charter' appears to have strengthened some of the negative provisions of the colonial ICA. Indeed, this is in-keeping with the promise of the first independence Minister of Labour that there would be no major changes to colonial law.

The Act does recognise the right of labour to organise and the right to form workers committees and the like. It also protected employees' dismissal without state consent.

However, elsewhere, I have indicated its negative aspects:

"Besides the painful and bureaucratic method of dispute settlement - which starts from a labour relations officer to a regional hearing officer, then to a Labour Relations Board, from which appeal lies with a Labour Tribunal and from thence to the Supreme Court ... the range of spheres which are defined as essential services (and, therefore, no strike in them is so wide that only domestic workers remain outside the essential services sphere)." (JSCD, *ibid*).

In the Act, the power of the Minister extends to cover control of union finances, union elections, staffing, property, and even overruling collective bargaining agreements. This makes trade unions mere recreation clubs!

However, recently, with the economic problems of the country and with calls for 'structural adjustment and liberalisation';

with the desires for 'much needed foreign investment', the little gains that labour may have made in the L.R.A. are being eroded. Capital has demanded (and been granted) a review of the LRA, particularly the protection of labour from dismissals. In fact, the unions have always been powerless to protect their members from retrenchment. 'Rationalisation' caused by recessions which hit the uncompetitive forms of the country have led to retrenchment (See Table 1).

Labour has equally demanded the right to strike and "free collective bargaining." The state has responded with "bargaining within certain limits" and invocation of Emergency Powers to declare strikes illegal and threatening to arrest and arresting strikers. This was the case when leather workers went on strike over their employers' renegeing on pay increases previously agreed. The state nullified the agreement and declared the strike illegal. (The Worker, November 1987). Junior doctors were arrested when they went on strike over their conditions of work in June, 1989. Railway artisans were similarly treated when they went on strike in July-August 1989. Recently, the striking technicians of the Post and Telecommunications service were arrested as their strike was declared illegal since they were in an "essential service." The current Minister of Labour has declared that he will not hesitate to deal with "wild cat strikes." (The Herald, 01-09-89).  
<sup>use emergency powers to</sup>

The state and labour contradiction is currently intense also in the field of the new economic programme of the government, particularly the "Investment Guidelines." Labour has condemned this as a sellout to foreign capital and a deviation from the socialist path. Instead, an alternative programme has been submitted, which calls for state take-over of land, banks, and other leading sectors of the economy. Also, the giving of the right of employers to hire and fire is countered by labour by that there should be an unfettered free collective bargaining with the right to strike. To date, the government is silent on this and only questions the labour movement

on whether it has consulted its members. (The Sunday Mail, 27 August, 1989).

### **CONCLUSION**

In the post-independence period in Zimbabwe, the struggles between labour and capital have intensified. The industrial relations system reveals a continued strong intervention by the state more on the side of capital than of labour. Where the state has intervened on the side of labour, this has led to state paternalism, which has in turn rendered the labour movement weak.

The political economy of the new state is such that dependence on the external factor has produced negative effects, precipitating calls for structural adjustment and liberalisation, the part-implementation of which has weakened the labour movement and sharpened the contradiction with the state. Under such conditions, political and general social stability, democracy and development, cannot be guaranteed.

TABLE 1.

APPLICATIONS FOR RETRENCHMENTS : JANUARY TO AUGUST 1980<sup>3</sup>

Industry	Applications				Employees			
	Received	Rejected	Accepted	Total	Retre- nched	Short Time Work- ing	Unpay- able	Not Retre- nched
Agriculture	38	7	31	-	618	0	29	135
Brick and Clay	5	1	4	-	100	0	0	6
Building	17	0	17	-	758	0	0	0
Civil Engineering	11	1	10	-	143	0	8	8
Clothing	33	9	24	-	698	0	281	459
Councils	77	1	6	-	110	0	0	43
Catering	7	2	5	-	38	341	0	351
Commerce	26	3	23	-	400	0	8	24
Domestic	5	0	5	-	6	0	0	0
Eng. Iron & Steel	48	8	40	-	1602	5	152	202
Leather & Shoe	4	1	3	-	51	0	0	250
Mining	12	0	12	-	249	0	0	0
Minimum Wage	4	0	4	-	16	0	0	0
Meat Trade	3	0	3	-	60	11	0	11
Transport	13	5	8	-	304	0	0	51
Miscellaneous	34	7	27	-	456	0	0	113
Total-Jan-June	278	46	232	7276	5623	357	478	1653
Percentage	100%	17%	83%	100%	77%	5%	7%	23%
Total-July	50	12	38	1036	699	101	169	337
Percentages	100%	24%	76%	100%	67%	10%	16%	33%
Grand Total	366	70	290	9703	6808	971	11,033	289
Percentages	100%	21%	79%	100%	70%	10%	11%	30%
Total - August	38	18	20	1391	486	513	386	905
Percentages	100%	47%	53%	100%	35%	37%	28%	65%

Source : Monthly Reports, Industrial Relations Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Services, 1983

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