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The Interests Of The Workers And Landless Peasants Shall Be Paramount

RADICAL ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION: ANOTHER BOURGEOIS SWINDLE

Following his State of the Nation Address, President Zuma declared 2017 the year of radical economic transformation. Mr. Zuma, speaking with a forked tongue, proclaimed that a key aim is to change the structure and patterns of ownership of the economy in favour of all South Africans, particularly the poor (State of the Nation Address (SONA 2017)). In a class divided society, if transformation is for all South Africans and the poor, then whose class interests will radical economic transformation ultimately serve? One of its key pillars, in order to fast track land reform, is the expropriation of land without compensation. This caused quite a buzz amongst mainstream bourgeois media talking heads. Charlatans like the Black Land First, proponents of a hollow black nationalism, peddled this as a radical move by President Zuma.

On closer examination it becomes abundantly clear that radical economic transformation is nothing but a bourgeois swindle advanced by the petty bourgeois leadership of the ANC tied to the apron strings of the capitalists, shackling the entire oppressed masses to capitalism and imperialism. Politically it is just another sedative in the arsenal of the petty bourgeois to dull the revolutionary ferment of the landless peasantry and working class.

Land expropriation without compensation has been a central demand of the landless and working class during post apartheid South Africa. With only 8 million of 82 million hectares transferred to black people since 1994 and, amidst the unremitting agrarian crisis experienced by rural labour and the landless peasantry in the countryside, expropriation

of land without compensation should be a welcoming reprieve to these toiling masses. In this SONA Mr. Zuma nailed his colours to the mast emphatically stating, amongst other things, that the government will implement the commercialisation of black smallholder farmers. This is nothing else but the de-racialising of the agrarian economy by fast tracking the establishment of a black capitalist farming class that will continue the super exploitation of agricultural workers. This encapsulates the mirage of radical economic transformation: a state laid bridge for the black petty bourgeois to loot and accumulate.

Tied to a clear political programme land expropriation without compensation is an important demand, as the APDUSA programme elucidates, whose logical conclusion is: A resolution of the land question in accordance with the needs of those who work (workers) and live off the land (peasants). This means the destruction of all existing tribal and feudal relations in the rural areas and the nationalisation of the land, without compensation. A new division of the land and its management, which excludes forced collectivisation, the payment of rent and the expropriation of small peasant farmers, must be undertaken by committees that are democratically elected by and answerable to the people.

The conquest of power by the working class allied by the landless peasantry to build socialist democracy, engulfing the entire Southern Africa, is the only real step towards radical economic transformation. ●

A NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE TO MAXIMISE EXPLOITATION?

The Deputy President signed the National Minimum Wage agreement on 7 February 2017 at the offices of the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) . It is set to come into effect on 1 May 2018 and pegs the lowest earnings at R20/hour. Loopholes inside this minimum wage plan show that it is aimed at maximising super-exploitation.

Despite the best efforts of Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, his announcement contained nothing for workers to celebrate. How is it possible to be jovial about the abject misery of 6,6 million super-exploited workers? This, he could not hide

from the spotlight of the world media. Why must 41% of workers in our wealthy country be forced to survive on this pittance? The fat report of the ➔

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➡ National Minimum Wage Commission never answered this cardinal question. Judging from the theatrics of Ramaphosa and the experts on their National Minimum Wage Commission, it is a question which they want to dodge. He looked like someone implicated in a scandal and forced into a public confession; a wealthy man embarrassed to tell workers that there is no end in sight to their suffering.

Ramaphosa conceded, repeatedly, that joblessness will worsen if there is only a slight rise in the national minimum wage. But he echoed the same logic to argue why a *living wage* is not on government's agenda. Yet he did not pinpoint any chief obstacles and was quick to elaborate on strings of benefits from the minimum wage for capitalists. Companies can apply for countless exemptions. Workers employed in government's farcical public works programme, with its pitiful stipends, are excluded.

COSATU did not sign the agreement. Neither did they oppose the flawed plan. They issued a defensive press statement a few days afterwards, betraying their stance with sugar-coated poison: "The NMW is a product of the workers' living wage struggles since the 1980s, and the product of continuous pressure by workers and their federation COSATU." (S. Pamla, COSATU National Spokesperson, 9/2/2017).

It is not surprising for these union bureaucrats to talk-up this agreement as a victory for workers. After all, they have been part of the behind the scenes wheeling-and-dealing. With ease they have slipped into their old job to shackle workers to the bankrupt politics of the ANC. In their view "...both

President Jacob Zuma and Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa deserve equal credit for the strides that have been made by government to introduce a legislated National Minimum Wage." (COSATU National Spokesperson, 9/2/2017) Their praise for the ANC literally knows no boundaries!

A week later, Statistics South Africa confirmed the shocking jobless numbers: 26.5% of our workforce is without a job (it leaps to 35.6% when they count in so-called discouraged workers). In other countries this is known as depression-era unemployment levels (above 25%). This means that South African working people have endured a depression for decades!

Research published in The Financial Mail has revealed the growing divide between workers and bosses. This magazine reports that "...the average executive earned 21 times the average worker's salary. But when bonuses were included, CEOs pocketed a total package 47 times bigger than their average worker's pay." (Financial Mail, 16/2/ 2017).

Basic pay-gap studies only expose a tiny part of income inequality. They obscure the capital-labour relation that forms the basis for extracting profit from exploitation. These calculations overlook a critical fact: the minority that own capital (bosses) are not the same as the working majority who must live from the sale of their labour power (workers). In other words, if workers as the primary producers do not seize control of the means of production, they cannot uplift their working and living conditions. But this requires fighting for state power with a political organisation firmly grounded on the demands and aspirations of working people. ●

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR WORKERS IN THE CURRENT EMPLOYMENT BLOODBATH?

How will the ANC government reverse the unemployment trend which recently increased to more than 27%? After seeing jobless growth for nearly a decade up to 2007, the economy of South Africa started to haemorrhage jobs from 2009 onwards. This process started in the wake of job shedding for nearly a decade in the textile and mining industries. The years 2016 and 2017 revealed a bloodbath again within these sectors, coupled with mass retrenchment that are currently being experienced in the poultry industry. This is despite a situation especially in the textile industry where the union SACTWU, was prepared to allow employers to employ workers at 20% less than the Bargaining Council wage agreement.

The impact of poverty and hunger will hit all of these workers and their dependents when the small severance packages dry up. The textile industry sits in a situation where an entire household would normally work for the same company as the industry has a history of recruiting their workforce through family relations. You thus find a situation where a mother, daughter and son work for the same factory

and when it closed down the whole support structure within this family is destroyed.

It was reported that more than 1 500 poultry farm workers have lost their jobs in 2016, while well over 3 000 poultry farm workers are in the process of being retrenched as companies are closing down. Earlier this month, AngloGold Ashanti announced plans to retrench about 850 employees. It is reported that one mineworker supports up to eight dependents. This came with the news that the amended Mineral Resources and Petroleum Development Amendment Bill will limit any future mining permits to majority black-owned South African companies. This offers endless enrichment opportunities for the political connected.

The merger of SAB Miller and ABInBev resulted in another exercise of retrenchment as some of the midlevel and senior management positions are being deemed redundant. These unlucky persons will be offered voluntary retrenchment packages. The same might happen when the current merger talks between PPC Cement and Afrisam are completed during this period. ➡

➔ Sub-contracting and casualisation is becoming the order of the day. All this means that huge numbers of the working class and landless peasantry are trapped in grinding poverty. The ANC government response to this crisis was to announce a minimum wage of R20 per hour with great fanfare.

According to experts on a Lynette Francis program on “Radio Sonder Grense” ,50 percent of the working population earns less than this. In Parliament, President Jacob Zuma claimed that The Expanded Public Works Programme created 2.5 million “job opportunities”. From 2014-16 these opportunities lasted only three months and amounted to only a fifth of the target set by in the National Development Plan. These jobs pay just R84/day, half the R20/hour agreed as per the new minimum wage. And R20/hour still leaves a family of four

well below the poverty line.

World Capitalism is in a crisis and South Africa shows just another symptom of this crisis!

What is to be done?

The South African working class is still held hostage by the notion that political parties within the parliament that was formed after the negotiated settlement will solve the socio economic problems. These parties are governed by the constitution which was negotiated based on the requirements of the Brettonwood agreements. In other words, a capitalist constitution and all these ills cannot be addressed by the capitalists as it is not in their interests. We therefore call for a constituent assembly that will and must address the interests of the working class and landless peasantry. ●

SHOULD WE BE THANKFUL FOR THE BENEFITS OF COLONIALISM?

A recent tweet by Helen Zille highlighted some of the benefits of colonialism; this she had done to the embarrassment of (mostly) her black party members and the fury of most South Africans. Apparently, we should have some degree of appreciation for the progress that colonialism brought in areas such as health care and infrastructural development, if one may paraphrase broadly. Needless to say, those who were on the receiving end of colonialism, responded with justified rage and indignation. Faced with an inevitable and acrimonious Party response and an impending disciplinary hearing, the Western Cape Premier reluctantly retracted her statement and issued an apology. She subsequently reverted to some defence of her initial utterances by criticising that the tendency of political correctness takes precedence over historical correctness. Notwithstanding the obvious irony and political opportunism of acting politically correct by apologising for a view that one regards as historically correct, the Premier also demonstrated how deeply rooted the poisonous ideas are in the colonial minds of those who have reaped the sweet fruits of a system designed solely for their comfort, convenience and the extraction of super profits. What is deliberately omitted in Zille's arrogant and imperial assertion, is the incontrovertible fact that an advanced infrastructure like railroads, bridges as well as health care were all geared at achieving the overarching objective of exploiting all the continent's resources (especially human labour) to the fullest extent possible under Colonialism. Let it also be stated that in spite of all these achievements, the oppressed masses were never allowed to share in them.

They were consciously relegated by the privileged and 'intellectually advanced' Colonial Masters to the dustbins of history; this, after they succumbed to the atrocities of the most inhumane socio-political and economic system imaginable to the human mind. The examples of health care and road infrastructure, ironically (to add insult to injury) were of the lowest quality in the specially reserved

Bantustans and the remaining 13% pockets of arid land in which the oppressed had to eke out a miserable living. Poverty related diseases such as TB (among others) could not be adequately contained in poorly resourced hospitals and worsened in many instances. A preponderance of fatal mine accidents and lung diseases decimated men in townships and rural communities, for they were merely and tragically, regarded by their colonial masters as expendable commodities. These are immutable facts of the history of colonialism, not just in South Africa, but globally where the system reared its ugly head. The final point to be made here, is that the colonial benefit sentiment is oblivious of two facts: (i) The oppressed were used to build the much-acclaimed infrastructural networks and hospitals; and (ii) They were deliberately and legally withheld from an education that could provide them with the knowledge of engaging in such engineering projects. Let us not forget the grim views of arch-imperialist and arch-racist Cecil John Rhodes and Verwoerd who sniggered at the mere thought of teaching a black person mathematics, the foundation of any scientific field.

Another more insidious proposition and not necessarily explicitly expressed in Helen Zille's colonial assertion, is that the finest achievements linked to social progress could be put at the doorstep of those of colonial or European origin. For who are most of these colonial masters than those of especially Western European descent? This is where even alluding to such an assertion or view, assumes a critical dimension that lends itself to prejudice at least and unbridled racism at most. Zille's point of departure insofar as her recollection of history is concerned, is utterly partial, mechanistic and devoid of any understanding of dialectical materialism as expressed in its natural form or historical materialism as expressed in its social form. Dialectical materialism adheres to an inevitable dynamic of movement or growth within the make-up of organisms, and inevitably affect their behaviour. This growth invariably follows a trajectory from a ➔

➡ lower order to a higher order. Brought about by a biological evolutionary process known as embryology, organisms develop and grow from for instance, babies to adults. Historical processes adhere to the self-same developmental patterns and as explained by historical materialism, this growth trajectory imitates the natural process. Thus we find generally, society moving from savagery to barbarism and eventually civilisation. Why is it necessary to make such a cumbersome point? The answer is simple: Life is not static. History is not static. The claimed achievements of these colonial rulers, their scientists and engineers etc. are the result of the achievements of humanity before them. Here we can confidently cite the Sumerians and Phoenicians who developed the foundations of writing, the Egyptians who contributed invaluable to the science of modern-day medicine with their advanced embalming techniques and surgical procedures and the Middle-Eastern and Indian mathematicians who have all played an invaluable role in advancing society. Yet, this is not held before the rest of humanity as a reminder of how appreciative we should be of them. That goes without saying. ALL of humanity has contributed to these great historical epochs. Let Mrs Zille also be reminded that it was due to the compass which the Chinese invented, that the colonial masters could reach the shores of 'undiscovered' continents. It was the Chinese gunpowder recipe which led to their military conquest of these continents. We evolved fundamentally from one-celled organisms to homo-sapiens and are all endowed with the same genetic material and four blood types A, B, AB and O. Changing material conditions such as climate and mainly our perpetual struggles for access to resources, saw us scattered all over the earth through glacial paths that still connected continents then. Most remarkable about all of this, is the fact that we originated as a single species, which after thousands of years of adapting to different material conditions, underwent cosmetic physiological changes like skin colour. These cosmetic differences have formed the basis of the biggest myth foisted on humanity - RACE. The WC Premier, by ignoring this scientific fact, perpetuates this race myth even

further! Today, in spite of our indisputable oneness, we still create the most precipitous cultural, religious and political adversity. Emphasis is placed on differences and basically set the scene for the trail of internecine destruction that has come to characterise history.

Much more can be said about the benefits of our commonalities as opposed to our differences but that is a treatise on its own. Suffice at this point to state categorically the following irrefutable truths:

- Whoever claims success or victory in any meaningful social endeavour, does so on behalf of the human species as a whole;
- Race is a myth that has NO scientific basis;
- The fundamentals of science, mathematics and literacy as well as the vital agricultural industry emerged from regions outside of Europe;
- Civilisations in China 5000 years B.C. existed as advanced societies before the advent of so called Western Civilisation;
- Later, stages of savagery produced highly advanced technologies for its time, especially in the regions of Asia, India, the Middle East and North Africa;
- The architectural wonders of the pyramids and Inca temples serve as monumental testimony to the mathematical and engineering genius of those societies;
- Central Asia and Southern Africa is currently the most scientifically plausible regions as the cradle of human kind;
- The introduction of the slave trade, especially African slavery saw the unprecedented growth of the world economy especially the Western economies.
- Knowledge that transformed human cultures were mainly spread through trade between Europe and those outside her borders;
- Knowledge is thus the preserve of ALL humanity which no single group can stake a claim to;

There is only one type of civilisation and that is human civilisation. The Colonialists are part of that civilisation, not above it or the creators of it. We are not indebted to an oppressor but to the progressive forces who aim to take society forward! ●

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO AGRICULTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA: THE CASE OF THE PHILIPPI HORTICULTURAL AREA

Africa as a continent faces many challenges, most tangible among these, that of food security. It is estimated that 250 million Africans are chronically malnourished, with 40% of children under the age of 5 years experiencing stunted mental and physical development. A Global Hunger Index, released by the 'International Food Policy Research Institute' in 2014, places Sub-Saharan Africa at the top of regions/countries afflicted by this problem. Some of these countries are facing mortality rates as high as 15-18% amongst children under 5 years of age. This is directly due to hunger.

Africa has the largest tracts of arable land

coupled with amongst the biggest and youngest workforces in the world. This begs the question why do we find ourselves in the midst of this crisis and what are the options and mind shifts needed to eradicate this problem?

Alternative farming, as viewed within the capitalist order, has been postulated as a possible vehicle towards solving the current food crisis in the world. Within this capitalist agricultural context, it can be defined as " a systematic approach to farming, intended to reduce agricultural pollution, enhance sustainability and improve efficiency and profitability." It focuses on those farming ➡

➔ practices that are consistent with its ideal. This holds far-reaching implications for amongst others natural resources management and lifestyle philosophies conducive to environmental care and community building/social upliftment.

Let us look at the case of the Philippi Horticultural Area (PHA) and the proposed Oakland City housing developments within its borders. The PHA is an important agricultural area spanning 3000ha, 30 minutes' drive from the Cape Town central business area. It contains fertile farmland and acts as a natural recharge area for the Cape Flats aquifer. It is estimated that the PHA produces as much as 50% of the fresh vegetable needs of Cape Town and its surrounds and provides work to many in the formal and the informal working sector, contributing to food-security for the poor. In 2012 a proposal was tabled at a MAYCO meeting to change the 'Cape Town Spatial Development Framework'. Its purpose was to alter the urban edge line in order to allow a change of designation from 'agricultural area of significant value' to 'urban development', thereby opening the door for 300ha within the PHA to be allocated towards a housing development. This proposal was turned down. At a MAYCO meeting in August 2016 however, a decision was made in support of the proposed housing development.

Concerns from interest groups and farmers were simply ignored in pursuit of short-term economic gain. Some of these concerns include

- Encroaching of the urban zone on valuable agricultural land
- A threat to food-security of the poor and marginalised
- Loss of income and livelihood of the affected people
- The environmental impact of construction activities within the PHA and its detrimental effect on the already pressurised Cape Flats aquifer.

Against the backdrop of alternative approaches to current agricultural practices the PHA serves as an example of how food insecurity for millions could be addressed within capitalism. At a time when there is an active drive towards creating 'greener' urban spaces for the improvement of quality of life, we can ill-afford the compromise of the PHA. It sets an unhealthy precedent which can only lead to further losses to working class communities in the greater Cape Town area.

The struggles for food-security, rational agricultural practices and progressive environmental policies must be conducted as one, guided by a political programme.

THE FIGHT FOR URBAN LAND FOR AGRICULTURAL LIVELIHOODS

The Western Cape Department of Human Settlements is involved in a protracted struggle to remove livestock farmers on the edge of the City of Cape Town. In October 2016 the Department issued eviction notices to the Ithemba Farmers Association and Penhill Residents Small Farmers Co-operative Association. As long-term urban residents they have engaged in livestock production and crop farming since the mid-1980s and 1994 respectively. The Ithemba Farmers Association comprises 175 members occupying approximately 70ha of land whereas the Penhill Farmers Association consists of 269 members occupying 200 hectares of land currently owned by the Department of Human Settlements.

Instead of addressing the pressing land hunger in the city by strengthening the land rights of these occupiers the department wants to expel them from the land to make way for mixed development. According to Human Settlements mixed development include "residential uses, social facilities and amenities, commercial, business and industrial uses". As a solution Human Settlements is offering to squeeze both the Ithemba and Penhill farmers on 40ha of land currently occupied by the Penhill farmers with no guarantee that every farmer will be accommodated on the land. In essence the department wants to evict Penhill farmers to make way for the Ithemba farmers. What a textbook

demonstration of the tactic of divide and rule! The number of livestock and land use will also be severely limited. This poisoned chalice, offered as a solution, will effectively render a sizeable number of the Ithemba and Penhill farmers once more landless, continuing the callous history of dispossession. It clearly shows that the interests of the different layers of government is completely opposed to the landless and working class.

Urban land occupations for livestock production upend the misleading claim by left formations and pundits that maintain the peasantry has completely disappeared from the landscape of South Africa. As I. B. Tabata forewarned, "Whoever flounders on the agrarian question is lost". Such individuals or left formations will "lead the movement into the swamps of opportunism". These types of urban land occupations for agricultural livelihoods are revealing of a central contention of the APDUSA that migrants to the city do not abandon their peasant outlook despite being culturally, socially and economically assimilated into the city. In a city like Cape Town research suggest that the city comprises 54% migrant households, 40% mixed households and 4% non-migrant households. In fact circular migration to cities has increased during the post apartheid era with households maintaining their linkages to the countryside. Migrants are part of both urban and ➔

➡ rural households and continue to invest in rural homesteads and livestock. The agrarian question continues to be a fundamental problem of South African society.

In order to avert the imminent threat of eviction and to advance the broader quest for radical anti capitalist agrarian reform the urban livestock farmers need to understand that theirs is a political struggle. The illusion that the bourgeois courts will solve their land hunger is a political cul-de-sac. As a first step unity on a principled basis between the

livestock farmers is essential to execute the struggle for land. This has to be extended to a broader alliance with the working class and landless peasantry in both the city and countryside advancing the struggle for land on an independent basis with a clear political programme. The immense land hunger in the cities and countryside can only be solved through a complete overhaul of the existing unequal landholding system and the ushering in of a new division of the land in the interest of the landless peasants and workers on an independent basis. •

A NEW GROUP AREAS ACT

The Bromwell Street struggle for decent housing in Woodstock reflects once again the ruthlessness of the capitalists and their flagrant disregard for the working class. These residents face imminent eviction by the City of Cape Town and relocation to a desolate area far removed from either their current jobs or job opportunities closer to the city. Destitute communities and so-called backyard dwellers are all too familiar with the now common practice by the DA-led Western Cape government of relocating poor residents to glorified shanty towns that are far removed from major economic hubs and decent amenities.

In the past, black disenfranchised communities were forcibly removed from prime property earmarked for white residential or commercial development. The oppressed fought bravely against this form of tyranny and many heroically lost their lives in a relentless pursuit of justice and equality. Then came 1994 and ex-president, Nelson Mandela, boldly declared that SA would never again tolerate the oppression of one human being by another. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

Private property (including majority ownership of large corporations) remained firmly in the hands of white monopoly capital, now shared by a tiny minority black bourgeois class. This wholesale betrayal of working class interests by a self-serving

ruling class, ensured that prime property still remains in mostly rich white hands. But these capitalists and their lackeys are not satisfied. In addition to state capture by corporates and large-scale corruption by government officials, the latest deception is a new group areas act, not based on skin colour, but people's economic status in life.

People are relocated to areas that their new oppressors deem fit for them. So much for integrated communities! Today, the Blikkiesdorpe and pathetic RDP human settlements where people languish in abject poverty and face endless service delivery problems, bear shocking testimony to the exploitative and dehumanising nature of capitalism. In the case of Bromwell Street, it is a desolate piece of land called Wolwerivier nearly 30 km from the CBD and job opportunities. Ironically, through an insidious process of gentrification, areas like Woodstock are beautified and housing units are rented or sold at exorbitant prices; this by the self-same investors who benefited from Apartheid and who have now co-opted their spineless black lackeys. The inequalities in landownership and property relations can only be resolved by a government which promotes the interests of the working class and landless peasantry. Capitalism is incapable of doing this as it puts profit before people and the planet. •

Helen Zille's 2017 State Of The Province Address

The premier of the Western Cape, Helen Zille used the opportunity of the 17 February State of the Province address to smugly advocate her usual toxic provincialism and the associated racialism that it accompanies. Her speech was littered with references to the 'exceptionalism' of the Western Cape and the 'good governance' of her party, the Democratic Alliance. Her political alliances and political utterances clearly marks her out as a representative of the international and the national bourgeoisie. She portrayed the supposed achievements of the provincial government, since 2009, as something that should be emulated by others, especially the ANC. Any party who measures its political and economic performance against the ANC as being positive, clearly ignores the fact that there is not much to use as a yardstick; ask the

millions of workers and landless peasants who daily suffer under the yoke of their capitalist order. The rampant corruption and maladministration of the ANC will make any remnants of the old dispensation appear squeaky clean.

Her comments on land reform, employment, unemployment and housing (amongst others) warrants closer scrutiny. In listing the successes of the DA and the failures of the ANC, Mrs Zille effectively, though unintentionally makes a strong argument for provinces to be done away with immediately. These provinces continue to exist at the behest of these two parties who still find it a useful measure to divide those forces whose class interests are opposed to that of the capitalist ruling class, whose interests Mrs Zille champions with vigour. Therefore, the objective need exists for ➡

➡ the lopsided and uneven economic wealth accumulation and distribution in the country to be addressed by a new, democratically elected Constituent Assembly. Its main task must be to make laws in the class interests of the working class and landless peasantry who produce the wealth of this country. Zille's government's holding exercise regarding urban and rural land reform/redistribution hardly makes a difference to present land ownership and distribution patterns in the Western Cape province.

A Constituent Assembly, representing primarily

the interests of the working class and the landless peasantry must be tasked with tackling the job creation issue in ways the present government will not consider doing at all: shortening of the work week; a sliding scale of wages etc. It will require a national government, ruling a unitary state without artificially created tribal, ethnic, provincial and minority interests' boundaries, to deal with these matters – decisively. APDUSA calls on all forces whose general political outlook aligns with this narrative to rally behind this call. We say no to continued bourgeois rule. ●



From Around the World

Trump's Election And Its Implications For Africa

Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential elections has shocked far more citizens in the US and the rest of the world than those who have hailed his triumph. This deeply divisive figure, xenophobe, misogynist, climate change denier and racist, will assume the presidency of the only superpower in the world. This billionaire's election campaign with its focus on an attack of the establishment, his tirades against illegal Mexican immigrants and calling for a ban on Muslims entering the US, succeeded in attracting sections of the white working class, whose lives had been blighted by unemployment and poverty wages as a result of the onslaught of neoliberalism and the financial crisis of 2007. This crisis affected the middle class as well and many rallied to Trump's side. He owes much of his success in the campaign to his demagogic skills. But as he takes on his presidential role, he will require much more than his demagogy to deal with the disaffected, who will be waking up to the fact that they have been deceived.

Donald Trump's victory was gained at the expense of Hilary Clinton's defeat. These two candidates were among the most unpopular in the history of US presidential elections. Hilary Clinton, who as the first woman US presidential candidate, would have been expected to attract female voters from many parts of the political spectrum, but failed to do so. Many black women, deeply opposed to Trump, were not enthused by Clinton and failed to go to the polling booths. She was identified by many of the disaffected in the US as a prominent member of the establishment for over twenty- five years and tied to Wall Street. So they turned to Trump. Many of the youth, hungry for progressive policies turned to the ageing senator, Bernie Sanders who inspired millions and proclaimed himself as a socialist. There was no way that the bosses in control of the Democratic party machine would endorse Sanders as the Democratic candidate. He chose to support Clinton as against Trump after she won the primaries to become the Democratic candidate.

The formation of an independent socialist party

remains a burning issue in US politics. Trump, who was scorned by the Republican hierarchy before his nomination in the primaries only gained their endorsement in the fight against Clinton for the presidency. Ideologically, the ruling classes in the US as elsewhere, are facing a crisis of legitimacy. They are losing control of the electoral process as is graphically illustrated by Trump's victory in the Republican primaries and the Brexit vote in Britain.

Trump's victory stirred deeply reactionary forces both in the US, Europe and the rest of the world. There is heightened tension between the rival imperialist powers, the US, Russia and China. In choosing his cabinet Trump turned to corporate US, to flawed politicians and retired army generals. He nominated Steven Mnuchin, a former Goldman Sachs executive as Treasury Secretary, Rex Tillerson, Chief Executive of Exxon Mobil, the biggest fossil fuel company in the world, as Secretary of State and Scott Pruitt, a close ally of the fossil fuel industry as head of the Environmental Protection Agency. This is the most anti-environment cabinet in history. His Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, was previously rejected as a judge because of racist comments. His national Security Adviser, Michael Flynn, a retired army general is outspoken in his views of the threat posed by Islamist militancy. With the deeply flawed Trump at the helm, this cabinet, more isolationist and protectionist than previous US administrations, will not act against corporate US business interests. Instead of promoting sustainable forms of energy as would have been expected following the US ratification of the Paris agreement on climate change, it will almost certainly encourage increased fossil fuel extraction and sales. It will also clamour for increased production and sales of armaments.

In Europe, far right wing parties like Marine Le Pen's National Front in France and fascist parties, are acclaiming Trump's victory. Le Pen stands a chance of coming on top in the presidential elections in 2017. Trump's latest call for the US to "greatly strengthen and expand its nuclear capability until ➡

➡ such time as the world comes to its senses regarding nukes”, further raises questions of his judgement in world affairs. The Guardian newspaper, the media representative of the liberal bourgeoisie in Britain in an editorial commented “Americans have elected their most unpredictable and dangerous president of all time.” As Trump steps into the presidential office, not only will America be living more dangerously but so will the rest of the world.

Trump’s victory in the elections cast shadow a on the struggle of feminists all over the world, none more so than in Africa. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the Liberian president and first woman to be elected as a head of state in Africa was quoted as saying “We are extremely saddened by this missed opportunity on the part of the people of the United States to join smaller democracies in ending the marginalisation of women.” In Africa, it is not only feminists who are alarmed at Trump’s accession to power. Environmentalists fear that he will sabotage the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In Africa, as in

other parts of the global South, populations are suffering from the effects of climate change after years of inaction by rich countries like the US.

The rich countries need to increase their pledges to cut pollution and increase financial support to the poorer countries in their fight against global warming. Africa needs to turn away from its reliance on the export of oil and gas, minerals and cash crops and turn its attention to growing its own food. Trump and his cabinet as the most likely champion of fossil fuels rather than sustainable energy, face confrontation with environmentalists not only in Africa but the rest of the world

Trump is expected to continue the expansion of AFRICOM (United States African Command), the US military arm in Africa, to maintain its hold on the continent. It will remain involved in “the war on terror” in Africa from Libya and Mali to Kenya and Nigeria. It is not unlikely that in protecting its interests in Africa, it will come up against China, a rising power in the world. ●

Privatisation Of Health Services In England – Implications For The Working Class And Poor

The situation facing the National Health Service (NHS) in England was described recently by the chief executive of the British Red Cross as “a humanitarian crisis”. The British Red Cross has been providing support as dozens of hospitals and the ambulance services struggle to keep up with demand. He said his organisation was on the “frontline” as they had to “help get people home from hospital and free up much needed beds”. There were press reports of patients dying in ambulances queuing up outside Accident and Emergency departments (A&Es), waiting to discharge their patients to the care of the clinical staff.

The Prime Minister of the Tory Government, Theresa May in reply to questions about long waits for emergency care and patients left in corridors of hospitals, dismissed the Red Cross statement as “irresponsible” and “overblown” and simply a situation of increased demand in winter, which would soon ease. She was not prepared to admit that the acute shortage of beds was due to her policy of underfunding the NHS. Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader accused her of being “in denial”. Cancer patients requiring surgery have their operations cancelled because of lack of beds and patients in A&Es have to wait for long hours as the staff try to cope with the growing number of emergency cases. Some older patients fit to be discharged from hospital remain there because the social care they require at home cannot be provided for them . It is clear to millions of people throughout the country that the NHS as well as social care are in crisis.

The NHS was launched by a post second World War Labour government in 1948, voted into office by a population that had not only suffered the

ravages of war but the pre-war years of depression and unemployment. The NHS, publicly funded through taxation, publicly run , free at the point of use, supplanted the market system of private healthcare. The Conservative and Liberal parties conceded that the health service, operating within the capitalist system, was a necessary concession to the working class to ensure perpetuation of the system . Aneurin Bevan, the Minister of Health, and key figure in the introduction of the NHS, had to concede contractor status to the GPs, allowing for some private practice as well as part time contracts for consultants, also entitling them to treat private patients.

The mass of the population welcomed the NHS. The fears of millions before the NHS, when they fell ill and could not afford to call in a doctor because of the expense of medical bills, were replaced by the sense of security with the provision of free healthcare. The NHS developed a reputation for excellence and doctors from the ex colonies flocked to Britain to work in the hospitals and further their postgraduate training. There were problems however at the inception of the NHS such as insufficient funds for building new hospitals. The shortcomings of the NHS over the years , the waiting lists and inefficiencies, the withdrawal of free prescriptions, free spectacles and free dentures arose from inadequate funding . Inequalities in healthcare suffered by the working class, the poor, socially deprived and elderly, although reduced have not disappeared in the NHS .

In spite of the fact that the resources spent on the NHS compare very favourably with the wastefulness of private health systems such as in ➡

➔ the US, right wing forces, particularly in the Tory Party, remained unreconciled to public funding of the NHS. Following the end of the post war boom in 1973-4, they called for marketisation of the NHS. Margaret Thatcher's government together with President Reagan in the USA embraced neoliberalism in the 1980s. In Britain, Thatcher pursued market driven constraints on health spending and market style reforms, including competitive tendering for catering and cleaning services and an internal market with a purchaser/provider split. The Labour government led by Tony Blair, elected in 1997, discarded many traditional Social Democratic policies and was won over to the "Third Way", embracing a neoliberal agenda. Although his government did at some stage increase spending on health, he later promoted the use of private capital to finance the building of almost one hundred new hospitals through the Private Finance Initiative. He also formed a "partnership" with private sector providers treating NHS funded patients in Independent Service Treatment Centres (ISTC). One of the providers running an ISTC was a private South African company, Netcare

In 2010, a Tory/Liberal coalition government introduced a policy of austerity, which included big cuts in public services such as the NHS. In 2012, its

Health and Social Care Act was passed by parliament, removing responsibility of the Minister of Health to provide health services for the population. Instead, there is now a market in healthcare with commissioning of services from the private as well as the public sector. The amount of NHS funds that have gone to private health companies, has more than doubled from £4.1 billion in 2009-10 when the Labour Party was in power to £8.7 billion in 2015-16. The Tories are pursuing a twin track strategy of underfunding and privatisation to destabilise the NHS. With further drastic cuts planned, the Tories are aiming to replace the NHS with a two tier system of healthcare. Those who can afford it will be taking out health insurance, while the workers and poor will have no option but be treated in a rump health system, which is inadequately staffed and resourced.

Opposition to the Tory plans for the NHS is growing all over the country. Health Campaigns Together, an alliance of organisations embracing local and national NHS campaigning organisations, trade unions, political parties such as the Labour Party and pensioners organisations, together with the People's Assembly are organising a big demonstration in London against the Tory policies on the NHS. This is part of an ongoing struggle to save the NHS and a return to its founding principles.



Letters

THE LIFE OF A YOUNG MAN WHO IS LOSING HIS EYE SIGHT (1)

I am 39 years old this year. I am a visually impaired young man, a father of three boys and I have been living with this eye condition for 13 years since I was diagnosed with glaucoma in 2003.

I am living with my life partner and my sister in Kutlwanong Location in Kimberley. I went to school at St Peters primary, Molehabangwe and high school at Thulash and at Tetlano Secondary where I completed my Matric in 1996. I had a gap year because I had no money to pay for my studies and I started working as a taxi assistant.

I went to the University of the Free State in 1998 where I did my first year law and dropped out due to financial constraints. I started doing piece jobs in order to pay for my studies (e.g. driving taxis in Bloemfontein) while doing short courses. In 1999 I was involved in youth political organisations, while working for Diskom and in 2000 I worked for a bush clearing company under the Water Affairs department. In 2001 I worked for the Diamond Fields Advertiser, Community Skills Training College and then the Red Cross from 2002 to 2007. I also studied child and youth care with the University of South Africa (UNISA) which was in line with the type of work I was doing with the Red Cross at the time.

In 2007 a great change took place in my life when I was granted my second chance to study law after 9 years of dropping out from university. When I first went to university in 1998 I had no disabilities

but when I went back this time I had a sensory impairment, which was a serious change. I had to face a world which was prepared for the fully visioned where no enhancement tools were available for persons with sensory disabilities.

The education system of South Africa does not guarantee one a chance of being funded after Matric/Grade 12. Therefore it took me a number of years to source funding provincially and nationally. If it was difficult for me to source funding with good results when I was still fully visioned, one could imagine how tough it was after I became visually impaired 25 years of my life later.

With all the hardships I had to bear, I just persevered for success and gaining strength day by day. Someone would think I am exaggerating my situation but I tell the tale as it is. I intentionally omitted the names of the persons I came across in the two phases of my life, especially those who gave me a tough time in making sure I struggled to get my success. I refer to persons in and outside the systems of government and family members.

Thank you to all my family, lovers, friends and people who adopted me to make sure I become an inspiration to some.

THE MINORITY DROPPING OUT OF THE SYSTEM (2)

Day in, day out, the country's people talk ➔

➤ about the missing middle, but I have noticed that this does not include the minority who suffer at the hand and mind set of the majority who are fully visioned.

Application forms do not cater for the minority I am referring to above, nor does the working environment reasonably accommodate this minority. All or most processes are meant for the visioned and not for the visually impaired. This minority is encouraged to apply but when it is realised that the person who is invited to an interview, does not have the type of disability which was expected (which is any disability but sensory disability) such a person is not accepted or catered for. The working environment is simply not made conducive for the employee with a sensory disability.

The government policy is that persons with disabilities should apply for positions and a two percent of this minority should be employed, but these processes still push away those with sensory disabilities. The real example is a situation where persons who were taken on learnership programs

were denied the right to learn practically in the offices of the Department of Labour in the North West Province. These learners were confined to a reception desk to operate a switch board, because it was said that they would not be able to perform the normal duties which they might be tasked with.

This group of learners left the program even when I tried to intervene in my capacity as the provincial deputy chair person. They fell through the cracks to such an extent that they were paid their stipend while they were sitting at home, for the duration of the program. What a sick society do we have which can't embrace disability according to its distinctions.

How much education does this society need in order for people to understand that people with disabilities are not less people but they are also human and that they can do everything equally as anyone else?

Smooth Operator

APDUSA

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

Despite the gain of political rights for all, the compromise of 1992 has not fulfilled the democratic aspirations of the labouring majority and they continue to suffer in conditions of abject poverty and subjugation to the will of the rich who command the economic resources of the country. In the ongoing struggle we therefore demand:

- The convening of a democratically elected **Constituent Assembly**, charged with the task of drawing up a new constitution, governed by the interests of the oppressed and exploited working class and peasantry, based on the demand for full, unfettered political rights for all with majority rule in a unitary state, the removal of all artificially created regional political boundaries, the liquidation of all special minority rights and privileges which militate against the interests of the majority. The Constituent Assembly must have full powers to discharge these duties, untrammelled by any directions and constraints designed to serve self-interested minorities.
- A resolution of the **land question** in accordance with the needs of those who work and live off the land. This means the destruction of all existing tribal and feudal relations in the rural areas and the nationalisation of the land, without compensation. A new division of the land and its management, which excludes forced collectivisation, the payment of rent and the expropriation of small peasant farmers, must be undertaken by committees that are democratically elected by and answerable to the people.
- The **expropriation** of all major industries, banks and institutions of credit and their management by the state and representatives of the workers in the interests of the population as a whole.
- The revision of labour legislation for the liquidation of all discrimination against the worker. This also means:
- The **right to work**, which must be implemented both via the institution of necessary adjustments to the length of the working week to provide employment for all, without a reduction in wages, as well as by the institution of a progressive **public works program** with the full representation of the unemployed in its management.
- The fixing of a living **minimum wage** as well as a sliding scale to compensate for any price increases.
- The unconditional right to **strike** which includes the right of occupation of the workplace.
- Free and **compulsory education** for all up to matric with free books for the needy.
- Free **health services** for the needy.
- A single, progressive **tax system**, the abolition of vat and all indirect taxes that fall so heavily on the poor.
- The elected representatives of the people, at organisational level or in the local, regional or national political institutions of state, must be fully **accountable** to those who elect them and they must be fully bound by the demands and aspirations of the working class and its allies, the landless peasantry.

APDUSA calls for the self-organisation and united independent struggle of the labouring masses. We believe that the struggle can only advance decisively via the greatest ideological and organisational unity between the workers in the urban centres and the peasants in the rural areas under the leadership of the working class.

The democratic demands and aspirations of the oppressed workers and peasants shall be paramount.

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