

New Zimbabwe Government

Opportunists Throw Holy Water on Capitulation

In 1940, in the middle of China's war to drive out the Japanese imperialists who occupied much of the country, Mao Tsetung wrote an article analyzing the stages in the revolutionary struggles in China and the colonial and semi-colonial countries generally as they took place in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. He described two stages. The first was aimed at driving out the foreign imperialists and defeating their feudal and capitalist lackeys inside China. In this stage, he described the task of uniting all the forces opposed to imperialism, including sections of the national bourgeoisie. This revolution, he said, "actually serves the purpose of clearing a still wider path for the development of socialism," the second stage of the revolutionary struggle. "Such a revolution," he said, "attacks imperialism at its very roots, and is therefore not tolerated but opposed by imperialism." (Mao, "On New Democracy," *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 344)

For almost a decade the people of Zimbabwe have waged a bitter and heroic war to defeat the white settler rule that has kept them in virtual slavery and to drive out the U.S. and British imperialists who for decades have plundered the land and exploited the people. But surprisingly, now that this struggle has supposedly reached a victorious climax with the British-orchestrated internal settlement and the election triumph of Robert Mugabe and ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union), the main political and fighting force in the war against the Smith regime, the U.S. and British imperialists are not only "tolerating" it, they are downright pleased. In fact, they are crowing about how well things have turned out. "Rhodesia—the clearest outcome and the best" proclaimed the British imperialist newspaper the *Manchester Guardian* after the elections. The *New York Times*, in the finest imperialist "good show, old boy" style, congratulated the British for having "brought an honorable end to another chapter in England's imperial history." "At long last," emoted the *Times*, as if its editors had been fighting in the jungles with the guerrillas these many years, "Rhodesia has been reborn as Zimbabwe. Most important, it has been born free." Now right from the get-go you have got to be suspicious when the imperialists so warmly hail developments in a revolutionary struggle that was largely aimed at themselves. In fact, they see more than a little analogy between what's happened in Zimbabwe and the taming of Elsa the lion made famous a few years ago in the movie "Born Free."

Also interesting is the fact that the U.S. and British imperialists are joined in their enthusiasm over the settlement of the guerrilla war and the course Robert Mugabe has charted as new Prime Minister, by a whole chorus of revisionist and so-called communist groups in the U.S. and around the world, from the Socialist Workers Party and the "Communist" Party USA to the "Communist" Party (M-L) and the "Communist" Workers Party (Workers Viewpoint Organization).

Nothing better typifies the reaction of these groups than an hysterical article in the newspaper of the "Communist" Workers Party, *Workers Viewpoint*, attacking the RCP for daring to raise sharp questions and criticisms of the whole British-engineered "settlement" and for exposing the "Fool's Gold Victory in the Zimbabwe Election" (see *RW*, March 7). As we stated in the *RW*: "This whole election process, or more to the point, the whole 'internal settlement' has in fact resulted in a serious setback for the struggle of the people of Zimbabwe. And to think for a minute that this election of Mugabe has brought the country closer to real independence instead of actually

farther away is indeed an extremely dangerous illusion."

The imperialists certainly do not like to hear this, because they very much want to foster illusions about their neo-colonial grip on Zimbabwe, which Mugabe has given no indication he intends to break—or even challenge. Groups like the Communist Workers Party do not like to hear it because, fundamentally, they do not think it really possible to break with imperialism. In fact, the bottom line in their analysis of developments in Zimbabwe, as with their analysis of Iran, China and so on, is to argue for and justify capitulation to U.S. imperialism.

The *Workers Viewpoint*, like the *Guardian* (U.S. weekly) and other reformist groups, attacks the RCP for "not believing that a third world country can fight off imperialism." Like their defense of what ZANU and Mugabe have done in Zimbabwe, they turn reality on its head. It is not some question in the abstract of whether "ZANU is capable of leading a national democratic revolution against imperialism and taking up the tasks ahead," as *Workers Viewpoint* puts it. It is a question of whether they are doing it or not, and if not, why not. It is not a question in the abstract of whether Mugabe and ZANU will inevitably capitulate to imperialism. It is a very real question of whether they have, and why. It is not a question in the abstract of whether Mugabe and ZANU "have to become either sell-outs to the U.S. imperialists or to the Soviet social-imperialists" as *Workers Viewpoint* falsely claims we say. It is a question of whether their outlook and political line has led or will lead them to do so. These are real questions, questions that the masses of people in the U.S. and revolutionary-minded people of all nationalities all over the world want to know the answer to. They won't thank these pseudo-revolution-

aries one bit for their shuck and jive antics in trying to obscure what is going down in Zimbabwe, any more than, in the long run, they will be taken in by the schemes and "settlements" of the imperialists.

While it was absolutely correct and imperative for revolutionaries in the U.S. and around the world to give wholehearted and active support to the armed struggle of the Zimbabwean people against the U.S. and British imperialists and the racist Smith regime, because it was dealing blows to imperialism, for the same reason, revolutionaries must concretely analyze the direction in which this struggle has been led and criticize and expose Mugabe and ZANU's capitulation to imperialism and the chains of neo-colonial domination in which they are entangling the people of Zimbabwe.

The starting point and fundamental question in analyzing the situation in Zimbabwe today is who, what classes, have political power. Does the election triumph of ZANU and Mugabe represent the seizure of political power by the masses of black people, the urban working class and the rural peasantry and farm laborers? As Mao Tsetung pointed out quite realistically, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun," and as the *RW* stated a couple of weeks ago, "The answer to the question of who has political power in Zimbabwe today is the same as the answer to the question of who controls the military—who commands the guns. And decidedly, it is not the masses of people of Zimbabwe." According to the *Workers Viewpoint*, this is a lie. "Today," they say, "the Zimbabwean masses are still armed!" They dismiss as shrewd tactics Mugabe's decision to make the white Rhodesian military commander—who led the white settler efforts to militarily defeat the liberation struggle, the man responsible for the murder of more than 10,000 freedom fighters—head of the military of the

new "national front government." This, they claim, "shows the mature political level of the ZANU central committee... this is a better condition to disintegrate it (the white army) even further. Even more, this is the best condition to try to control them and at the same time build up ZANU's independent military forces by furnishing it with newer and better weapons."

Unfortunately for this "rose-colored glasses" view, Mugabe himself has taken the opposite stand on arming the masses. Yes, black Zimbabweans may still have weapons, but only because he hasn't had time to collect them all yet. As he said in an interview printed in *Time* magazine, "There must be disarmament of everybody, not only the whites. There are many guns around and we want to remove them. We want this to be achieved in as short a time as possible. The people now have the power, so I don't see any reason why they should have these individual firearms. If we want them to be armed, we will arm them properly." That, of course, is very unlikely. "There can never be a return to the state of armed conflict," Mugabe told a television audience. "It is time to beat our swords into plowshares so that we can attend to the problems of developing our economy and society."

The fact of the matter is that the military power of the white settler regime, much less its economic power and the political power of the imperialists, has not been broken. And Mugabe's plan to allow the main military force of the settler regime, the Rhodesian army, to stay intact, while integrating his guerrilla army into it—under the command of the former leader of that reactionary military force—and disarming the black masses, hardly proves that the popular forces control the gun and political power in Zimbabwe. It argues the opposite. Unable to deny that the military power

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This drawing was recently received by the RW. It was inspired by an article about an RW network in a factory where workers passed the paper around by leaving copies in a drawer for the next shift to find.

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of the white settlers and their imperialist supporters has not been broken, *Workers Viewpoint* attempts to put the best face on this. "Yes," they admit, "there is coexistence of two armed forces as before. The thing that has changed is that ZANU has access to more masses both in the countryside and in the cities." Apparently the fact that before these two armed forces were locked in deadly combat for control of the country (coexistence?) and that now both forces are to be "integrated" under the command of the settler military leader is not a significant change! Not to mention the fact that South African mercenaries still operate inside Zimbabwe and the reactionary South African army sits on Zimbabwe's border ready to move if the need and opportunity presents itself—which is no change at all. And what does it mean to say that ZANU now has more access to the masses? Even *Workers Viewpoint* admits that ZANU controlled 2/3 of the countryside and had strong influence in the cities before the settlement. Are they arguing that they needed the imperialists to give them "access to the masses"?

But even more fundamental than what individual, black or white, gives the orders to the military, is the question of what political line commands the gun. There are numerous cases throughout Africa where black politicians and black generals control black armies—in Tanzania, Zaire, Zambia and Kenya, to mention just a few—and the political line that directs these armies is thoroughly reactionary and subservient to imperialism. These countries waged struggle against the old and open forms of colonialism only to fall into the web of neo-colonialism. These are not new-democratic societies or states under the leadership and control of the revolutionary classes. They are societies under the control of bourgeois elements who are to one degree or

another under the thumb of imperialism. The national liberation struggles in these countries did not ultimately serve the purpose of clearing a still wider path for the development of socialism, but for continued underdevelopment and exploitation, while being sucked more closely into the superpower blocs.

The *Workers Viewpoint*, the *Guardian* and the rest of these opportunists are very upset that the March 7 RW, after describing the post-settlement military situation, stated that the Zimbabwean forces are "virtually sitting ducks for the imperialists' guns," and in describing the situation prior to the elections, said that "essentially, the imperialists were holding a gun to Mugabe and ZANU's head." If this is so, asks *Workers Viewpoint*, full of self-righteous indignation, "Why didn't Britain and the fascists of Smith and South Africa wipe ZANU out during the elections? They could not, precisely because the balance of military force as well as the support of the masses is on ZANU's side!... (the RCP) cannot bring themselves to believe that ZANU outmaneuvered the British and Rhodesian troops on the military front." And further, during the elections "ZANU maintained its military position and engaged the British on the political front (i.e., the elections)."

The answer, which these fellows in their idealist world cannot see, is that the British did not have to. When ZANU agreed to the British-engineered settlement, they had already been sized up and outmaneuvered by the imperialists. The whole purpose of the Lancaster House settlement was to put an end to the guerrilla war and rope ZANU into a settlement that the imperialists could accept as satisfactory for their own interests in the country. Having done that, why should they attack ZANU during the elections and risk breaking the whole thing open again? The unfavorable military situation ZANU walked into by calling its troops into the camps guarded by the British and Rhodesian armies during the election campaign did pose a real threat,

did point a gun at ZANU's head, but even without firing a gun, made it clear who was calling the shots under the terms of the agreement.

Let's just look at the real situation before the settlement. The guerrilla war had dealt severe blows to the Smith regime, and things were rapidly deteriorating for the white settler regime and the imperialists of Britain and the U.S. On the one hand, they feared that if the Zimbabwean forces carried the military struggle through to complete victory, their own hold on the country and the economic and political power of the whites would be irreparably smashed, and further, that the struggle in Zimbabwe would increase the flames of resistance in South Africa. On the other hand, they feared that a prolongation of the war would give new openings to their Soviet imperialist rivals in southern Africa.

They were driven to seek a way to effect some sort of settlement that would short circuit, abort, the armed struggle and create the conditions for them to maintain their hold on the country. There has been a big flurry of propaganda in the British and U.S. media that they and the South Africans were very surprised at the Mugabe-ZANU election victory. Baloney! These imperialists know how to count. They knew that ZANU had a tremendous following and support among the masses of Zimbabwean people because of its leadership of the armed struggle, just as they realized that Bishop Muzorewa had been exposed and discredited after his conciliation with the Smith regime. They also had a pretty good idea that Mugabe and at least the majority of the ZANU leadership could be convinced to be "reasonable" and not try to smash the imperialist and white settler economic domination in the country if elected. And since the elections, they have not stopped congratulating themselves for their astuteness.

And well they should. Not only has Mugabe left the military power of the white settlers intact, he has also proclaimed his intention of not disturbing

their economic holdings either. Neither the bulk of white landholdings (nearly half of all commercial farm output comes from only 6% of the 5500 white farmers who control the most productive land) nor settler and imperialist-controlled industry will be expropriated. Instead, Mugabe has resurrected a plan put forward by Bishop Muzorewa when he was the "interim" Prime Minister under Smith to allocate only government-controlled land and that of absentee landlords to the masses of landless blacks. Even this "underutilized" land, much of it abandoned by white farmers during the guerrilla war, will not be expropriated but purchased. Top priority will be given to the reopening of schools and medical facilities, and to finance this, as well as the purchase of the white farmland, Mugabe has already approached the U.S. and British imperialists for substantial loans and aid.

Of course, some of the most hated aspects of the minority racist rule will be eliminated: curfew and the Smith regime's "camps" for blacks. The civil service will be integrated. And the state broadcasting network will be given a "complete overhaul," reportedly with the help of the British Broadcasting Company (BBC).

Such changes do not add up to the masses taking control of the country. *Workers Viewpoint* tries to argue that they do. In defending the so-called political victory that the Mugabe triumph in the elections supposedly represented, they argue that "ZANU can now use the national broadcasting stations to put forth its line and to mobilize and consolidate the people." So what line are they putting forward and what are they trying to consolidate the people around? In the weeks after the elections, Zimbabwe's cities were hit with massive strikes as thousands of black workers stood up to throw off their slave-like conditions, not wanting to accept them one day longer, and believing that there was no reason to accept them now that, as Mugabe said, "The people have political power."

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The new Zimbabwean Minister of Labor took to the radio to tell everyone to go back to work. In effect he argued that they should not try to take matters into their own hands, that their leaders would make things better for them in due time and that the main thing now was to keep the economy running—the white settler-controlled economy.

Mugabe himself has made a guiding principle of his new government the least possible disruption of the white settler and imperialist interests, promising gradual change sometime off in the future. There will certainly have to be some changes. Everyone, including the British and the U.S., realize that. The people will not long tolerate living in the old way. In his efforts to deal with these demands, without breaking the economic power or expropriating the vast holdings of the imperialists (65% of Rhodesian industry, with the bulk of the rest held by white settlers), Mugabe will "have some help from friends," reports *Newsweek*. "The U.S., Britain and other western governments indicated willingness to help with such priority items as public health and agricultural development." You might even say that the imperialists are eager and anxious to get their hands deeper into Zimbabwe, this time under the guise of aiding the people and their new government. And the Soviet imperialists are right there also, using whatever leverage they have through the liberation organizations.

Workers Viewpoint has cooked up a raggedy "Marxist" theoretical justification for Mugabe's conciliation and capitulation with the white settler military forces and political and economic structure. "Chairman Mao himself entered three united fronts during the Chinese national liberation struggle," they argue. "Mao continuously emphasized the need for and the relationship between the three magic weapons: the communist party, armed struggle and the united front." They might also add that Mao himself warned against the reactionaries who would use his words to defeat what he stood for.

Yes, Mao put forward the necessity of entering united fronts in the struggle against imperialism, a united front of the working class and the masses of people with those forces who objectively opposed imperialist domination. As he said in *On New Democracy*, "No matter what classes, parties or individuals in an oppressed nation join the revolution, and no matter whether they themselves are conscious of the point and understand it, so long as they oppose imperialism, their revolution becomes part of the proletarian socialist world revolution, and they become its allies."

But what argument is the *Workers Viewpoint* making? That by uniting with the military leader of the imperialist-backed white settler regime in Rhodesia, ZANU is entering an anti-imperialist united front? That by temporizing and conciliating with the imperialists themselves, Mugabe has entered a united front with the imperialists and their lackeys against imperialism? Come on! In their efforts to justify ZANU's settlement with the imperialists and white settlers by raising the "three magic weapons," *Workers Viewpoint* manages only to slice up its own arguments.

Objectively, Mugabe and the top leadership of ZANU, along with Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU, represent an aspiring national bourgeoisie. The class forces they represent are able, up to a point, to play an objectively anti-imperialist role, as they did in the long guerrilla struggle against Smith and the British. But they are not able to carry this struggle through to completion or victory. They do not see the power of the masses united in struggle as principal. Rather, they see themselves as "saviors" of the masses. And naturally, they believe that once they themselves are in power, or share power, then the interests of the masses will be served. History has time and again debunked this. In fact, once they are in power, or in this case, to get into

power, they rely not on the masses of people, but on wheeling and dealing with the imperialists, what *Workers Viewpoint* calls "outmaneuvering" the imperialists. But in the realm of the wheeling and dealing of bourgeois politics, the Mugabes are late-comers and outclassed. They use the struggle of the masses as leverage for their own advancement and end up dragging the country into neo-colonialism.

Underlying *Workers Viewpoint's* distortion of the reality of developments in Zimbabwe today is their own thinly disguised embrace of the "3 worlds" theory, made an international "strategic concept" by the Chinese revisionists after Mao's death. This "theory" is not based on advancing the interests of world revolution, but is based on sacrificing support for revolutionary struggles with the justification of uniting countries against the "main danger" of the Soviet Union. Because the "three worlds" strategy of the Chinese is a recipe for capitulation, it has found ardent supporters in many countries throughout the world among those self-styled "Marxists" anxious to grab hold of any justification for capitulating to their own bourgeoisie. They have found this "theory" a handy justification for ignoring and in fact opposing the genuine struggles for national liberation in the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, or for jumping in to say right on, right on, you've won, you've won, stop fighting, when the U.S. imperialists or their allies find a way to temporarily cool things out.

This same capitulation to U.S. imperialism is seen in the *Workers Viewpoint* (and CPML, and the rest) analysis of developments in Iran. While protesting that U.S. imperialism remains the main enemy of the Iranian people, *Workers Viewpoint* argues that the Iranians should drop their demand for the return of the Shah and conciliate with the U.S. because "the Soviet invasion (of Afghanistan) changed the balance of forces facing the Iranian people," and they go on to argue that the Iranian people cannot and should not "take on both superpowers at the same time." (i.e. take on the Soviets, not the U.S.)

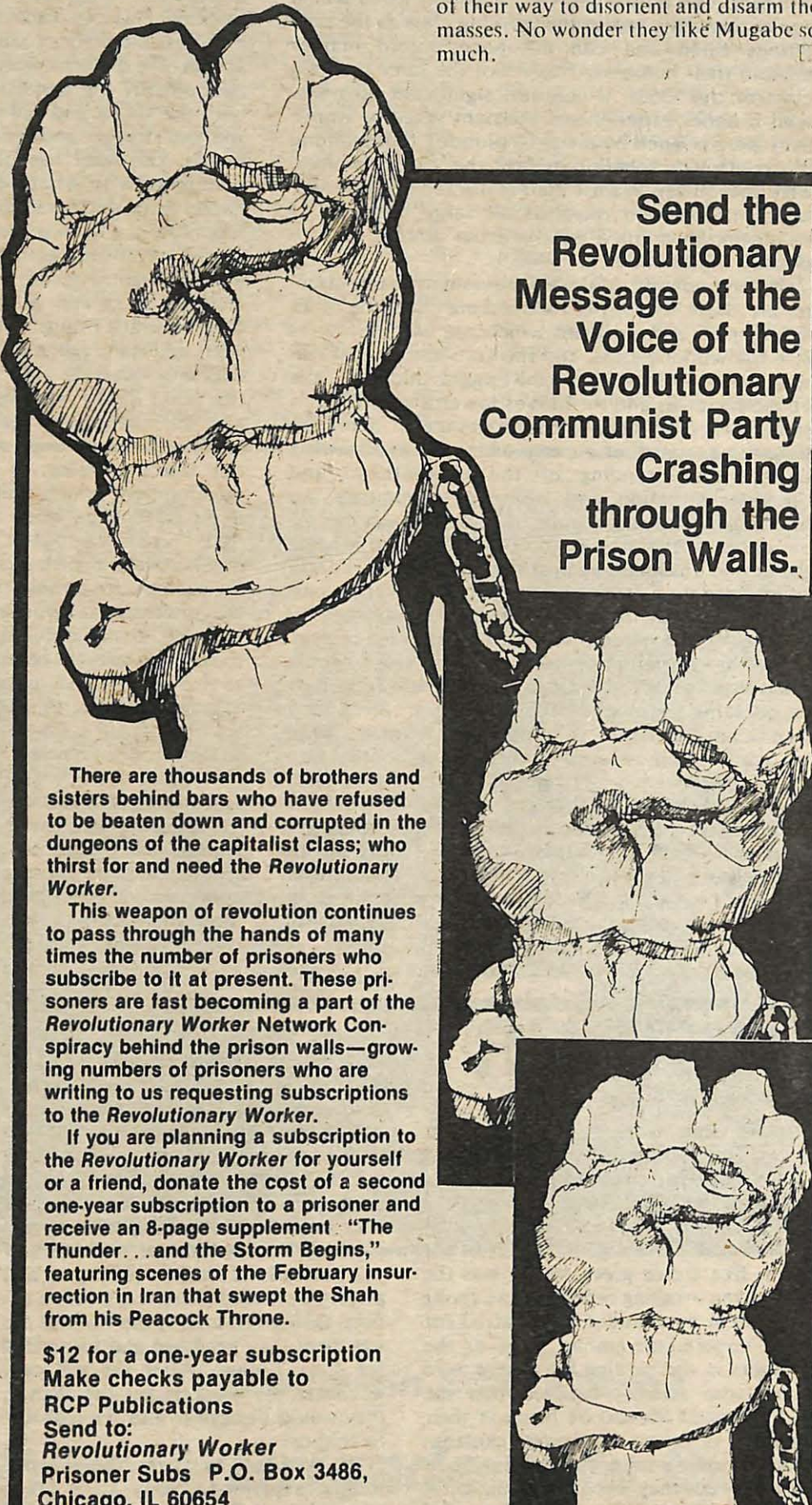
In defending Iranian president Bani-Sadr's attempts to conciliate with the U.S. (efforts already challenged and rebuffed on several occasions by the militant students and revolutionaries) constructs the same dream world argument that they have with Mugabe and ZANU in Zimbabwe: Since victory has already been won against U.S. imperialism, any deals or compromises made with these imperialists are just fine, particularly if it clears the decks for opposing the Soviets. It's no coincidence that these are the same arguments made by the U.S. imperialists themselves. As it is for the Chinese, this three world's theory is nothing more than a raggedy excuse for colluding and capitulating to U.S. imperialism. The people of the "third world" must unite with the people of western Europe and Japan (who must in turn unite with their own capitalists) and the unite with the U.S. imperialists to take on the Soviets.

In the end, *Workers Viewpoint* is reduced to the pathetic argument that "even if a right-wing coup comes, who speaks for Zimbabwe is settled. Now with even more legitimacy and authority, ZANU has the right to organize the resources of the government and of the country." With the settlement, ZANU has been able to "gain worldwide and domestic legitimacy and support for their military fight" (which, of course, they have abandoned). But in whose eyes are they supposedly seeking legitimacy? ZANU always claimed, and rightly so, that they had legitimacy in the eyes of the masses of Zimbabwean people, a legitimacy gained in seven years of armed struggle against the Smith regime. They certainly had legitimacy in the eyes of revolutionaries and other progressive people who support the liberation of Zimbabwe from minority rule and imperialist domination. What *Workers Viewpoint* means is now they have legitimacy in the eyes of the imperialists and in "diplomatic circles." But that legitimacy came not because of the election victory, but because they agreed to play ball.

Presumably *Workers Viewpoint* would have also argued that the people of China, led by Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, should not have driven Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang off the mainland, but entered into a coalition government with them in 1949 so that they could have had legitimacy in the eyes of the imperialists.

The principal aspect of *Workers Viewpoint's* defense of Mugabe and ZANU's capitulation is their own willingness to conciliate with and cover for U.S. imperialism. But there is also a secondary, and no less disgusting, aspect of their antics: their own efforts to gain "legitimacy" by trying to capitalize on the spontaneous sentiments

among many Black people in the U.S. for continued support for ZANU, and by playing up to reformist and reactionary Black nationalists who don't really care if a government or party or individual is anti-imperialist, only that they be black and in power. Hence their silly and sad attempts to paint the RCP as racist for daring to criticize black leaders and organization in Zimbabwe. These games they play only emphasize the fact that they really do not give a damn whether the people of Zimbabwe are in the process of winning genuine liberation from imperialism and the white Rhodesian reactionaries or not. Once again, the *Workers Viewpoint*, like their fellow revisionists and pseudo-revolutionaries, have gone out of their way to disorient and disarm the masses. No wonder they like Mugabe so much. □



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Correction

In last week's issue of the *RW*, the article on page 4 reporting on the international meeting in Paris to support the struggle to keep Bob Avakian and the Mao Defendants free contained incorrect names of two of the organizations that helped organize the meeting or sent messages. One is a group in France, the *Marxist-Leninist Communist Organization Proletarian Way*, and the other is a Marxist-Leninist organization in Tunisia, *Ech-Choola*.