



THE APDUSAN

Vol 10 No 2
September
2004

AFRICAN PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UNION
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

The Interests Of The Workers And Landless Peasants Shall Be Paramount

"CONTRACT WITH THE PEOPLE" - THE ANC'S LATEST RALLYING CRY

In its general elections campaign the ANC came up with a new rallying cry - "a contract with the people" - a contract that has a strong social component. According to this contract The ANC promised that it would be delivering services and lots more during its next term in government. What we have seen instead is a growing crisis of legitimacy, of continuous revelations of corruption, graft and all the usual conduct befitting bourgeois politicians and their hangers-on. The support base of the organisation, in the trade unions, in the townships or, especially in rural areas, is beginning to ask serious questions of the leadership of the ANC. With black economic empowerment inevitably being seen for what it really is, and with people's quality of life worsening, the ruling party has had no choice but to step up its rhetoric. But this time it appears to be more serious about job creation, service delivery and the like. Some conservative political commentators have even accused the ANC leadership of 'turning to the left'. Clearly the pressures are building up rapidly and the actual delivery on promises and reaching development goals are being addressed with a new urgency.

Serious questions need to be asked about the new ANC line. What are the chances of this 'contract with the people' actually freeing the poor and oppressed millions from their deteriorating conditions of life? Is this yet another patching up of the festering sores of GEAR? Is this greater government involvement in economic affairs, really in the interests of the working class and peasantry?

As an organisation which claims that it is the home of all the people of the country, the ANC can easily continue to serve its petit bourgeois leadership's quest for economic glory. This it can do while at the same time using liberation struggle rhetoric to dupe the workers and peasants to continue trusting it, even while executing the agenda of imperialism and neo-liberalism.

Among many other issues, the expanded public works programme has been given quite a bit of publicity. The millions of unemployed will now be offered a chance to compete for short term jobs that will barely feed and clothe families adequately. Instead of involving the unemployed directly in the management, administration and implementation of these programs, they are being kept under the control and command of government ministries. Going by the track record of state departments as far as the interests of the poor majority are concerned, the alarm bells should start ringing loudly. The state of affairs regarding governance in provinces such as the Eastern

Cape does not promise anything good for the starving and destitute millions.

In the face of this acute problem we in APDUSA say that the demands of the present should focus on the eradication of unemployment on the basis of the fundamental right to work. Such a program must be implemented, both via the institution of necessary adjustment 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 programme with the full representation of the unemployed in its management. ●

THE FIGHT FOR LAND IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the second decade after apartheid, under pressure from militant landless people, the ANC government has renewed its promise to speed-up land reform. One dimension of these policy adjustments, and arguably the most significant to date, is intended to ease the availability of land to peasant farmers. For example, last year government passed an "Expropriation Amendment" to the Land Restitution Act to stop a white landowner from obstructing the transfer of claimed land to a community removed from such land during apartheid. This allows the Minister of Land Affairs to expropriate a piece of land under claim but *must* then pay a market-dictated compensation to the landowner. Given the limited and overstretched land reform budget, it is doubtful that the state will have enough money for this compensation or to settle legal costs if landowners decide to challenge land claims.

While landless communities have welcomed this 'expropriation with compensation amendment', they do not consider it cause for celebration. They will rejoice, for instance, when the Minister uses these powers against the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). The SANDF, one arm of the state, owns and uses vast tracts of claimed land in Northern Cape and Limpopo provinces, actively obstructing dispossessed communities from getting back to their land for many years!

Shortly after the April 2004 elections government started a public debate on its policy to expand the participation of blacks in South Africa's highly concentrated commercial farming sector. Roughly 50,000 white farmers own more than 80% of the country's most fertile farmland. Like the black economic empowerment (BEE) charters in mining, finance and so on, this 'AgriBEE' sets out to equalise the racial imbalances in farming. White farmers

Continued on Page 2

➡ and agri-businesses insist that this policy should not harm the contribution of commercial farming to economic development and should therefore only integrate successful black farmers into the industry.

As such, AgriBEE makes explicit a longstanding orientation in post-apartheid land reform policy, which is to create a so-called black emerging farming class. It is this layer of farmers that has benefited most from state resources and land transfers to date. Moreover, if commercial farming is making such a major contribution towards development, why do we find the highest indicators of poverty, child malnutrition, casual jobs and slave wages on big farms? There is clearly a need for a fundamental overhaul of the agrarian structure in South Africa; a task that the post-apartheid government has failed to address.

Another indicator of the need to find a genuine solution to the land question in South Africa has been the birth of the Landless Peoples Movement (LPM). Landless people, young and old, in rural and urban areas have joined the LPM over the last five years because they hardly benefited from the existing land reform process as the ANC promised in 1994. In the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the ANC's platform in the first post-apartheid election, 30% of commercial farmland was to be transferred to poor peasant farmers within 5 years. But less than 5% of commercial farmland has been redistributed in the first decade! In the meantime the timeframe to transfer 30% of land is now 2015, with increasing emphasis on redistributing land to emerging black farmers who can match the state's land purchase subsidy with their own wealth. It is this marginalisation of the landless majority that is swelling the support-base of the LPM.

The LPM has already established itself as a social force in the gradual revival of mass protests in South Africa. Well before its official launch at the World Conference Against Racism, held in Durban in 2001, LPM supporters engaged in land occupations. However, the

LPM is organisationally weak and therefore unable to sustain such protests in the face of farmer vigilante groups and the police force. This is also a reason why sustainable production has not taken place on occupied land at the scale that the MST, the Brazilian landless movement, has achieved.. In a few pockets across the country LPM groups observed its 'No Land No Vote' campaign in the 2004 national elections, before its impact started fizzling out. Nevertheless, for the first time in more than 5 decades we are seeing the beginnings of a radical mass movement in South Africa's countryside, where 45% of the population live.

The LPM's participation in the Social Movement Indaba (SMI), joining its forces with the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) and the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) that are mobilising in the townships, reflects the unity between rural and urban struggles. It was at the WSSD in 2002 that the LPM and APF displayed their strength and united action against neo-liberalism that underpins the state's land reform and privatisation policies. Their joint demonstration, involving more than 20,000 activists, gained solidarity from activists from other parts of the world who travelled to Johannesburg at that time. The slogan, "Land, Food and Jobs", boldly inscribed on the LPM's red banners and t-shirts, could be seen as a call on the unemployed in the squatter camps around the big cities to join in the struggle for land.

LPM activists argue that the neo-liberal macro-economic policy and the property rights clause in the Constitution are the main barriers to land reform that could benefit poor peasants. These points were repeated several times at a tribunal against landlessness and rural poverty attended by more than 300 representatives of landless peasants in December 2003. This tribunal then challenged government to scrap the property rights clause and its 'willing seller willing buyer' land redistribution policy. Government officials simply reiterated the state's faith in private property and markets and declared that there will be no large-scale confiscation of productive farmland. ●

UCT AND LENTEGEUR HOSPITAL WORKERS SHOW THE WAY

Workers at Lentegeur Hospital in Mitchell's Plain and at the University of Cape Town have been compelled to confront the consequences of outsourcing at these institutions. Their experiences are remarkably similar. In line with the government's policy of privatisation and the neo-liberal approach of reducing the role of the state in the provision of social services, the management at these two institutions has decided that tasks such as cleaning, catering, ground maintenance and security are not part of their "core function" and they must be outsourced to private contractors. Not only have jobs been lost but workers who have been pushed under the control of these private contractors have lost their pension fund and medical care benefits. In many cases workers now have to work longer hours and most of the victims of outsourcing have also suffered wage cuts in the region of 50%. Some workers who formerly earned about R3000 per month now have to try to exist on a salary of R1200 per month or less. This is done in the name of the much vaunted government promotion of the so-called public-private partnership.

A further consequence of this outsourcing has been that workers who were formerly united in one trade union now find themselves in various, different unions with many also no longer unionised. But what is most

important is that these workers have recognised that they were all faced with the same threats and that unity was essential in their fight to defend their rights and interests. At UCT workers have united across union lines under the banner of the UCT Workers' Forum while at Lentegeur they have come together under the banner of the Lentegeur Labour Caucus.

The UCT and Lentegeur workers have made an extremely significant advance, considering that their unions are members of different federations. While the major labour union federations have collaborated in wage negotiations we know of no case where they have used their collective muscle to come to the defence of workers faced with the blight of outsourcing and job casualisation. Their participation in Nedlac has likewise proved useless and only serves to give respectability to the governments privatisation policies.

The worker unity forged in struggle at UCT and Lentegeur hospital has the potential to become a powerful means to counter all the neo-liberal measures that have been used to weaken and undermine the power of trade unions. Activists of the Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum have played a not insignificant role in these two struggles. This raises a new challenge as to what an organisation such as the APF, or any other organisation for that matter, can play in developing and broadening this new front of worker unity and struggle. There are many unanswered questions and real political vision will be required. ●

R300 TOLL ROAD - EXPLOITATION IN ANOTHER GUISE

The scheme to extend the present R300 and make it a toll road in the Cape Town metropole has raised strong objections from various quarters. Unfortunately, it appears that the members of the poor working communities who live along this route and use it daily, have little knowledge of these plans. This is in spite of the fact that the consortium that is driving this scheme is supposed to ensure that the public at large is given an opportunity to give their views on the proposal. This is according to the public participation process that is being touted by the government. The Cape Town Anti-Privatisation Forum has joined the opposition to this scheme and has linked up with another opposition group – The Ring Road Forum, which has highlighted the disastrous environmental damage that will result. Judging by the reaction of people who it has reached the opposition is potentially widespread and extremely strong.

The only reason for this toll road is that it is seen as a good money making scheme by the consortium that is pushing it - Peninsula Expressway or Penway for short. The partners in this consortium are Murray & Roberts, Tolcon, Power Construction and lastly, African Renaissance, which is a black economic empowerment enterprise. The reason that Penway puts forward to justify this project is that it will ease the problem of traffic congestion on Cape Town's roads and it will also

have the economic benefits of improved transport and less wear and tear on motor vehicles and so on. But questions can be asked about how much traffic congestion can be eased if virtually every entry and exit to the road will be controlled by some tolling facility. In any case it is quite likely that while congestion might be eased on the R300 itself there will be serious bottle necks where it ends. It should be obvious to any one that to deal with the problem of traffic congestion in a fundamental way there is the need to build a cheap and efficient public transport system that will take thousands of single passenger commuter vehicles off the roads. But such thinking is of no use to Penway as there is no money to be made along that route. It is better for them to construct this toll road and at the same time create serious and irreversible damage to the important False Bay ecology park.

Penway has been given the go ahead to plan this scheme by South African National Roads Agency Ltd – Sanral. Sanral is a private company but the only share holder is the government!. Sanral is responsible for national road works and maintenance but it says that it does not have sufficient funds to do its work. This is in spite of the fact that the state collects between R15 and R20 billion per annum for road works via the national fuel levy. But only about R1 billion is allocated to Sanral annually which means that after its important salary bill there is very

little left for roads. But Sanral is based on the neo-liberal mantra that the market is the best mechanism to decide what is best for the economy and society as a whole. According to this ideology, Sanral makes no plans around what is needed as one would expect. Instead, it sits back and waits for private business ventures such as Penway to come forward with their own schemes of building toll roads where they think they can make easy money. Sanral happily backs such ventures and apparently it also collects a share of the tolls.

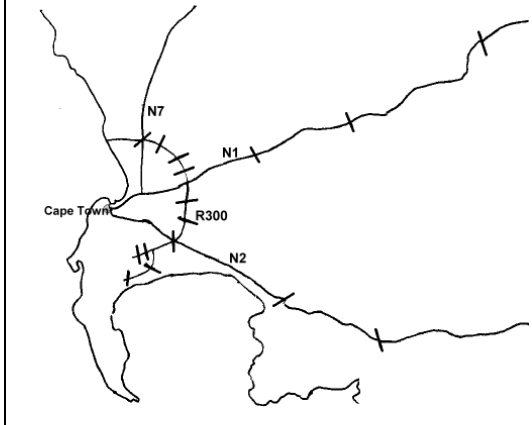
Today our government admits that its reliance on the business sector to build the economy and alleviate poverty has not born any fruit. Yet it continues with its privatisation and pro-business policies at the expense of the poor under the guise of its public/private participation process in all its activities. If the government is serious about attending to the needs of the poor than Sanral should be liquidated and road works should be the full responsibility of the public works department.

The control and tolling of public roads by private companies shows that the exploitation of the working class is not confined to the shop floor. Workers will have to pay increased transport costs in the form of bus and taxi fares. The costs of transporting consumer goods are also increased and those who can least afford higher prices must pay. All this so that a handful of business men can become stinking rich. ●

SIGNPOSTS TO THE DEBATE ABOUT TOLL ROADS AND FUEL LEVIES

- **The National Fuel Levy** was first implemented to cover the costs of road works. In 1987 fuel levy funds were added to the collective revenue handled by the Department of Finance.
- **Road Management Restructured** in 1998, in line with the post 1994 change of public works in public-private partnerships. The South African National Roads Agency Ltd (SANRAL) was tasked to run the country's national roads on commercial lines, i.e., also raise funds. SANRAL mainly financed ex national budget via Transport Dept.
- **Crisis of poor, dangerous, under funded roads** by year 2000. Attributed by then Minister of Transport to trend of diverting road-budget to fund shortfall in govt. expenditure in other functions. The road budget was half of what his department needed.
- **Income from road users** : +-R26 billion per annum. Fuel levy equals about 28% of fuel price, Includes Customs duty, road accident fund tax and "road-works" tax.
- **Estimate of Roads Budget for year 2000** +- R3 billion for national roads. +- R1billion used by Sanral and R2 billion for provincial roads. Only 2.6% actually spent on roads, according to SABITA. The rest spent on salaries and wages.
- **Other Provincial/Municipal road funding** – comes from vehicle licences and traffic fees. W.Cape proposing its own fuel levy. Its Transport & public Works Dept. uses road user income for roads, schools and hospitals, etc.
- **Tolling** - The Sanral solution. Cities ringed by tolls. Proposed toll roads by consortiums with Black economic empowerment partners approved by Sanral even though counter to City Council plans.
- **Public - No!** to paying private companies for using roads. Taxes are more than enough. Public transport needed!
- **Another Debate?** – The proposed Pondoland Toll Road.

PROPOSED TOLL POINTS AROUND CAPE TOWN – A CITY HELD TO RANSOM?



THE APF AND THE DEMAND FOR A CONSITUENT ASSEMBLY

The April 2004 APDUSA conference paper entitled 'The new social movements in SA – realities and prospects' states: "... Some of the demands from the APDUSA programme and the SMI linkage are the following: *the demand, for the convening of a democratically elected constituent assembly, relate to the still prevalent attachment and trust of the masses in the parliament of the bourgeoisie. Do we tactically highlight a demand like this in the present time? Is the level of disillusionment high enough to strike out on such a path?...*"



From Around the World

RESPECT AND ELECTIONS IN ENGLAND

Respect (Respect, Equality, Socialism, Peace, Environmentalism, Community and Trade Unionism) emerged as a coalition arising out of the UK anti-war movement at the beginning of this year to contest the European elections in June. Others who formed part of the coalition, came from the anti-capitalist (anti-globalisation) movement, disaffected members of the Labour Party and trade unionists. In a short space of time Respect has begun to establish itself on the left as an alternative to New Labour and its neo-liberal policies.

While many on the left have quibbled about its founding declaration not being explicitly socialist, its emphasis on democratic control and common ownership of the railways and other public services shows the direction in which it proposes to move.

In the last general election, as a result of voter dissatisfaction with the established parties, the turnout at the polls was the lowest since universal suffrage was

The APF (Gauteng) workshop on 'Local Government Elections' held on 31 July answered the question. In motivating its answer in the plenary, the workshop commission pointed out that the local government is undemocratic. The mayors, the commission proceeded, are not elected by the people but appointed by the president. The effect of this can be seen in the ruthlessness with which, the mayor and his councillors, are serving big capital. The commission cited the manner and number of evictions, water and electricity cut offs, etc, that are taking place at local level. The fierce struggle waged by communities against municipal councils runs contrary to the popular view that at the local level the people are nearer to the instruments of government and thus their voices are easily heard.

The Constituent Assembly, as viewed by the commission, is seen as a structure that is mass based and through which the accountability of government officials can be enforced at local level. The cornerstone of this accountability is the **RIGHT TO RECALL** - not only of any despot, e.g. a mayor, but his rascals as well (viz. the councillors).

"Do we tactically highlight a demand like this in the present time?" Runs the question in the APDUSA conference paper. What is important 'in the present time' is the fact that this demand is being introduced. It's very introduction will give us a concrete indication of its tactical appropriateness and will raise a lot of question in a variety of political scenarios including. For now let us applaud the very attempt of its introduction and make sure that it succeeds.

*Forward to the demand for a Constituent Assembly
Forward!*

introduced. There was a rise in the turnout for the 2004 European elections as compared to the previous one but an erosion in support for the two main parties, New Labour and the Tories. There was a polarisation of the political process as voters turned either to parties on the right or the left of the centre, with the centre of gravity moving to the right.

On the right, the party that benefited most from the disaffection of voters with the mainstream parties was the UK Independence Party (UKIP). Its policies are based on hostility to immigrants and asylum seekers and opposition to the European Union, with its stated aim of negotiating the UK's withdrawal. It secured more votes and the same number of representatives as the Liberals in the European parliament. Further to the right, the fascist British National Party (BNP) obtained 800,000 votes nationally but did not succeed in securing an elected parliamentary representative

Voters supporting parties to the left of the political spectrum voted either for the Green Party or Respect. The Green Party, with its program based on sustainable

Continued on Page 4

➡ development, refused an offer from Respect to form a coalition to fight the elections. It secured two parliamentary representatives. Respect won 250,000 votes but did not gain a parliamentary representative. Although it obtained only 1.7% of the votes nationally, it scored heavily in a number of inner-city areas with large working class ethnic minority populations. Thus in a borough in the East End of London it won over 20% of the votes, topping the poll. In ten Birmingham inner-city wards it polled an average of 24% of the vote. In the Northern city of Leicester it polled 9.2% of the poll and in Preston, where it stood in five council elections it polled an average 30%.

The breakthrough of the left into ethnic minority communities is a big step forward. Previously most blacks and Asians voted Labour. In the election campaign Respect distinguished itself from the other parties in that it was the only genuine anti-war party, advocating an immediate end to the occupation of Iraq and the withdrawal of the imperialist armies. It was the only party which consistently defended asylum seekers.

Confirmation of the support that Respect is building up in the ethnic minority, working class communities in the inner cities comes with the parliamentary by-election results in Leicester and Birmingham and a council by-election result in London. In Leicester South the Respect

candidate obtained over 12% share of the votes and in Hodge Hill, Birmingham over 6% of the vote. The Respect candidates saved their deposits in both constituencies. In the council by-election in East London, (St Dunstons and Stepney Green) Respect's first councillor was elected under its own name.

Respect has the potentiality of becoming a broad based socialist party as an integral part of the process taking place in Europe, where parties to the left of social democracy such as the Scottish Socialist Party have been established. These parties are involved in the politics of "rehabilitating socialism". Respect has a wider base than the Socialist Alliance, which was unable to draw into its ranks significant numbers of members of the ethnic minority community such as the Muslims. Among the trade unions, several branches of the railway union, the Railway, Maritime and Transport Union (RMT) have affiliated to Respect. It is the task of Respect to build from the grass roots well organised local branches and other structures which are democratic and pluralist. It has to be a campaigning party taking up the many issues that affect the population as well as being involved in the electoral process. It needs to adopt a constitution and an organisational structure. It has called a national conference in October to discuss outstanding issues. ●

VENEZUELA:

BOLIVARIAN REVOLUTION AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Venezuela's president, Hugo Chavez, won the recall election that took place at the behest of an opposing coalition called Democratic Coordinator. Chavez won 59% of the votes cast in the August 15-16 recall referendum, while a national opinion poll that *Datanalisis* conducted before the elections gave him only 41% of the vote. His opposition, Democratic Coordinator, reluctantly accepted the final election results after two credible international observers endorsed it as "free and fair". Shortly after the Organization of America States and the Atlanta-based Carter Centre, linked to former US president Jimmy Carter, had issued their fraud-free declaration, even America accepted the outcome.

According to the opposition, and those who back them in America and elsewhere, Hugo Chavez is an undemocratic dictator who bribed poor voters with social programmes funded from oil revenue. Even if one agrees with these claims, it is quite clear that these charges reflect a bitter loathing of Hugo Chavez as well as the depth of the split and conflict in that country. The fundamental political divide in Venezuela is along class lines. President Chavez has his support-base among poor workers and peasants who comprise 80% of

this nation of 25 million. The opposition consists of the old elite and their pals who ruled the country through a two-party oligarchy for almost 4 decades. They used the wealth of the country for their own enrichment and thus discredited themselves in the eyes of the poor majority.

What evidence exists that Hugo Chavez introduced an undemocratic dictatorship in Venezuela or is logically moving in this direction? A basic, and universally accepted, gauge of the degree of democracy is the access of the population to genuine bourgeois democratic freedoms. Any person who has taken the effort to examine unfolding events in Venezuela since Hugo Chavez came to power in 1999 will agree that these rights - including the freedom to vote, organise and protest as well as private capitalist property rights - are well protected by Venezuela's new Constitution.

In contrast to these established criteria of democracy the opposition instead base their assertions on Chavez's friendship with Cuba and his fierce resistance to US imperialism. But how consistent is this yardstick of democracy given the fact that many so-called democratic countries across the globe, take South

Africa for example, maintain friendly relations with both Cuba and the US? Or does the opposition deny an independent state the democratic right at an international level to determine its own foreign policy? It is absurd to reason that every country that challenges the role of the US in the world today is an 'undemocratic dictatorship'. In the standoff between France and America on the military invasion and occupation of Iraq, France was not called an 'undemocratic dictatorship'. International public opinion seems to be reserving this label for the American-led coalition instead!

Is this anti-Chavez opposition really such a champion of democracy in practice? In April 2002, when the opposition held power for two days after their coup, one of its first acts was to suspend the new Constitution. Was this not a dictatorial and undemocratic act? It subverted its own rule as it detonated mass demonstrations against the 'regime of the coup plotters'. For poor people quickly sensed the dangers in this scrapping of the Constitution and were left with a clear-cut choice: either witness the old oligarchy smashing the democratic gains of the

Continued on Page 6

➡ 'Bolivarian Revolution' or defend those gains with a determined fight.

Hugo Chavez says he stands for 'social humanism' and 'participatory democracy' and not Marxian socialism. He won the 1998 elections on a platform for the convocation of a democratically elected Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution that reflects the demands and aspirations of working people. On 25 April 1999, 92,17% of Venezuelans voted in favour of a Constituent Assembly. For the first time in Venezuela's history, genuine political space opened for the poor and indigenous to participate in drawing up a new Constitution. It was not mere window dressing because the final constitution incorporated more than 50% of the 624 proposals put forward by civil society groups.

An unprecedented political mobilization of poor people occurred at local and regional level, which fundamentally changed the relationship of class forces to the advantage of the working class and peasantry. 'Bolivarian Circles'

emerged spontaneously around community development projects since 2000, marking the start of popular participatory democracy. Thereafter Chavez encouraged communities to form these circles to enable them to decide on questions of health and education policy, repairing neighbourhood infrastructure and so on. At the start of 2004 there were 200,000 of these circles, each consisting of 7-10 members. These structures are now being strengthened and united in a nationwide network of 'Bolivarian Houses' (*Casas Bolivarianas*). But the fundamental overhaul of society must naturally extend beyond these forms of participatory democracy. It must, in the final analysis, register improvements in people's material conditions of life.

Chavez embarked on this process long before the current oil-price spike and the recall referendum. Under Plan Bolivar 2000, the state employed the armed forces to build infrastructure, distribute food and deliver healthcare and education to the poor. With the

assistance of Cuban doctors and teachers it launched special healthcare (inside the barrio) and literacy (Mission Robinson) campaigns. But there is no reason why Venezuela should not use its economic wealth and enormous potential to better the lives of its workers and peasants. All evidence show that the restructuring of the oil sector to achieve this goal is not done at the expense of productivity and it will not undermine the long-run sustainability of the country's oil output.

Rapid progress in agrarian reform can be seen. Until the end of 2003, the state redistributed 600,000 hectares of land - unused and productive farmland - to 1,2 million peasants. It extended credit to them and made 2000 new tractors available. Chavez committed himself to further increase the pace of land reform. In a televised speech after his victory Chavez said: "The time has come to accelerate the transformation. The revolution has just begun." ●

Letters

THE MASS WORKERS PARTY vs THE VANGUARD PARTY

Comrades

The argument for a 'Mass Workers Party' appears to be popular amongst the 'Left' intelligentsia today. I hope that this contribution will generate more debate around the question. I would like to put this argument in the light of the emergence of the Social Movement and contend that the argument for a 'Vanguard Party' is a more appropriate one.

By a workers party, I assume, is meant an organised, conscious, expression for the socialist revolution by the working class. The very call recognises that such an organised expression is historically determined and that its very non-existence means that certain historical conditions, whether objective or subjective, are not yet ripe.

The question that we need to pose is; how does the call for a 'Mass Workers Party' fit in with the emergence of the Social Movement (SM)? Does it run parallel to it? Does it substitute it? The SMI is a federal type mass based formation which, in spite of its weaknesses, has nevertheless posed a clear ideological path for the struggle viz., non-collaboration with the bourgeois ruling class. The nearest historical example to the Social Movement

is the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA). Without overlooking any of the differences between the SMI and UMSA one cannot fail to observe the similarities in structure and ideological character which suggests a more or less identical development in addressing political needs and its parallel organisational requirements.

We can therefore not ignore the significance of the UMSA in searching for answers. A closer look at UMSA in the early 1960s, with the formation of the APDUSA, reveals an interesting political development in this: **a unitary political coordination within the federal structure of people's organisations was forged.** APDUSA was not to be a workers' party. But it saw a 'Workers Party' as an appropriate instrument that would lead the socialist revolution. It thus saw itself as a facilitator of such a party, acting as a bridge, organisationally and politically, between the need for bread and butter struggles waged by people's organisations and the necessity for a Revolutionary Workers Party.

The programme of APDUSA reflects its role and is well explained in the conference paper of April 2004 entitled 'The new social movements in SA – realities and prospects, page 2, 5th paragraph):

"As generally understood, the transitional demands contained in the [APDUSA] programme is meant to guide us in struggle i.e. provide direction towards the future society that we want to construct. The demands act as a bridgehead between the present-day struggles in

Continued on Page 7

➡ the SMI and the future socialist society. The demands of the people as articulated in the SMI therefore need to be given a present and future context. Hence the need for us to propagate these demands in relation to the struggles that are ongoing around us. What we should remind ourselves about is that as a collective these demands represent a decisive, revolutionary break with bourgeois rule...”

What would be the relevance of national political coordination in the SMI? Its immediate or short term objectives would be:

1. To bring the advanced cadres of the various affiliates of the SMI under the Transitional Programme
2. To politically co-ordinate the various bread and butter struggles along the lines of the Transitional Programme.
3. To pin down the leadership of its affiliates to the political interests of the working class and the landless peasantry.
4. To root the ideology of the SMI in the political alliance of the working class and the landless peasantry, instead of the ‘Charterists’ political alliance of the working class with the bourgeoisie.
5. To facilitate the emergence of SMI structures in areas where they are not in existence so that an individual or group may join a political organ and be subjected to the same discipline in the attempt to build SMI there.
6. To give the SMI a Southern African Perspective.

The long term objectives would be to:

1. synchronise the various political tendencies of the ‘Left’ within the SMI
2. orientate bread and butter issues towards socialist objectives.
3. serve as a political link between the SMI and a ‘Vanguard Workers Party’.

The very existence of the SMI has had a gravitational effect on the various political tendencies cooperating within it. It is possible to assume that these tendencies can constitute the nucleus of a political organ in that the very ability to cooperate within the SMI reveals commonalities in their programs. From this nucleus a vanguard can develop. By “Vanguard” is meant a significant weight of the advanced elements in the working class. Its tempo of development cannot be pre-determined as it will necessarily be determined by the objective realities that drive the SMI.

The argument for the “Mass Workers Party” does not take into account the dialectical relationship between the development of political consciousness with its crystallisation into political organs. For instance, the working class is not homogenous and the Marxist Party is constituted by the most conscious elements. The swelling of the ranks of the party is determined by the advancement of revolutionary class consciousness. The dialectical relationship between the advance and the backward sections of the working class only confirms the rule

that the ‘Mass’ will be determined by the struggle and not by the formal establishment of the party.

If the dialectical logic within the SMI points to a formation of a political organ of the SMI, leading to a vanguard party, then what becomes of the SMI? The APDUSA conference paper quoted above had this to say : “...the accountability which the [APDUSA] programme calls for under point 6 is political practice that ought to be implemented in a forum such as the SMI. In doing so people get to understand that the SMI as a representative body in fact occupies a higher level of political relevance than local institutions of state. This greater relevance will be rooted in the fact that it has a greater legitimacy. If developed to its logical conclusion a soviet style system of government, parallel to that of the state will represent a tremendous advance in the struggle of the masses.”

Thus the tasks of revolutionaries today is to assist the SMI to develop towards a ‘soviet’ style organ - i.e. an organ for the democratic rule (dictatorship) of the working class - whilst building a ‘Marxist Workers Party’ that will clarify and consolidate the ideological march of the working class in that ‘soviet’. Thus the coming into being of a “Mass Workers Party” would be the signal of the close proximity of the revolution with all its organs clearly defined.

Eltee

MARCHING BACKWARDS?

‘Backwards we shall march’ is what the public sector workers and the students at tertiary institutions in Cape Town should be singing when they next decide to march again. In the week, 30/8 to 3/9. we witnessed the age-old spectacle of SASCO and its campus affiliates marching in the demand for free education and against exclusions of students from tertiary study on the basis of inability to pay. We cannot but support these demands. However, a few days later, teachers and nurses marched along the same route to parliament for their wage demands.

We once more find people still labouring under the ANC/UDF mentality of fighting battles in isolation of one another without regard for the root of the problem. It is a consciousness that has persisted for more than a decade, not learning from mistakes of the past or endeavouring to improve on methods of struggle in the present. Instead of highlighting the fundamental school and general education malaise, and formulating demands around these, our brothers and sisters choose to rally only around a percentage pay increase. Instead of raising demands of health workers in conjunction with demands of teachers, our union leaders rather chose to steer clear of these political imperatives. They will continue doing so and in the process yet again mislead people en masse. The time for a political re-awakening is now.

APDUSA

APDUSA was established in 1961 by the Unity Movement of South Africa (UMSA) to raise the interests of the working class and landless peasantry as paramount in the national liberatory struggle. Despite the gain of political rights for all, the compromise of 1992 has not fulfilled the national 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. We have therefore adopted a programme of transitional demands for the completion of the unfinished tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution in an uninterrupted struggle for socialism.

APDUSA calls for the self-organisation and united independent struggle of the labouring masses. We further 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

We 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.
 - 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.

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