



THE APDUSAN

AFRICAN PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UNION
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

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50c

**THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS AND LANDLESS PEASANTS
SHALL BE PARAMOUNT !**

A NATIONAL PLAN AGAINST THE POOR iGOLI 2002

The iGoli 2002 plan for the privatisation of public services in Greater Johannesburg represents a serious attack on the already miserable living standards of the poverty-stricken masses. There is little doubt that the government intends that every local council must follow suit to implement the same scheme in every city and town across the country. In the June 1997 edition of the "APDUSAN" an article entitled "The fight against privatisation" deals with the background to privatisation, the government's policy in this regard and other related matters. In the section dealing with "An economic function for the (capitalist) state" the following is said : *"In order to build themselves up capitalist businesses adopt different methods at different times. During phases of weakness and economic difficulty the government, which is in charge of a large social fund, is roped in to accelerate capitalist expansion. It is called upon to finance the construction of major industries. Iscor, Eskom, Armscor and so on were all built up out of state funds. Through organised and consistent struggle, the oppressed classes make tremendous gains. Victories include the financing of education, health, unemployment insurance, etc, out of the social fund managed by the government. While the capitalists can increase profits, they reluctantly concede to such welfare services. But as conditions for making profits become more difficult, they hit back to reclaim what they conceded to the poor yesterday."*

All the actions of the government and the capitalist class regarding the iGoli 2002 plan, should be viewed in the light of the above. As reported in previous editions of the APDUSAN, the implementation of the privatisation of basic public services in the Greater Johannesburg metropole (or the setting up of public-private partnerships with the same objective in mind) has evoked a strong response from people's organisations. The government is nevertheless proceeding full steam ahead and will in due course start implementing similar programmes elsewhere in the country.

Such is the brazenness which has come to characterise government policy. In response to protests they offer all sorts of rationalisations, none answering the real and devastating effects these policies will have on the

workers and their dependants. These actions clearly show the working class that in their present and future battles they are faced with the representatives of the capitalist class whose reason for existence is to enrich themselves at the expense of the majority and to execute the pro-capitalist political and economic agenda irrespective of the social costs to the poor majority. These are the people who, after entrenching themselves in positions of power and influence, are today confident enough to proceed with these actions knowing that they can call on the repressive apparatus of the state (courts and prisons, parliament, police and army) to follow through with their oppressive policies. They also take heart from the fact that the ability of the working class and their allies to effectively counter their policies, is at present limited. Hence their steamroller attitude in the iGoli 2002 battle. They are telling us that we should shut up and listen to them - the experts. All this in the glorious name of "transformation" and "the realities of being part of the global economy", not to forget the much abused "democratic" label.

In various meetings around Johannesburg recently, strong opposition to the iGoli 2000 plan was expressed by trade unionists, students, civic and political organisations alike. APDUSA has participated in the establishment of a broad alliance to resist and combat this scheme. The unity of the oppressed and exploited labouring masses across the country, under the leadership of their won independent organisations, is of paramount importance for this struggle to be waged successfully. Once again it becomes clear that the defeat of legalised apartheid has been but a limited victory while the socio-economic plight of the majority is growing worse rather than better. The struggle continues. ●

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A CALL FOR UNITY

Manenberg Tornado Victims Take Up The Broader Challenge

The Manenberg Disaster Community (MDC) took the bold step of convening a meeting on 9 April to address the manifold problems facing the working class today. In its ongoing battle with the Cape Town City Council to rehouse the victims of the tornado that struck the area last year out of the insurance and disaster relief funds, which the City Council refuses to do and insists that the people must pay for new homes themselves, the MDC reached the conclusion that its fight was but a part of the struggle of the broader community. The "Urban Renewal" program of the City Council in which it divests itself of any responsibility for the needs of the poor, affects all squatter camp and township dwellers and not just the tornado victims of Manenberg.

A number of organisations were

invited to this convention but unfortunately, only a few responded. Nevertheless, it was an enthusiastic meeting, reflecting a high level of understanding of the problems confronting those who are forced to eke out an existence in the squatter camps and sub-economic townships which besmirch the land.

Besides the speakers who highlighted the plight of the tornado victims, most of whom have been rehoused in cramped temporary shelters without any amenities and who face enormous health risks, others focussed on the broader issues. A speaker from the MDC highlighted the effects of unemployment and escalating retrenchment and poverty on the people in the townships, while a representative from COSATU spoke on its campaign against unemployment and its opposition

to the GEAR macro-economic policy of the government. Finally, a speaker from APDUSA endorsed the call for broad based unity of independent organisations of the oppressed and exploited, emphasising the need to learn the lessons of past struggles. While the oppressed and exploited masses have won a partial victory in the defeat of legalised apartheid, their fundamental socio-economic problems have yet to be resolved and the struggle must continue.

The success of this meeting is yet to be measured but efforts such as these and the mounting campaign against the Igoli 2002 project show that the exploited masses are not prepared to lie down in the face of new techniques of oppression and exploitation. ●

MAY DAY RALLY

A general analysis of May Day by workers in Gauteng reveals that attendance was not satisfactory. Many reasons have been forwarded, beginning from poor organisation, that there were insufficient buses to transport the workers, to the fact that May Day was part of a long weekend. What concerns us however is the following incident:

At the FNB stadium rally the ANC gave support to the 10th of May General Strike of COSATU. This seems to have satisfied some workers. We have nothing else but harsh words for such workers because they are not learning from the bitter experiences that have resulted from the GEAR policy of the ANC government. Let us make this point clear: the ANC is a petit bourgeois-led organisation that has no other interests except serving capital. A clear class line runs between its interests and the socialist interests of the workers. Only the worst opportunists can place themselves on the capitalist side of that class line without being ashamed. As for the ANC, in ditching the RDP and adopting the GEAR policy, it has made itself clear, it serves our class enemy - full-stop.

At the FNB stadium the ANC was merely paying lip-service to the workers' struggle in view of the coming local elections. We must not forget that the general strike was, after all, against the policies of the ANC itself! ●

WHITHER THE ALLIANCE?

At a meeting of the COSATU Johannesburg Local the South African Communist Party (SACP) found itself in a rather awkward situation. It had announced that on the 16-18th of May a privatisation conference would take place in Sandton where, amongst other people, Jeff Radebe and Kenny Fihla, would be speaking. It then requested workers to go and picket against the conference.

A worker stood up and asked: "how can the SACP request us to go and protest against Jeff Radebe an executive member of the SACP?" OOPS! The SACP responded by saying that all of its members who are in government or parliament represent the interests of the ANC not the SACP. Another answer given was that a letter had been written to Jeff to demand of him to speak only in the interests of the workers. The workers at the meeting could not help themselves but to giggle over these gimmicks.

One thing comes out clearly. The SACP's line of fighting to "complete the process of democratic transformation", that excuse for it to run with the hares and chase with the hounds, is fast being exposed in the eyes of the workers. How far can this deceptive alliance of labour and capital last? That depends not on the workers alone but on the work of all revolutionary organisations to offer them a real alternative. ●

COSATU UNDER FIRE ON TRIPARTITE ALLIANCE

A workshop, attended by 40-50 people, was held at the Workers Library in Johannesburg on the 25th March to discuss whether COSATU should remain in the Tripartite Alliance or break away from it. The speaker in favour of COSATU remaining in the alliance, a shopsteward from the South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU), argued that the alliance was broad and historical, that the ANC was the leading partner but that the SA Communist Party was in the vanguard! The alliance was based on national democratic demands first formulated in the Freedom Charter, which COSATU had adopted in 1985. He admitted however that the workers had not achieved much since the democratic breakthrough in 1994 and that real freedom would only come with economic freedom. The workers must fight to control the means of production through the SACP, while the ANC must speak out against retrenchments, but the alliance must be maintained.

The majority of those, who spoke from the floor, representing organisations like APDUSA, Socialist Alternative (formerly Marxist Workers Tendency) and individual shopstewards and workers, roundly attacked the views of the speaker in favour of the alliance. An Apdusan asked how COSATU, which was opposed to GEAR could at the same time support the ANC government, which was implementing the GEAR policy and yet was supposed to carry out the policies of the alliance. The SACP provided a cover for the reactionary policies of the ANC government and workers were expected to fall in line behind their "leaders". A member of Socialist Alternative pointed out that the alliance supported the preservation of the state machine and that it had become a trap for the workers. A member of the SACP said the government was disciplining the workers to carry out capitalist policies and that the nationalist route had failed but nevertheless the alliance did have some merit!

THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET

For some time there has been talk of a "safety net" that will be available to workers who end up being retrenched, the idea being that the company concerned will provide retraining in skills appropriate for the said employees to use upon being retrenched. A typical case is the situation of Telkom workers who have recently been retrenched. According to an article in the Mail and Guardian of 19 May 2000 Telkom "outsourced" 958 workers to a black empowerment company Molapo Technology. This company then proceeded to retrench about a third of these workers. According to a spokesman for the Communication Workers' Union, Telkom, as

part of the arrangement, informed workers that their jobs at the new company would be guaranteed. The standard denials and rationalisations on the part of the companies concerned followed.

This is an illustration of the lengths that the capitalists and their handmaidens will go to defend their interests. The deceit and double talk is typical of an oppressor class which must hide behind smokescreens to get its policies accepted by the working class. The future will see more of these actions, and failing that, more direct and blatant attacks on the labouring classes. ●

TEACHER CONTROL

A new Bill is soon to be tabled in parliament, namely "The Education Laws Amendment Act" (Cape Times, 15/05/2000). The bill contains five categories of serious offences, for which teachers will be fired if found guilty after a series of investigations. The bill also covers amendments to the Employment of Educators Act, the National Education and Policy Act and the South African Schools Act.

At a speech to the Mamelodi community in Pretoria, Kader Asmal (Minister of Education) said that the bill would "streamline" the process of disciplining teachers. (ibid.). At the moment if a teacher faces charges of misconduct, he or she is brought before a tribunal. The tribunal consists mainly of union members "who (according to Asmal) make it difficult if not impossible" to discipline or fire teachers.

The new bill makes provision for an investigation to start, if there is evidence of a teacher misbehaving. If a preliminary investigation yields enough evidence, then the offending teacher will be charged with misconduct by the Department of Education. A presiding officer will be appointed to deal with the case, who can recommend a dismissal if the teacher is found guilty.

No one will disagree that teachers who are guilty of misconduct or dereliction of duty must be brought to book. The question that arises here is who decides what constitutes misconduct and to what end? If a teacher refuses to carry out a bureaucratic dictate of the Education Department which will have a negative effect on the students is this misconduct? We have been through all of this in the past under the old oppressive regime. Our new government is not doing much better so why should we drop our guard now?

APDUSA says that this new law is just another way of taking the matters of education out of the hands of the people responsible for it, the teachers, alongside the students and their parents. This is also an attack on the teachers' unions and is a mechanism to sideline them. The fraternity involved in education must not take this lying down. Involve the organs of the community that are existing (like Parent Teacher Student Associations). Link up with other organisations and resist this, because worse is sure to follow. The teachers must not try to fight this in isolation of the broader struggle because this is but just one facet of the broader struggle. ●



From Around the World

IMPERIALIST INSTITUTIONS FACE MASS DEMONSTRATIONS

"Shutdown the IMF and World Bank!" This slogan attracted thousands of "anti-globalisation" protestors to Washington DC to stop the Spring meetings of the Bretton Woods twins. Many demonstrators saw April 16 & 17 as the sequel to the demonstrations in Seattle last November to "Abolish the WTO".

When the IMF and World Bank big shots posed for the media briefings after their meeting, they had to respond directly to the anti-big business voices from the streets. The bureaucrats had to tackle the charge that they are helping to impoverish people across the world; they had to deflect the attacks of their outspoken enemies. What strategy did James Wolfensohn, head of the World Bank, and his army manufacture? They jumped on the bandwagon of combating AIDS which is killing so many poor people. So, where is the catch in this trick? The World Bank resolved to pump "limitless dollars" into private drug research corporations. Many other incentives, including tax credits, will be offered to the private sector to "create a market for anti-AIDS vaccines". (The Economist, 22/29 April 2000) According to them, a stronger dose of capitalism will clear up the healthcare mess it caused! But the reason why the fight against AIDS remains ineffective is to be found in the capitalist control over healthcare. Capitalist healthcare is not about curing people but securing super-profits for drug companies. As anyone can see, these agents of imperialism think nothing of using the poor to enrich their paymasters.

This anti-AIDS hullabaloo concealed the infighting plaguing these institutions. These imperialist policing agencies get paid handsomely for hiding the fact that the source of their internal quarrels is the capitalist system itself. Shortly

before the spring sessions, Germany was badly beaten by America about who should be the next IMF Chief. America virtually appointed the German candidate, Horst Köhler, with bids by Japan and Africa thrown out. They could not even settle on the self-reform recommendations by the Meltzer commission. They used the fact that President Museveni from Uganda recently purchased a jet of \$36m to sidestep scrapping all the debt. Although there have been whispers for 3 years about the "private lenders and investors" sharing responsibility for the "Asian crisis", nothing is being done! Both the Financial Times of April 19 2000 and The Economist of April 22 declared the Spring meetings a failure.

But what is needed is not just periodic demonstrations in one city here or there around the globe, but the building of an international movement around an international anti-neoliberal programme. It must also be ensured that challenging this or that symptom of imperialism should contribute to overthrowing the underlying system.

ISRAEL'S DEFEAT IN LEBANON

The last detachment of Israeli army soldiers in Lebanon have withdrawn into Israel following the disintegration of its surrogate army, the South Lebanon Army (SLA) as a fighting force. This occurs 22 years after Israel created the SLA when it first invaded Southern Lebanon. Later it occupied part of Southern Lebanon, establishing a 15 kilometre buffer zone, which it claimed was vital for its security. Hizbollah, an indigenous Lebanese guerrilla force,

backed by Iran and Syria, has inflicted a humiliating defeat on Israel.

Israel's real objective in invading Lebanon was stated by its Chief of Staff at the time, Rafael Eitan "We destroyed the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) as a candidate for negotiations with us about the Land of Israel". During the course of their occupation, the Israelis created havoc in Lebanon, bombing and destroying much of Southern Lebanon and the capital city, Beirut and being responsible for many atrocities committed against the population. It is estimated that 20 000 people, mostly civilians lost their lives during the occupation. Hundreds of thousands of people became refugees following their expulsion by the Israelis from South Lebanon.

What the Israelis did not bargain for was the resistance to their occupation by the people of Lebanon and the guerrilla force, the Hizbollah. Hundreds of Israeli soldiers were killed and it was their coffins going home that made the war in the Lebanon so unpopular among the Israeli people that the government was in the end forced into the decision to withdraw from Lebanon. Instead of it being an orderly withdrawal, it turned into a rout as the proxy army, the SLA either surrendered to the Hizbollah and the Lebanese army or turned tail, fleeing across the border to Israel and leaving their tanks, guns and ammunition behind them. The success of Hizbollah will give heart to the Palestinians, who are engaged in a pivotal struggle in the region against Israel.

The defeat of Israel in Lebanon, like the defeat of the United State in Vietnam and its failure to crush the little island of Cuba, shows us that in the long run, the military might of reactionary forces is no match for the forces of history. ●

LIVINGSTONE ELECTED MAYOR OF LONDON

A Rebuff for the British Labour Party's Right-Wing Policies

The accession of Ken Livingstone to office as the first elected Mayor of London is a resounding defeat for "New Labour" and its policies. Livingstone declared himself an independent candidate for mayor following the result of an internal Labour Party ballot for the selection of their candidate, in which he won the overwhelming majority of the votes cast, but nevertheless did not get the nomination. This was because the Labour leadership, in conducting the ballot, violated all democratic practice such as according each Labour MP a vote equal to 1000 individual members of the Labour Party!

Livingstone, in his campaign to become mayor, focused on his disagreement with the Labour leadership's plans to privatise the London Underground, which he stressed was his most important difference with the government. He won massive support from,

labour supporters disillusioned with the policies of 'New Labour', which have led to job losses, cuts in spending for social welfare and to the further deterioration of the health and education system. His support came from those who remembered his leadership of the Greater London Council and its policies of reducing transport fares and catering for the needs of minority groups.

Livingstone's challenge to "New Labour" could have been much more effective had he been prepared to support putting up a slate of candidates, committed to socialist policies for the Greater London Assembly, the body which together with the Mayor was elected to run London. This would have been a real alternative to "New Labour". Instead, he chose to offer to work together with the mainstream political parties. His failure to endorse a list of candidates led to the London Socialist Alliance, an alliance of

the major far left groups, putting up a slate of candidates, supporting Livingstone for mayor and fighting for socialist policies. Although it failed to get any of its candidates elected to the Assembly, it conducted a vigorous campaign in support of socialism and signed up more than 2000 active supporters, who were not members of constituent groups.

"New Labour" is committed to its neoliberal policies and transforming the Labour Party into a bourgeois party. However, its loss of core support among traditional supporters of Labour is a problem which will not go away. Livingstone's challenge to "New Labour" presents the far left in Britain, which after many years of splits and divisions has been able to form an alliance, with the opportunity to begin building a socialist alternative to "New Labour". ●

CAMPUS PROTEST IN MEXICO CITY

John Lennon spectacles, Cuban revolutionary songs, Class struggle language, Insurrectionist slogans covering the buildings, Posters of Che Guevara everywhere. These "sixties symbols" marked the nine month strike at the largest university in Latin America.

On 6 February 2000, Mexican President Zedillo, ordered the elite police force to smash the strike at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Over 2200 members of this elite force stormed onto the UNAM-campus. They arrested over 700 protesters, mainly students. According to reports, this crackdown was not like the Tlatelolco square massacre of 2 October 1968 in which nearly 300 protesters were murdered by the army. Nonetheless, up to the first weeks of April over 200 students were still behind prison bars. Charges brought against those imprisoned range from theft to vandalism. Apparently the charge of terrorism, which can lock you in jail for a maximum of 40 years if convicted, had been dropped. The Human Rights Centre in Mexico City meanwhile reported that students have been tortured and sexually abused

by the police.

For the whole duration of the strike, President Zedillo and the university bureaucracy tried to crush it with all their might. They, for instance, replaced Francisco Barnés de Castro with Juan Ramón de la Fuente, the ex-health minister. Dr De la Fuente, a psychiatrist, plotted with a "referendum on the strike" to drive a wedge into the strike movement. When this 'divide-and-rule' manoeuvre failed, President Zedillo instructed the police to attack.

Over 320 000 students, workers and academics at UNAM started the strike on 20 April 1999. The following three demands formed the core of the strike movement's platform:

1. Scrap the \$150 tuition fee that the administration wanted to impose.
2. Break down the bureaucratic operation of the University.
3. Oppose plans to design the curriculum to serve big business.

A teenager attending the UNAM preparatory high school summed up the goal of the fight: "We don't want a university that just serves private companies! We want it to be at the service of society." During the strike links were established between the UNAM strike council, a body coordinating the strike, and

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the Zapatistas in Chiapas. Unity with other anti-capitalist movements, especially those based within the working class, will definitely show as other battles unfold. Although the administration caved in on the tuition demand, the other issues plus the arrest of students and police occupation of the campus produced a highly charged climate. The high level of organisation and sharp political edge marking the UNAM struggle, are modest gains for the overall objective to overthrow capitalism.

Unam Struggle Breeds Revolutionaries

After the Mexican police invaded the UNAM campus, the capitalist press drew an explicitly fearful account of the strike. The Economist of 12th February 2000, described UNAM as "a symbol of publicly financed higher education and a traditional home of left-wing activism". Later this assessment underlined the fact that "the long sit-in will have nurtured future revolutionaries, as previous protest movements did." (page 34). We salute those Mexican comrades for their heroic resistance to the policy of "education for the capitalist market". ●

THE SOUTH AFRICAN LAND QUESTION IN PERSPECTIVE

"Threats of land invasion in South Africa have been made by groups of land claimants in Southern and Eastern Cape who have slammed the commission for delays in restoring land." (Argus 6/7 May 2000).

The demand for land by the peasantry in South Africa has resulted in many revolts in the rural areas. The famous 1960 Pondoland revolt bears testimony to the land hunger of a large part of the population. We in the APDUSA say while 87% of the land belongs to a minority there can be no progress in dealing with the essential socio-economic problems of the country. The 1992/93 negotiated political settlement has left the new petit-bourgeois government with a lot of problems that it is unable to solve.

The Zimbabwean crisis is an indication of what is to come if the land redistribution policy of the ANC government stays mainly on a "willing buyer, willing seller" basis. The R16,000 subsidy offered by the state to poor would-be farmers was grossly inadequate. Now the ANC is proposing a new scheme in which the basic subsidy has been increased to R20,000. But this new plan makes no better provisions for the poor, landless peasants. It has come under strong attack by the national Land Committee which questions its "allocation of resources away from the poor". (Sunday Independent 13/02/2000).

On the other side of things, the prices that are asked by the so-called willing sellers exclude the majority of the landless from the outset. A case in point is a Cape farmer who was initially prepared to sell his farm for R3 million but at the settlement stage a year later he demanded R21 million for the same farm. (Argus 6/7 May 2000).

According to Mr. Ramabulana, Executive Director of the National African Farmers Union, "Black farmers are paying higher interest than white farmers, because they are being seen as risky clients." These farmers will not be able to pay these exorbitant prices for commercial farms and still make a living from these farms. We also find that conglomerates own vast tracts of land for commercial farming. Our pro-bourgeois government understandably finds it impossible to carve up these highly profitable farms for subsistence farming. We thus find that the bourgeoisie finds itself in a contradictory situation. They must answer the growing demand for land by the landless peasantry while they know that subsistence farming, as a mode of production, is outdated and cannot meet the requirements of a modern bourgeois economy. But they will have to address this land hunger in order to prevent uprisings in this young and distorted democracy.

It has recently been stated that 85% of state-owned land will be distributed amongst 70 000

farmer's country wide. Most of this land is located in the Eastern Cape, the former bantustans, and which has been eroded by farming of too many people on too little land. Is this what is to be given to these would-be farmers? According to Statistics South Africa (SSA), there are 1.7 million households in former homeland areas that are engaged in some form of agriculture and in addition there are about 25 000 labour-tenant households, mainly in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. SSA also says that 1% of households in the former bantustans access about 24% of the arable land, and 7% of the households maintain 45% of all the livestock. (Mail & Guardian 12/05/2000).

Any sensible person will immediately see that this land that is being offered to the millions of landless people is like a drop in the ocean and that the needs of only a handful will be satisfied. The industries of this country will not be able to provide the rest with jobs and proletarianisation of this vast army of peasants cannot take place.

Since the land is unable to feed the population, hunger is forcing them to the towns and cities. The increase of squatter camps in every town and city bears testimony to this. Local authorities did not plan for this "population explosion". They are unable to provide basic services to these settlements and ➤

➔ water and sewerage systems are grossly inadequate. This has culminated in an increase in sicknesses that result from the unhygienic life-styles of the people, not through any fault of their own. All services are inadequate to accommodate the needs of all the people.

The liberal leader Tony Leon, knows of the threat of a people who are driven by hopelessness. He is running up and down crying the alarm and already asks for guarantees that expropriation ("invasions") will not be tolerated. Thabo Mbeki as lackey of imperialism gave his assurance: "government would not allow the illegal invasion of farms in this country" (Argus 13 May 2000).

We of the APDUSA state that the expropriation of the large farms is a prerequisite for the resolution of the land question.

From Our Programme:

APDUSA demands "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 redistribution of land must take place under the democratic control of the peasants and the workers and productive collective farming must be promoted with financial and technical assistance from the state. This demands the unity of the workers and peasantry under the leadership of the working class as a matter of paramount importance. This unity will instil in both classes the

importance of the struggle for socialism. It means that we must accept that the land question can only be addressed by a democratically elected constituent assembly after the destruction of capitalism. The majority of the peasantry, as a class in transition, will of necessity join hands with the working class to solve the contradiction of land hunger and the exploitation of the masses. ●

APDUSA CONFERENCE 2000

The national conference of the APDUSA was held this year in Cape Town on the 21/22 April 2000. All national branches and groups attended this important event on the calendar of the organisation. The reporter also observed that although the organisation suffered a few defections during the past year, the number of delegates at conference was not diminished. The conference was also attended by a delegates from the FEDCRAW trade Union and AZAPO.

Four papers were presented at the conference namely, The Presidential address, The National Situation, The International Situation (focussing on Sub-Saharan Africa) and the Trade Union Question. The introductions were all of a very high quality and most of the delegates participated in the discussions. Conference also revisited the position that was taken by the organisation at its previous conference in East London last year.

In his address the president, Mr KA Tshangana painted a graphic picture of the plight of the most poverty stricken members of the oppressed masses – those who eke out an existence in the rural areas. In most rural villages, the dirt roads, which represent a lifeline to the people living there, have become deteriorated to such an extent that they are totally unusable for any kind of vehicular traffic. The result is that children have to walk for miles to attend dilapidated, overcrowded and unequipped schools, while those who are sick, if they are not strong enough to walk a great distance to the nearest clinic or hospital must simply die where they are. It is becoming a common sight for the coffins of the dead to be carried by men on foot to the nearest point where the dignity of a hearse becomes possible. The president

observed that its becoming a common saying in the rural areas that "the democracy that people fought for is enjoyed by those who are in parliament and a few henchmen who are used as political decoys".

The paper on the national situation showed clearly how the ruling ANC Party is aligning itself more openly with the interests of big business. Its program to privatise state assets and the proposed amendments to labour legislation to conform with illegal realities promises dire consequences for the working class. The black petit-bourgeoisie, under the cloak of fighting racism, is moving ahead at full steam in their campaign to get a bigger share of the economic cake at the expense of the suffering and poverty stricken majority.

The paper on the International Situation highlighted the economic backwardness of sub-Saharan Africa which was enforced by the Colonialist powers and which now precludes it from competing effectively on the international market, despite the best efforts of governments to implement the structural Adjustment Programs dictated by the IMF and the World Bank. All that this has done is to open up the region to the rapacious exploits of international capitalist booty hunters who have no regard for the people of these countries that they would bleed dry if not opposed.

Over and above the political analyses, a very important decision that was taken was for the tightening of the operational aspects of the organisation.

The resolutions of conference, printed on the next page, indicates the importance that members attached to the activities and policies of the organisation. ●

APDUSA CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

We observe:

1. In this period of globalisation and the enforcement of neo-liberal policies throughout the world, the traditional struggles of the workers is gravely affected by fragmentation of labour due to the technique of outsourcing, contract labour and casualisation.
2. While labour is "flexible", trillions of dollars are being moved around the world everyday. The working class in any region or industry is subjected to the control of international capital and its agencies, the IMF and the World Bank.
3. National governments are unable and unwilling to defend the interests of the working class and they (national governments) play the role of lackeys of imperialism.
4. The trade unions are increasingly impelled to take up political questions and form links with civic and student organisations, as well as political movements.
5. The neo-liberal agenda of the capitalist class results in massive retrenchments and has intensified the land hunger and poverty in the rural areas.

We resolve:

1. APDUSA must actively be engaged in these initiatives and promote unity, such as united fronts amongst the oppressed and exploited masses against the neo-liberal agenda of the capitalist class.
2. APDUSA has to reactivate the resistance in the rural areas, which will also promote unity between town and country. We must ensure that our transitional programme is widely disseminated in the rural areas.
3. We recognise the interdependence of the struggles in Southern Africa and we must promote unity between the workers and peasants across national boundaries.
4. In relation to the impending municipal elections we call on the masses to build and strengthen their independent civic organisations to promote candidates of their choice, who are fully answerable and accountable to the communities that they will represent.
5. The APDUSA newsletter must be fine-tuned to focus more clearly on the fundamental political and economic problems, underlying the struggles and experiences of the labouring masses.
6. The organisation must move to strengthen its internal functioning by formal and efficient administrative procedures.

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