



# THE APDUSAN

Vol. 23 No 2  
July 2017

AFRICAN PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UNION  
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

www.apdusa.org.za

*The Interests Of The Workers And Landless Peasants Shall Be Paramount*

## FROM A MOVEMENT FOR SOCIALISM TO A WORKING CLASS SOCIALIST PARTY

*Figuring out what happened to the Movement for Socialism (MFS) after the 2016 local government election is difficult. The reason for this is straightforward: information about its activities became scantier and inaccessible by the end of 2016. No public record of its official launch exists, fuelling suspicions that it has been aborted and buried. Even so, workers must know what happened to the MFS and study its significance for constructing a genuine workers party in today's political crises. Our previous article (Vol.22 No.1, July 2016) pinpointed that union leaders at the forefront of the MFS proved themselves unable to forge a consistent and visible coalition with principled socialist currents. These unionists capture media spotlights but remain a peripheral fraction of the country's fragmented workers and socialist movement. To break out of this isolation they must, as a first step, be liberated from bankrupt political traditions and offer workers a consistent political programme. On what programmatic basis do they seek to organise workers and unite with other radical left formations? This second article answers this question based on developments after August 2016. Given the importance of political organisation in our fight for democratic eco-socialism, the final article raises questions on why trade unions are incapable of leading the workers' fight to seize political power.*

The 2017 May Day messages of the union leaders that have promoted the Movement for Socialism (MFS) venture are intriguing. For instance, unlike the press releases of the past two years, the latest versions maintain a grave silence on the MFS. What does this MFS news blackout tell us about the political strategies of these unionists? How do they account for this manoeuvre?

### Great Leaps Backward

Hints of a 'new direction' showed up in statements that the NUMSA general secretary issued in the months leading up to May Day. A case in point is the 'Crisis in South Africa' press release which boldly declares: 'We are hard at work forging the working class political party, and we are completing preparations for the launch of our new,

socialist, democratic, worker controlled and militant federation. We are also revitalising our United Front.' [NUMSA General Secretary, 5 April 2017] NUMSA leaders must be elated with the recent launch of the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) – a boost to their smugness. However, behind the urgency to revitalise the United Front lurks a grudging admission that this project is in incontrovertible trouble. How did the united front degenerate into this crisis of existence and how do they plan on revitalising the supposed unity of workplace and community struggles? Should operating leftovers of the united front not prioritise frank self-criticism to rescue it from its trauma (death agony)? It would be a mistake to evade this chance to completely reconstruct the united front on the basis of the revolutionary interests of the impoverished and exploited majority.

The excision of the MFS from the April statement is conspicuous. Has the establishment of a working class socialist party replaced the MFS? If so, when and why did this switch transpire? How should anti-capitalist activists interpret this sleight of hand or putrid ad hoc-ism? NUMSA's response to the February 2017 budget exposes the frenzy behind this abrupt turn to "the revolutionary organisation of the working class behind a revolutionary programme in a revolutionary socialist party to overthrow the supremacy of capital. As NUMSA we will not rest until we have built a Workers Party capable of representing and defending the interests of the working class and capable of advancing to a Socialist South Africa." [NUMSA Statement on the Budget Speech, 23 February 2017]

Since NUMSA's 2013 Special Congress, it was generally accepted that the MFS would be a catalyst for a broad-based workers party. NUMSA leaders always insisted that the MFS was not a substitute →

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➡ for a working class socialist party. Instead, they conceived the former as an ‘anti-capitalist bridging formation’ for the latter. The dynamics of this supersession was to flow from many tactical determinants, such as exhausting the limits of the MFS (radical left ‘regroupment’), lasting political victories, an upsurge in mass struggles and so forth. With remnants of the united front limping along and the implosion of the MFS without any gains, NUMSA’s reasons for launching a workers socialist party are hard to fathom.

### **Programmatic Deadlock**

The necessity for a revolutionary party of and for the working class to liberate society from capitalist barbarism has been on the agenda for decades. Reasons why tireless efforts for establishing such a party have not been realised yet must be confronted head on, particularly by the newly radicalised activists. Failure to do so would mean that the heavy political costs that radical leftists paid for old party building disasters would have been in vain. Moreover, to qualify for revolutionary leadership means to assimilate the collective experiences of workers’ struggles in order not to be condemned to recyclers of historical errors. The impetus for a working class socialist party, these popular unionists claim, primarily stems from two intertwined motives. First, in their view, the ANC government (with SACP endorsement) is imposing neoliberal policies on workers and have therefore abdicated the leadership of the working class struggle against capitalism. Second, and closely related to the above, is the fact that the SACP-ANC alliance abandoned the Freedom Charter in favour of an unbridled neoliberal and white monopoly capitalist system.

Radical as this ‘leftist opposition to the SACP-ANC’ might sound, it is far from new, particularly if we lift out the main idea of each criticism. Nevertheless, this justification for a revolutionary socialist party poses a crucial question: why must workers embrace a so-called ‘abandoned ideology’ with an inherent logic which runs counter to the interests of working people? If NUMSA leaders care about answering such questions they must start from trenchant critiques of the ANC-SACP ideology that date back almost seven decades! This rich history we have inherited from our genuine political forerunners – not the liberals and Stalinists. But blind loyalty to the national democratic revolution is robbing today’s crop of radical unionists of political enlightenment. After all, many of them cut their political teeth and learned the sum total of their politics from this stale and rotten ideology, which the liberals resurrected to wreak havoc on and derail our struggle for freedom – a gruesome record of Communist Party and Congress treachery this generation might be too young to know. In this

context, NUMSA’s tirade against the SACP-ANC-COSATU alliance echoes the undertones of a feud among erstwhile comrades, locked in a faction war over the best way to breathe life into a moribund ideology.

At least in its rhetoric NUMSA talks about both a revolutionary class struggle party and a ‘representative of workers’ interests’. Their bias for a ‘political representative of workers’ poses fundamental questions about the proposed party’s orientation towards bourgeois parliamentary and electoral tactics. This reminds us of its Deputy General Secretary’s rhetorical quip in answering two academics in late 2014: “Are we ready to field candidates for local government elections in 2016, and on what platform, or would a Workers’ Party have been formed to contest elections?” (*Karl Cloete Interview, in E-Bulletin of Socialist Project, 20 March 2015*) Almost two years before August 2016 they were seriously thinking about or planning to launch an election oriented party (‘leftist alternative to the ANC’). Back then it would have ended in disaster given the chaos in their ranks. When the ANC suffered the devastating losses in the local government elections, the event in all likelihood reinforced assessments of Cloete & comrades that a decisive opportunity has opened for speeding up the formation of a working class socialist party – and ditch the MFS process.

Let it not be forgotten that as the MFS staggered towards its demise, it failed to agree on the substance of a draft political programme for the new party. It became hopelessly dysfunctional after political currents without the ‘Charterist baggage’ joined its ranks. Programmatic debates plunged into confusion before it grounded to a halt. NUMSA’s flagrant insistence on keeping the Freedom Charter as the new party’s programme obviously could not break this deadlock. One of their ideologues even concocted the lie that the Freedom Charter is a transitional programme, which is not only an absurdity to laugh at but also displays traits of incorrigible opportunism.

Many articles published in the APDUSAN have unmasked how reactionary the Freedom Charter is and picked apart the flaws in its hodgepodge of promises. We have shown how its bourgeois foundations are disguised behind hollow slogans, with their egregious inconsistencies and atrocious distortions of revolutionary socialism. These reactionary slogans match the logic of its political policy which is rooted in compromise and opportunism. It is a charter for diluting and selling out the aspirations of the labouring majority. The so-called ‘radical interpretation of this charter for betrayal’ cannot be but a deliberate or unconscious subversion of our unfinished struggle for democratic eco-socialism. ●

# LAUNCH OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

*The launch of the South African Federation of Trade Unions marks a renewed beginning in the political landscape of South Africa.*

The truth of this assertion lies in the long view of history where one will find that history had cast the politics of the liberation movements on the path or route of non-collaboration with the bourgeois class or collaboration with that class. This is true since the late 1930s in the former route taken in the political evolution of the All African Convention ("AAC") and the formation of the Non-European Unity Movement ("NEUM") in 1943. On the other hand, the revival of the African National Congress (ANC) in between that period, under the clutches of the Communist Party of South Africa ("CPSA"), chose the collaborationist route. Based on these irreconcilable parallels, the full spectrum of the politics of the liberation movement evolved up to this day.

However, in the 1960s liberation movements in South Africa i.e. the Non European Unity Movement (NEUM), the Pan Africanist Congress ("PAC"), the ANC and the then South African Communist Party ("SACP") suffered severe political blows when, in various ways, they were effectively banned from operating within South Africa. The collaborationist ANC/SACP axis, assisted by the international liberal bourgeoisie and Stalinists was able to recover from this blow outside of South Africa while the non-collaborationist route of the Unity Movement suffered the most as it could not receive the necessary assistance from the bourgeois and Stalinist world. This translated itself into the effacing of the non-collaboration political route inside the country by the collaborationist one, which found its effective political expression in the 1994 elections, the year the ANC assumed guardianship of the bourgeois state.

With the entry of the Congress of South African Trade Unions ("COSATU") into the Tri-Partite Alliance with bourgeois collaborators, we have witnessed for some years the widening political gap and increasing political conflict within and amongst COSATU affiliates, between those who questioned the collaborationist Tri-Partite Alliance, calling for its break and those who were firm believers of the Alliance and what it stood for. The seriousness of this widening gap found expression in the split within Chemical, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union ("CEPPWAWU"), an affiliate of COSATU, in 2003 when the majority in its biggest branch – the Wits Branch, together with some in the Kwa Zulu-Natal branch, left and joined the General Industries Workers Union of South Africa ("GIWUSA"). In years to follow there were similar splits in other COSATU affiliates and most dramatically, the split of NUMSA from COSATU, with the expulsion of the latter's General Secretary Zwelinzima Vavi.

The launch of the South African Federation of Trade Unions ("SAFTU") on the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2017. with 1400 delegates representing 24 unions (*The Daily Maverick, Analysis of the third kind, 16 May 2017*), signifies a split of a section of the working class from the tutelage of the collaborationist Tri-Partite Alliance. It can however be argued that some of the splits were informed by alleged corruption practices and not outright political differences. The underlying factor is the general political orientation of COSATU after 1994, whose leadership swallowed bourgeois ideas hook, line and sinker. This became particularly clear in the creation of investment companies which effectively became vehicles for the self-enrichment of SACP/ANC leadership figures. In essence the Tri-Partite Alliance had become a conveyor belt for bourgeois ideas into the trade union movement.

Greg Nicholson of the *Daily Maverick* quotes Vavi during the inaugural congress as stating, "*Cosatu's relationship with the ANC and business has destroyed its ability to lead workers. Its unions will die naturally, one by one*". He is further quoted as stating that "*Cosatu is part of the ruling elites in our society. It is benefitting from the patronage network that is dispensed by the various factions of the ANC.*"

Those who attended the launch of the new federation found an atmosphere quite different from the times these unions were in COSATU; an unmistakable sense of independence from the political tutelage of the petit bourgeois ANC and SACP; tolerance to radical ideas carried by various left wing organisations and individuals. This sense of receptiveness was further expressed by one worker delegate who when receiving a copy of the APDUSAN newsletter, which was widely circulated at the launch, remarked loudly, "by its title only!". He was visibly impressed and amused by the title of one of the articles of volume 23, No 1 of April 2017: "*Radical Economic Transformation: Another Bourgeois Swindle*".

According to Greg Nicolson, "*Saftu defines itself as Marxist-Leninist and Pan-African in outlook, independent from political parties but not apolitical*". While Greg Nicolson observes that "*the federation has promised to be worker-centred while also tapping into the informal sector and the unemployed in its campaigns*" he quotes a congress resolution as saying "*Our struggle is to end class exploitation, and to dismantle colonial and apartheid capitalism and land dispossession, through a programme to reclaim land and for a socialist-orientated society*".

The new federation is clearly confronted with many challenges. The NUMSA dominance; the questions of the scope of individual affiliates; registration for some and others not yet registered; the establishment of the federation's structures; the affiliates' unequal weight and influence in the Bargaining Councils; its receptiveness to socialist ➡

➡ ideas and talk of the united front with the thorny question of the Freedom Charter, with some even harbouring illusions of a prospect of it being adopted as the political programme. This idea will definitely face a lot of resistance given the emptiness and hollowness of the Charter to be a guide for the working class towards socialist democracy. Already, the Daily Maverick quotes the newly-elected SAFTU President, Mac Chavalala, as saying: “*There’s no way that capitalism and neo-liberalism can be replaced under the ANC government.*”

Whatever are the future difficulties and

prospects, the formation of the new federation has enabled the left-wing intelligentsia, which has previously been isolated from the main stream politics and has for some time since 1994 remained on the fringes of the political spectrum, to begin to reorganise itself within a substantial section of the working class. As such the SAFTU ushers in brighter prospects for the revival of the non-collaborationist political trajectory within the working class and it should be welcomed. ●

## APDUSA CONFERENCE – APRIL 2017

The annual conference of the APDUSA was held in the Northern Cape over the Easter weekend. Three papers were delivered. The presidential address focussed on the sea change that has been occurring in the organisational vehicles that the labouring majority has been using in struggle. In these, social movements and trade unions are promoted and portrayed as formations to be supported on a political level. The struggles of trade unions are elevated to a political level at the expense of a focus on political organisations and the political programmes they represent. The inherent danger of this approach is for struggles to be confined to economic levels. Equating trade union and political demands is highly incorrect and improper. The former can be reduced or diluted whereas the dynamic of latter does not allow for such dilution. The advancing of political demands by APDUSA via its set of transitional demands must therefore take cognisance of the relevance of certain demands under any given set of circumstances.

The second paper dealt with the question of bourgeois parliamentarism. Drawing on the lessons of the Russian Revolution, conference deliberated on the importance of building/developing an independent political force, capable of seizing and holding power. Democracy, it was argued is possible without parliament; that the functions of a modern state can be merged into historically more progressive systems of representation.

The current high profile of court cases in South Africa raised the question of the importance of the judiciary in bourgeois society. Being class and constitutionally bound, it was concluded that the “independence of the judiciary” is a myth.

The third paper addressed the important question of political leadership in the context of political struggles in Africa. Conference noted that nationalism still acts as a key determinant in the progress that struggles can make. The situation in different countries presented conference with different but nonetheless crucial, linked aspects of the broader class struggles: syndicalism in Nigeria, transitional demands in Mauritius and agrarian revolution in Zimbabwe, amongst others. Giving practical effect to the name “APDUSA”, in fact means the promotion of trans-national integration of struggles in Southern Africa and on the continent at large.

The secretarial report and discussion thereon dealt with the importance of ongoing recruitment, which has to be coupled with a high level of effective integration and ideological orientation of new members. Linkages with formations and individuals ranging from the UF/DLF to the PAC, GIWUSA and NUMSA were deliberated on and a way forward plotted.

The fourth political school – to address the question of the working class and the acquisition of state power – is scheduled for mid-2018. ●

## MAY DAY IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is in the grip of a protracted political and economic crisis that is intrinsic to capitalism, with devastating consequences for the working class. The rate of exploitation of the labour force, with ever increasing unemployment continues unabated, with a growing number of companies closing down and economic growth foundering. Amidst these structural impediments workers’ day was celebrated in South Africa. May or Workers’ Day is an important event in the calendar of the international working class movement. Traditionally it is an occasion to show international working class

solidarity, mapping an anti capitalist future and the ensuing class struggles.

The main workers’ day rally of the Congress of South African Trade Union (COSATU), held in Botshabelo, was marred by the federation’s bureaucracy unilateral decision to abruptly cancel the event. This came about when workers heckled and prevented president Jacob Zuma from addressing them. This is indicative of the ongoing crisis of labour politics and implosion of a once fighting labour movement. For many commentators this highlights the fractures in the tripartite alliance. What it fundamentally demonstrates is that ➡

➡ workers are once again called upon to resolve the decadent ANC petty bourgeois factional battles.

President Zuma, once the darling of the federation has now been shunned by COSATU in favour of arch capitalist Cyril Ramaphosa, who played a key role in the Marikana massacre. Billionaire Deputy President Ramaphosa recently made a half-hearted apology for the butchering of the workers at Marikana simply to woo the working class, because of his aspirations to become president of the ANC and South Africa. Workers in COSATU continue to be in the vice grip of reformist petty bourgeois politics of the trade union bureaucracy, tying workers to the programme of the bourgeoisie.

In contrast the May Day rally of the newly launched South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU), arguably marked an important turning point in radical labour politics in South Africa. During its Workers' Day rally, held in Durban and starting off with a protest march, the federation proclaimed itself to be a fighting organisation for the working class and a critical social force in the anti capitalist struggle. At its founding congress SAFTU unequivocally declared that it is "building a fundamentally different type of workers' organisation – independent of political parties and employers but not apolitical – democratic, worker-controlled, militant, socialist-orientated, internationalist, Pan-Africanist from a Marxist perspective and inspired by the principles of Marxism-Leninism" (Declaration of the launching congress of SAFTU, 21 -23 April 2017). The importance of fighting for political power for the working class to end class exploitation, was further echoed at its Workers' Day rally. The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), the biggest affiliate of SAFTU, in its May day statement, amongst other things, declared: "The only way out of the crisis is through a mass movement of the working-class based on a program guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism for the nationalisation of the mineral and manufacturing monopolies, the banks and the land, in line with the

aspiration expressed in the Freedom Charter" (NUMSA May Day Statement 2017).

In essence NUMSA, like SAFTU in its founding declaration, is calling for the 'radical implementation of the Freedom Charter'. What the radical implementation of the Freedom Charter entails is still unclear. SAFTU it appears is still caught between a past political tradition that it has not fully transcended and a new reality that is emerging in front of them. It is still partially beholden to the petty bourgeois programme of the ANC, SACP, COSATU tripartite alliance that have chained workers to the dubious and empty promises of the Freedom Charter. Nevertheless the political and organisational break and the radical socialist orientation of the new trade union federation represents a positive step to reinvigorate the South African working class as a whole.

To make a fundamental break it is necessary for workers both inside and outside of SAFTU to carefully examine and uncover the rich history of the revolutionary left tradition in South Africa in its entirety. In examining this tradition of which the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA) and APDUSA is an integral part, workers can test, contest and compare its political programme against other tendencies. In the current milieu of an ever-expanding surplus population, where neoliberal capitalism is rendering workers redundant to the needs of capital, it is of vital importance that trade union federations like SAFTU cement their links between the employed and the mass of surplus population through their trade unions.

The call by APDUSA for the fostering of independent leadership among the working class, the promotion of 'self-organisation and united independent struggle of the labouring masses is of paramount importance. The struggle can only advance decisively via the greatest ideological and organisational unity between the workers in the urban centres and landless peasants in the rural areas under the leadership of the working class. ●

## **SAVE SOUTH AFRICA CAMPAIGN: A SMOKESCREEN TO SALVAGE CAPITALISM'S CRISIS**

There has been a wave of protest marches and actions by an assemblage of motley organised formations, including parliamentary opposition parties, calling for the resignation of president Zuma. Blatant corruption practices and his role in state capture by the infamous Gupta family, has led to their battle cry: Zuma Must Fall! We are told that the endemic state graft by "a rapacious predatory elite" is undermining the gains of our struggle and eroding our constitutional democracy.

The "Save South Africa Campaign", a newly configured formation, comprises ANC stalwarts and an array of NGOs and business leaders, is calling on all South Africans to pledge their commitment to "protecting and advancing all rights and duties in the

constitution". Notable neoliberal capitalist representatives like Anglo Gold Ashanti chairperson Siphon Pityana, founder and convenor of Save SA are some of its leaders. Other steering committee members like Trevor Manuel, who is a former United Democratic Front leader, three times finance minister and global advisor to the International Rothschild Group, has thrown his weight behind this initiative. In the recent national shutdown action led by Save S.A. a journalist reported that the liberal bourgeois organisation Business Leadership South Africa (BLSA) went so far as to inform a trade union federation that they would not take punitive action against workers who choose to take part in the protest (Mail and Guardian, 6 April 2017). ➡

What lies behind this call by the petty bourgeois and liberal bourgeois for the working class to defend this bourgeois constitution? The same constitution, canonized as the holy grail of democracy, protects private property - the bedrock of the capitalist system. South Africa's constitution is nothing but a tool in the armoury of the capitalist class to embed the rule of their petty bourgeois representatives in parliament and an attempt to save the moribund system of capitalism. Workers are simultaneously called upon to save the ANC and the system of capitalism. The political crisis facing the ANC, displaying deep internal fractures, is intimately linked to the crisis of capitalism in South Africa. As the political representatives of the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeois led ANC's role in containing mass discontent and managing the political affairs of the system of capitalism is becoming increasingly fragile. This is evidenced by its poor performance in the recent local government elections and incessant, often violent, internal squabbles. Combined with this we witness a rise in the number of militant working class struggles at the point of production and at a community level. University of Johannesburg researchers have shown that "between 1997 and 2013 there were on average 900 community protest a year and recently as high as 2000 per year" against the effects of neoliberal capitalism (The Conversation, 18 May 2017). This is a cause for concern for the capitalist class and imperialism.

South Africans are led to believe if we only remove president Zuma and the rot of corruption at all levels of the state, then the problem of poverty,

inequality and class exploitation would be eradicated. Nothing could be further from the truth. Deceptively, the petty bourgeois servants of the liberal bourgeois are attempting to delink the baleful corruption of president Zuma and his cronies from the corrupt capitalist system. A 2016 survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers, showed a "world-leading 69 percent corporate corruption rate for South Africa, compared to a global average for economic crime of 36 percent" (Socialist Register 2017, 168). A few cases are worth mentioning: the De Beers diamond mis-invoicing for seven years amounting to \$2.8 billion, tax avoidance by platinum companies like Lonmin and international finance capital, Net1 listed on the Johannesburg and New York Stock Exchange, sinking social grant beneficiaries wantonly into debt, thereby "profiting from poverty". Monopoly capitalism, through the Minerals Energy Complex (MEC), has captured the state throughout the vicious history of capitalism in South Africa. The MEC, together with the petty bourgeois leadership of the ANC orchestrated the 1994 negotiated settlement, paving the way for the betrayal of the working class and landless peasantry. Capitalism is inherently a corrupt political and economic system that is responsible for the super exploitation of workers, inequality, landlessness, poverty and environmental destruction. It should be abundantly clear that the interests of the labouring classes and outfits like "Save South Africa" are irreconcilably different. Superseding the barbarous system of capitalism is the only way out to end corruption that is pervasive in South Africa. •

## THE LIMITATIONS OF SCHOOL FEEDING SCHEMES

Is the government doing enough to counter the food security crisis that is facing South Africa? In 2002, Government introduced a new school feeding scheme or as it is officially called the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), that aims to foster better quality education by providing the children in schools with regular meals. The schemes also provide an incentive for the children to attend school. Vuzamanzi Primary School in Khayelitsha, Site C, is among the schools benefitting from the program. According to the National School Nutrition Programme 2011/2012 annual report, the programme reached eight million learners in more than 21 000 schools and according to the 2012/2013 annual report the programme reached 9 131 836 learners in 19 383 schools nationally.

These feeding schemes are not a solution to the food security crisis that is facing South Africa. The feeding schemes are not dealing with the root problem which is lack of access to food and economic power to purchase food in many households in South Africa. According to the Daily Maverick, (19 May 2017) 12 million live in extreme poverty. This means there is a problem of a food

security shortage that needs to be addressed. Government is in partnership with Tiger Brands and Nestle SA which are capital driven and Tiger Brands is also a major player in the South African food system.

One would expect that the government would put more emphasis on making sure people that live in poverty stricken communities have access to food. Some of the children leave their households in the morning with empty stomachs knowing they will have something to eat at school. But it ends there, because when school time is over they have to go back home to face the reality of having nothing to eat.

The School feeding scheme is limited because it only places emphasis on schools while poor households are largely ignored, which is where the problem starts. In South Africa there is a high rate of unemployment which leads to poverty and no access to food, which affects a large number of households. It is natural to expect that the government would create spaces in schools for children to learn about how to produce food and advise them how to start farming at household ➔

➡ level to combat food shortages at home. But little is done on this level.

What is going to happen when it is during the weekend and there is no food at home, especially for those children who are not at school? What are they going to eat? In Vuzamanzi Primary School, Ekasi Project Green is a food garden project that was established by a group of friends in 2014. The project aims to encourage small-scale farming throughout the townships so that residents can afford to eat healthily and become self-sustaining. The project involves the children from both the school and outside. Ekasi Project Green makes space for the children to learn how to plant and how to take care of the garden. It does not only end there because they are also encouraged to start food gardens in their backyards spaces and so produce their own fresh vegetables. The elderly are also welcomed to participate in the process. The project also provides seedlings and manure to people who are interested in learning to farm. In that way the project is enabling the community to implement food sovereignty to cover food security.

Food sovereignty is basically people controlling their own food system and agricultural practices. But

it is vital to not only look at food sovereignty in terms of production but also in terms of social, economic, environment and political aspects. Food security on one side means having food. But how is the food produced? What kind of food? How is the farmer treated? These are some of the questions we should ask when interrogating food security. In that way people can create their own little economies in their communities where they can create local markets at community level. People can use the money to buy other things they need in their households.

The solution to the problem of food security needs to be tackled on the basis of a bottom up approach. People need to be involved and also we need to understand the broader politics not only just the food aspect but the land question. We need to have a new system which includes everyone and not to oppress and exploit people. We need a people's government that should be involved in the process because such a government is one that can implement such policies. Government should make land, infrastructure and water available for the communities to be able to produce food for themselves. ●

## TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

As South Africa advanced to a post apartheid democracy it afforded some black people the opportunity to become the beneficiaries of land redistribution. However, little progress, as promised by the ANC manifesto, has been made in terms of the transformation of land ownership and resources for black empowerment. The ANC accepted the course of collaboration with colonialists while pretending that it would result in progress for the oppressed population of South Africa. The petty bourgeois in the ANC merely chose this route for their own benefit. Transformation for them was merely to parade a black face to manipulate the working class struggle into believing that things have changed.

The illusion of so-called freedom was spread rapidly where the working class thought that after the apartheid era that they would not work for long hours any more, they would receive good salaries and they would do their work without being pushed or punished by the white bosses. However, it was the opposite of freedom. The reality that nothing much has changed since the apartheid era dawned upon the oppressed masses very quickly. Anger and revolts have flared up, questioning the so-called Freedom Charter that the ANC trumpeted for so-called democracy. Revolts and the slaughtering of workers and communities, analogous to the Sharpeville and Langa massacres, continues during this democratic era. The massacre of mine workers at Marikana, where the deputy president had a hand and former police commissioner Phiyega, protecting their shares and status, allowed the murder of workers instead of

giving them a salary increase to better their lives. It was an expression of their primary objective to suck more profits from the working class.

The recent announcement, by Mr Zuma in his state of the nation address, (SONA) of radical economic transformation and getting rid of the white monopoly capital has sent shock waves in some circles throughout the country. A huge contradiction in terms. Mr President wants to install eight nuclear power stations through a nuclear deal with Russia that will lead the country into huge debt and further poverty for the working class and peasantry. It is strange to see how the ruling party always puts an indigenous black bourgeoisie forward through its "nationalisation" efforts while aligning it with the white bourgeoisie.

Amongst the BRICS countries, South Africa is the most unequal and our President continues to accept deals that will ultimately lead to the further exploitation of the working class. South Africa spends most of the budget of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in continuing to protect their mining and farming interests in Africa with their fellow African leaders and cronies in countries such as Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) etc., for their own benefit.

The "Zuptas must fall" movement, which was formed by political parties, trade unions and other NGOs to oust the president is nothing but a ploy, because we know that they also want to be in power and use the neo-liberalist system that is used by ➡

➡ the ANC for their own benefit. Most of the parliamentary political parties who adopted the charter of South Africa do not have a clear program. What will they do after Zuma or Zupta is no longer

in power? Even if Zuma steps down, there will only be another leader who will continue with the Freedom Charter and ANC program. ●



## *From Around the World*

### **NEOLIBERAL RESURGENCE IN LATIN AMERICA**

Counterrevolution has gathered momentum in Latin America. Local elites are bitterly determined to reassert their full control of the state and the economy in every country in the region. After restoring their social domination the prime target will be to wipe out all social gains that the impoverished and exploited classes have won through the anti-neoliberal governments in the last decade.

Imperialism - with the United States leading interventions in 'its own backyard'- is aiding this vicious assault on anti-neoliberal forces through supplying their South American clientele with weapons and bankrolling paramilitary forces, mercenaries and NGOs to destabilise and dislodge even 'moderately progressive' governments, like the Workers Party in Brazil. Reports that the intelligence apparatus of imperialist states, like the CIA, are conspiring with assassins to murder leading activists in the region are not surprising. The heinous crimes of these clandestine armies of the bourgeoisies are well documented. They are notorious for thwarting anti-imperialist revolutions and plotting the overthrow of progressive governments in Latin America, Africa and Asia - by any means necessary!

Countries in the region are the victims of the uneven spread of the worldwide capitalist economic slump. When the 2007-09 global recession and food price crisis erupted, several factors cushioned most South American countries against the ensuing slump in America, Europe and other countries. Two triggers of the counterrevolution can be traced to this great recession. First, the boom in raw material prices, primarily oil and agricultural exports to satisfy China's voraciousness for these commodities, kept these primary exporters afloat. Second, finance capitalists in the imperialist countries used the bailout packages to profit from investing in bonds and varieties of financial speculation that served as artificial economic stimuli. In effect, these factors, taken together, inflated the 'growth bubble' that had to burst as the logic of generalised overproduction dictates.

When world oil prices went into free fall, it unleashed foreign exchange and budgetary turmoil in countries heavily reliant on earnings from oil exports. With the implosion of the bubble economies, speculative investors also withdrew and switched to rival financial markets for higher rates of return. The mid-2016 Chinese financial meltdown dealt further blows to Latin America's raw material exporters. Resurgent neoliberal political groups are

exploiting these aggravating economic and social calamities to their advantage, relentlessly attacking anti-neoliberal parties for economic mismanagement, corruption, etc.

Economic crises explain only part of what is behind the resurgence of capitalists and neoliberal politicians in the region. Closely related facets of the explanation must be located in the capacities and programmatic manoeuvres of forces engaged in each country's class war. In Brazil, for instance, the Workers Party (PT) got ousted from the presidency as a result of a corruption scandal connected with the state owned oil company. The impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, Lula da Silva's handpicked successor, has the hallmarks of a 'palace coup' engineered by the captains of industry, the bourgeois media and bourgeois politicians. But it also exposes naïve and fatal political errors of the PT, such as forging coalition governments with bourgeois parties, entrapment within the bourgeois state and the lack of a revolutionary rupture with bourgeois democracy.

The parties that came to power through a series of electoral landslides in Venezuela (Chavez/Maduro), Bolivia (Morales) and Ecuador (Correa), embarked on an anti-capitalist transition towards socialism. Despite nationalising the oil and big natural resource sectors, investing export revenues for massive living standards improvements of populations beyond their own borders (through ALBA, for instance), the knock-on effects of the global oil price collapse hit these countries hard. But the mechanics of capitalist commodity production, distribution and consumption have not been dismantled and liquidating this dominant mode of socio-economic organisation has proved to be tremendously intricate and tough. In fact, private corporations extensively control manufacturing, retail trade, finance and media, harnessing this economic power to grab state power.

Declining electoral support for parties that uphold 'socialism of the 21<sup>st</sup> century' has been registered in all these countries. Rafael Correa and his Alianza PAIS leftist coalition used this slogan as their governing platform in Ecuador but also confronted explosive anger from mass peasant movements and trade unions who became disenchanting with Correa's ecological, land and labour policies. Unlike the first round victories in past elections, the Alianza PAIS candidate, Lenín Moreno, narrowly won in a second round (run-off) ➡



➡ election in April 2017 against a finance capitalist behind whom the splintered right regrouped themselves. In Bolivia, the Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) suffered defeats in key regional elections in 2015, barely a year after Morales had won more than 60% of the vote in presidential elections. Subsequently, they lost the February 2016 referendum on a constitutional amendment, thus ending the prospects for Morales to run for the presidency in 2019.

In Venezuela, President Nicolas Maduro and the PSUV (United Socialist Party of Venezuela) are resisting the onslaughts of an arrogant right wing

coalition. This heterogeneous mix of groups, known as United Democratic Roundtable (MUD), dominates the National Assembly after capturing two-thirds of the votes in December 2015. One consequence of this has been that the legislative and executive branches of government are in a political stalemate. Whether a Vatican brokered political settlement or Maduro's constituent assembly proposal will break this impasse is unclear. But fissures in the MUD have widened as coalition parties struggle to agree on participation versus boycott in talks between Maduro's government and opposition groups. ●

## THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OUTCOME OF THE FRENCH ELECTIONS

The uncertainty prevailing in French politics has been heightened by the outcome of the presidential elections. For the first time in modern French history the two mainstream parties, the right wing party, renamed Les Republicains and the left, the Socialist Party (PS) were eliminated in the first round. Emmanuel Macron, a relative unknown in French politics who less than a year ago founded a movement, En Marche (neither left nor right) without a formal political structure, defeated the Far Right candidate, Marine Le Pen of the National Front (FN) decisively. He received 65% of the votes against le Pen's 34%. Seen by the French establishment as riding to the rescue of the political system, Macron (a millionaire ex-banker, and former minister in Hollande's PS), is an upholder of neoliberal policies such as privatisation of public enterprises and deregulation. He plans to shift labour laws further in favour of the bosses and lower corporation tax. His policies are no different in essence from those of the two mainstream parties. He is unlikely to obtain a majority in the legislative elections in June to the National Assembly. If he fails, he could form a coalition government with one or both mainstream parties. The FN has succeeded in taking root in France without shedding its far right politics. Le Pen's score was an historic high for the party. It asserts that it is the main opposition party in French politics. The left wing party to have the most impact on the electorate was France Insoumise (Rebellious France), led by Jean-Luc Melenchon.

Turnout was the lowest in 40 years. Almost a third of voters did not vote with 12 million abstaining and 4.2 million spoiling their ballot papers. Faced with the choice of voting for either Macron or Le Pen, many left wing supporters abstained or spoiled their ballot papers. The neoliberal policies pursued by successive French governments has led to a stagnant economy with increase in unemployment figures, which stand at nearly 10%. The figures for the young are worse, with one in four under the age of 25 out of work. There are over three million unemployed. These figures compare

unfavourably with the dominant power in the EU, Germany. In an effort to become more competitive, the PS government of Hollande in 2016 bypassed parliament and issued decrees giving individual companies more power to hire and fire workers rather than being constrained by collective bargaining procedures. These decrees led to strikes, a state of emergency and violence on the streets between the protesters and police.

Marine Le Pen, since taking over the leadership of the FN has been responsible for the de-demonisation of the party and its increased share of the vote in local and national elections. She was instrumental in the expulsion of her father from the FN in 2015. This followed his remarks that the Nazi gas chambers were 'a detail' of the Second World War and that he had never considered Petain, the wartime collaborationist leader a traitor. This hardline approach to her father can only be understood in the context of her realisation that anti-semitism was the barrier that separated the FN from the majority of the French electorate. This, coupled with the FN upholding of French republicanism and its values, liberty, equality and fraternity and liberal democracy, opened the gates for the party to enter the mainstream of French politics. The FN lets slip its "rejection of anti-Semitism" from time to time, as was the denial by Marine Le Pen that the French state was responsible for the wartime roundup of French Jews before they were sent to Nazi death camps. The FN electoral program embraced France for the French. It promised a referendum to change the constitution so that "national priority" would be given to French people over non-nationals in jobs, housing and welfare. It gained significant support from white workers by pretending that it was their champion. It promised another referendum to leave the EU, an immigration clampdown and a ban on religious symbols, including the Muslim headscarf from all public places in France.

The combined vote of the left wing parties in the first round of the elections was less than 30%. Melenchon's "France Insoumise" was the most ➡

➡ impressive electorally , obtaining 19% of the votes in the first round. The main ideas coming across in his campaign challenged the role of president and the Senate and called for the convening of a Constituent Assembly. There was support for a break with Europe's policies of budget austerity, an ecologically based social model and leaving NATO. His support came mostly from those who fought Hollande's labour laws last year, from currents of social mobilisation and from disenchanted PS supporters. His refusal to discuss his candidacy with his Left Front partners, the French Communist Party (PCF) and Ensemble and the absence of democratic practice in building his campaign will hinder his party's chances during the legislative elections . The broad forces of the left, the left wing of the PS, the PCF, France Insoumise and NPA ( New Anti-Capitalist Party) in which some members of the Fourth International work, are divided.

After Brexit and the election of Donald Trump, the French election has seen the established figures kicked out of office. Macron, pursuing his neoliberal policies, may only have a short honeymoon with the electorate. Fear of terrorism, resentment towards the elites, the refugee crisis, mass unemployment and de-industrialisation are issues which the FN will continue to exploit. The disunited left is not in a position to challenge the right or the far right. Philippe Poutou, who stood as a candidate for the NPA in the presidential elections, issued a statement after the elections which makes a plea for unity in the struggle and concludes...."we need a political force to represent us, to organize our social camp facing the bosses and owners. A fighting party, anchored in daily struggles, that is not afraid of attacking capitalist property rights, that defends the need to break with national and European institutions. A feminist, ecologist, internationalist party for a revolutionary transformation of society – *it's urgent*". ●

## 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.*