

Socialism will work in Zambia

The doctrine is true like Christianity and failures elsewhere are irrelevant

Socialist staff reporter

THE SOCIALIST doctrine that will work in Zambia is viable, valid and true, and has nothing to do with the failings of its implementation in other countries, Socialist Party president Fred M'membe says.

Dr M'membe's comments follow repeated media questions about the validity of Socialism in Zambia.

"We keep on being asked in radio and television interviews if socialism can really work in Zambia having 'failed' in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," he said in a statement from Mwikia Royal Village, Chinsali.

"The collapse of the Soviet Union and other East European socialist states is often cited as an example of the impossibility of socialism by those opposed to socialism.

"The wrongs, abuses and mistakes that were committed in those states are also used to generally vilify socialism.

"But the viability and validity of socialism doesn't depend on what happened to it in the Soviet Union and other European socialist states, or the behaviour of socialists in those and other countries.

"The validity and viability of socialism here depends on the omnipotence of the socialist doctrine because it is true. What was deformed and killed was socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and not socialism here or elsewhere in the world," he said.

Dr M'membe said that to explain what he meant he needed to turn to the issue of hypocrisy in the Christian church and how some had tried to use it to dismiss and discredit Christianity.

"There's a very strong similarity in terms of arguments and way of reasoning used to raise doubts about Christianity and socialism.

"We are told in Matthew 7:3-5, 'Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your

brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye', when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.'

"With these witty but also biting words, Jesus causes his listeners – then and today – to carefully examine their own lives. Are we going about accusing others of minor shortcomings when, in fact, we ourselves are ignoring our own behaviour? If so, we are hypocrites. Once our hypocrisy is removed, then we are in a position to help others," Dr M'membe said.

The viability and validity of socialism doesn't depend on what happened to it in the Soviet Union and other European socialist states, or the behaviour of socialists in those and other countries

"Unfortunately, one obstacle to the acceptance of Christianity that is often raised is provided by Christians themselves. Phrased in many ways, the core of the objection is, 'If Christianity is true, why are there hypocrites in the church?' In other words, if Christianity is really supposed to change people, then why do some who profess to believe in Jesus set such bad examples?"

"But what is a hypocrite?"

"The Oxford English Dictionary defines hypocrisy as follows, 'The assuming of a false appearance of virtue or goodness, with dissimulation of real

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Socialist Party president Fred M'membe with Sr Judy of Chawama Cheshire Homes, Lusaka

Mwikisa: there can be no useful production without healthcare

Kelvin Phiri

SOCIALIST Party's second vice-president and general treasurer Chris Ngenda Mwikisa has criticised the reduction in the 2021 budgetary allocation for the health sector.

Speaking on a recent radio programme, "Policy, Power and Money", on Money FM, Dr Mwikisa said there were very serious consequences to the government's failure to realise its promises.

"They had made promises that they were going to allocate at least 15 percent of the national budget to the health sector, but now we are down to somewhere around eight percent allocation," Dr Mwikisa said.

He said the government had signed international protocols, such as the Abuja Declaration, which requires member states to increase their national budgetary allocations to the health sector to a minimum of 15 percent.

According to the recent Socialist Party special budget review, "The 2021 Budget shows a reduction in the health budget from 8.8 percent in 2020 to 8.1 percent in 2021".

"Many people are unable to access the medical services. In some cases, they have to walk long distances to access those particular facilities, how are those people going to be productive?" he asked.

Dr Mwikisa said the majority of Zambians were peasant farmers who could not afford to cover the high cost of medicines or access to health facilities.

"Imagine a peasant farmer who cannot access health services, who cannot pay for their health services when they are sick. What production can he or she engage in? So, health should not be seen as a cost, but as a necessity for all citizens."

Dr Mwikisa said that having a healthy population was vital to the overall economic growth and development of the country.

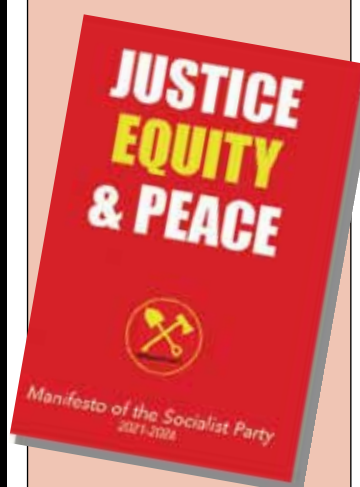
"If you don't provide good health services to the people, there is no meaningful production that you can talk about."

"Good health services are a critical component of ensuring that we are able to use our resources productively."

Dr Mwikisa said the health sector was one of the areas the Socialist Party would prioritise once voted into power next year.

● Research is vital – Page 4

The 2021 manifesto gives us a chance to change everything and build a more just and caring society



The manifesto is a document of revolutionary changes to our country and lives. Download details, and info about how to join the Socialist Party, are on our back page

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Zambia can only pay its debts if it ignores its people

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Bourgeois politicians 'seek slice of evil cake'

Musumali condemns ideological dishonesty

Socialist staff reporter

THE MOVEMENT for Democratic Change (MDC) is a bunch of frustrated and ideologically dishonest petty bourgeois politicians seeking a piece of the evil capitalist cake, says Cosmas Musumali, first vice-president and general secretary of the Socialist Party.

His comment follows claims by MDC secretary general Lucky Mulusa that his party is planning to combine "the best values from all ideologies", including socialism.

But Dr Musumali said talking about pursuing practices that borrowed from both capitalism and socialism was "not in the realm of ideology".

"For example, all capitalist countries, including the USA, apply some selected socialist principles in certain key areas of society or under crises situations – such as the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic – but this is not the same as saying they pursue a socialist ideology. Neither is their overall goal the building of a socialist society. Far from it, socialist principles and practices are selectively applied to stabilise the system and provide a human face to an evil system," he said.

Dr Musumali said the overall goal of bourgeois political parties was to entrench the capitalist system "in which capitalists, the most economic powerful elite, have hegemony over the social, cultural, economic and political life of the respective countries".

Principles

"In the same vein, a socialist country can never be purely socialist. By definition, a socialist society is transitional. It is built in a capitalist dominated environment," he said. "It has therefore to socialise specific aspects of life while others remain capitalist. A pure socialist society is therefore a misnomer – it would have to be called a communist society."

"Today, we do not have a single country that has attained the status of a communist society. China is a socialist country while embracing aspects of capitalism," he said.

"The political party in power has an overall goal to build a socialist and eventually a communist society. By allowing aspects of capitalism to grow, the Communist Party of China has not abrogated its overall goal at all. In a world dominated by capitalism, some spheres of life will for a long time to come still embrace capitalist principles and practices."

Dr Musumali said looking at the bigger questions around how to organise a class-based society and its inherent contradictions was "the sphere of ideology".

"In a class society, the class that owns the critical means of production has huge control of the economic base," he said. "It also logically ensures that a supportive social, cultural, educational, legal, administrative, political and security superstructure emerges that protects its economic class interests. Understanding this interface between the economic base and superstructure is key to the positioning of ideology."

"Socialists are honest about whose class interests they represent. The mission is to end class-based exploitation of labour by capital. This is only possible through a revolutionary transformation; where ownership of the economic base will be dominated by the working masses themselves, where the masses get to have a dominant say about the management of their natural resources, and where the masses regain their human dignity from the slave-like conditions under which they live and work today."

Dr Musumali said that to understand what the founders of the MDC believe in, it was necessary to look at what each one of them had said and written over the past years.

"They are all unrepentant capitalist promoters, so why not just be upfront about it? Why hide under some eclectic and contradictory statements? The simple answer is that it is good PR to talk about a middle-of-the-road approach."

"In a society where the masses of our people are marginalised and impoverished by the day, the MDC stand is tantamount to betrayal of the masses wanting transformative change," he said.



Socialist Party president Fred M'membe registering to vote in next year's elections. It is a mistake to shun this responsibility, he says.

M'membe: voting is a duty as well as a right

VOTER registration is under way – and voting is a duty as well as a right, Socialist Party president Fred M'membe reminds people.

"If you don't register to vote and withhold your vote, Zambians run a risk of getting into public offices people who have no national interest at heart and who are going to jeopardise the future of your children," he said.

"Not registering as a voter and not voting is incompatible with one's duty as a citizen and a Christian."

"Exercise your right therefore and take up your Christian duty. Go register, so that on August 12, 2021 you can vote for the right persons."

Dr M'membe said that to neglect one's duty to participate in the choice of leaders at all levels stood the risk of national catastrophe. "It's a great mistake to shun this responsibility," he said.

"All who have reached the voting age should register and participate in electing leaders who have the necessary qualities."

"It should be understood that to neglect to participate in voting and in the election of good leaders allows unworthy candidates to take leadership positions and bring disharmony in our country."

"Neglecting to register as a voter is to lose a person's right and the nation's right. Registering as a voter and voting is a serious duty."

"Whether Zambia will next year have good or bad laws, an upright or inefficient administration, depends on you registering to vote and actually voting."

"A person who is able to register as a voter and vote but never does so is guilty of serious omission. Citizens who do not care for their duty of voting are an easy prey to tyranny," Dr M'membe said.



Education a critical sector for funding

THE SOCIALIST Party is concerned that the education sector, which is essential to the country's development is continuing to be underfunded.

Speaking on a special interview on Money FM's Programme, "Policy, Power & Money", party second vice president and general treasurer Chris Mwikisa said the world had become very competitive due to technological advancements, and urged the government to allocate adequate resources for the education sector.

"Many people today are not able to go to school and some who have gone to school can't get their results because of non-payment of fees. Are we going to leave those by the roadside because they are

poor? That's unacceptable," Dr Mwikisa said. He stressed that the Socialist Party, once elected into government, would ensure that every child in Zambia had access to free education from kindergarten to university.

"This is one of the issues which the Socialist Party is going to prioritise, provide free education to everyone who must be in school."

"That strengthens the capacity of the economy, because the issues we talk about; mining, agriculture, and other sectors, have education as their backbone."

"If we are going to talk about improving people's standards of living, education is a very important and critical area," he said.

Stop harassing our free press, says M'membe

THE SUMMONING by police of Diamond TV chief executive officer Costa Mwansa and head of news and current affairs George Chomba to appear before them at force headquarters is unacceptable harassment of journalists and news media outlets, Socialist Party president Fred M'membe says.

"We are informed this was in connection with investigations police are conducting in relation to what is alleged to be a leaked speech of the 2021 budget."

"But when did a budget speech become a sensitive state security document?"

"This is nothing but an attempt to intimidate and censor the country's leading independent television station."

"This type of harassment of journalists has an impact on those affected by it, but it is also a direct attack on press freedom and independence – an attempt to silence specific voices and stories."

"A very tangible consequence is censorship, journalists not reporting a certain story because they're afraid of the onslaught of harassment."

"We call on the police to immediately stop its harassment of Costa Mwansa and Diamond TV," Dr M'membe said.

University exam fees demand 'unreasonable'

THE SITUATION at The University of Zambia is very, very unfortunate and could have been avoided, Socialist Party president Fred M'membe says.

He was responding to disturbances at the university after students were asked to pay 100 per cent of their tuition fees before they could be allowed to sit their examinations.

Dr M'membe said the demand was "unreasonable and unacceptable under the COVID-19 financial and economic difficulties the great majority of our people are enduring."

"And even without COVID-19 challenges, the great majority of our people are too poor to afford fees for the education of their children. How can our people in Western, Luapula and Northern provinces, where the poverty levels are 82.2 per cent, 81.1 per cent and 79.7 per cent respectively, afford such high tuition fees? Rural poverty today is 76.6 per cent. How can one reasonably expect these people to pay such

fees? Education should be treated as a right, not a privilege," Dr M'membe said.

"Today 66 per cent of our country's population comprises young people below the age of 25. People in this age group are supposed to be in nursery, primary school, secondary school, college or university."

"What are the national budgetary implications of this? Not less 25 per cent of our national budget should be allocated and disbursed to education. Failure to do that will lead to many of our people not attending school, college or university, as is the case today."

"Under the Education 2030 Framework, Zambia committed to allocating at least 20 per cent of its budget to the education sector. However, under this government this has consistently declined, from 20.2 per cent in 2015 to 12.4 per cent in 2020, and will be further reduced to 11.5 per cent in 2021."

Dr M'membe says the Socialist Party in gov-

ernment next year will make education totally free from nursery to university and compulsory from nursery to grade 12.

"This government has made our young people victims of every kind of injustice imaginable. And when they explode, they want them to explode politely! Why? They are dealing with the wrong young people at the wrong time in the wrong way."

"Let's not forget that all over the world, it is young people who are actually involving themselves in the struggle to eliminate oppression, exploitation and humiliation."

"But no grievances can justify atrocious acts, such as the harming or injuring of people or burning and destroying property. No crime can be committed in the name of legitimate grievances."

"We urge our students to put forward their grievances in a very firm, but peaceful, manner," Dr M'membe said.

Fear of change has become a ‘phobia’ among our leaders

‘Nothing lasts forever, the future is inevitable and we must face it’

Socialist staff reporter

THE FEAR of change – of losing power – is widespread among members of the current government and ruling party, and has become a phobia, Socialist Party president Fred M’membe says.

“Nothing lasts forever. Change is inevitable, there’s no need to fear it. We have no alternative to meeting the future, we have no hope but the changes, advances and improvements that the future may bring,” he said.

“Even if our current leaders want to stay in power forever, they won’t be able to do so. Nobody controls the future. No matter what schemes they may pull, other times will come.”

Dr M’membe was responding to information and broadcasting services minister Dora Siliya, who said the Patriotic Front was not ready to hand over power to anyone in 2021.

Addressing more than 300 village headmen and indunas from Eastern Province, she said: “We shouldn’t relax that Edgar azawina, since he is an Easterner, but if we vote lazily, our friends in Southern Province will challenge us and we will be removed from power.”

Fertiliser

“Let’s not vote lazily the way we did on Rupiah. We lost him because we are many but few voted, and we lost him.”

“Those eight bags of fertiliser we got under Rupiah disappeared because Sata ate cassava, which doesn’t require fertiliser, and you started calling us ‘paya farmer’ and it’s now under President Edgar Lungu that agriculture has been revamped.”

“These elections of next year are not easy. It’s war abale anga. It’s a war, we should make sure everyone registers as voters and votes on August 12, 2021, or else we will lose.”

“Napapata, we go wrong, we in government, but forgive us please. Pray for us, we know we have gone through problems in these five

years, but let’s not lose this presidency because we still have a lot to do with it in our families, communities.”

Dr M’membe said this fear of change is called Metathesiophobia. “It is often linked with Tropophobia, which is the fear of moving. The origin of the word Metathesiophobia comes from Greek ‘meta’ meaning change and ‘phobos’ meaning fear.

“Metathesiophobes often tend to live in the past and may also be depressed. Their phobia makes them unwilling to move, to progress or to change anything. This can severely impact one’s work and personal lives.

“The fear of change is evolutionary in humans. Since times immemorial, man has liked routine. Our internal predispositions – heredity and genetics – teach us to resist change mainly to ‘always feel in control’, but the normal fear of change becomes a full blown phobia when it is irrational, persistent and intense.”

Dr M’membe said this fear could affect a person’s adaptability, and lead to feelings of insecurity and guilt.

“Benjamin Franklin once said, ‘When you are finished changing, you are finished.’ The fear of change is a natural survival instinct ingrained in humans. However, in cases of extreme Metathesiophobia, life can become very difficult. It can negatively impact one’s work and/or personal lives.”

Dr M’membe said just the thought of change or adapting to new environments could lead to full-blown panic.

“To avoid change, one may go to great lengths; break ties, tell lies or make excuses, manipulate electoral processes, rig elections, and commit human rights violations. This can affect many things and lead to irrationality. Often the phobic is aware that his/her fear of change is irrational. However he/she is unable to overcome it.

“The root of Metathesiophobia is deeply embedded in one’s psyche. Many people suffer from this phobia, but the key is to accept change as part of life,” Dr M’membe said.



The Socialist Party’s latest parliamentary candidates (above), and (below), sharing a light moment with SP president Fred M’membe

SP introduces ‘organic leadership’

THE SOCIALIST Party has unveiled “organic leadership” in the form of five newly adopted parliamentary candidates.

The five are; Pastor Fred Chanda for Kasama Central, John Mubita for Shangombo, Isimwa Mebeelo Siyanga for Mitete, Debby Mwangala Akabana for Lukulu, and McLeod Lunkoto for Keembe.

The candidates, who spoke in their native languages at a briefing to introduce them, declared themselves ready to serve their respective constituents, with unquestionable commitment.

The candidate shadow lawmakers were unveiled by Socialist Party general secretary and first vice-president Cosmas Musumali at party president Fred M’membe’s Garden Compound office in Lusaka.

Dr Musumali said that without leadership, the issue of equity and peace could not be attained. “But that leadership has to be different from that which we have today. The leadership that the people of Zambia are yearning for is one that understands challenges,” he said.

“It’s a leadership that speaks for the people, a leadership that

lives with and for the people. As a party, we are making milestones each month in identifying that leadership. Today we have the pleasure to present to you five comrades representing five constituencies of our country.”

He told journalists that the five were identified by the masses themselves in the respective constituencies.

“The leadership of the party did sit down and has adopted these comrades. What type of leadership is this? This is

organic leadership, these are leaders who live in those communities,” Dr Musumali said.

“These are part of those communities, and the Socialist Party firmly believes that a leadership that is detached from the people can never provide, can never serve the interests of the masses.”

He said the Socialist Party was always very proud to be associated with comrades who offered themselves to diligently and selflessly serve Zambians. Dr Musumali added that next

month the party was likely to unveil further parliamentary candidates from the Copperbelt, North-Western and parts of Central Province.

“In total, we are looking at about 30 candidates who will be due for adoption in December. The Socialist Party is setting the standard,” Dr Musumali said.

“We are doing what other political parties are unable to do, to get deep down to where the people are and find the authentic leaders and introduce them to the people of Zambia.”



Bill 10 defeat shows true character

THE DEFEAT of Bill 10 in Parliament has revealed the true character of some of our rulers in the Patriotic Front and its government, Socialist Party president Fred M’membe says.

“We heard all sorts of words, justifications, consolations and sayings in reactions to the Bill 10 defeat,” he said.

Dr M’membe said it was clear that while anyone could handle victory, only the mighty could bear defeat.

“It’s very clear that our colleagues in the Patriotic Front are opportunists, chancers, who have not struggled much or struggled very little in their lives.

“We, who have struggled for many years from very disadvantaged positions and have suffered many setbacks, know very well that when defeat comes, it should be accepted as a signal that your plans are not sound, rebuild those plans, and set sail once more toward your coveted goal.

“The truth is, unless you realise that the situation is over, you cannot move forward.

“Any time you feel so pained by defeat, it is only because you insist on clinging to what doesn’t work.

“There’s no need for our colleagues in the Patriotic Front to be so bitter about the Bill 10 defeat. Defeat isn’t bitter if you don’t swallow it, it’s only bitter if you do. And it seems they have swallowed the Bill 10 defeat. That’s why they are endlessly and invariably spewing bitter words about Bill 10 defeat.”

Dr M’membe said anyone who had ever been in a political contest at any level could relate to how crushing it feels when you don’t win. “The truth is when you don’t win it hurts, it really hurts.

“It’s painful to spend so much money, time and energy trying to get somewhere and then to fall short at the final hurdle. Or to lose a political contest you know you should have won,” he said.

“So every politician out there always enters into their race or contest with the understanding someone will win and someone will lose. That’s the whole point.”

Socialists are principled and patriotic

BY POINTING out the mistakes, weaknesses, and even abuses of those ruling our country today, we have not turned ourselves into enemies of our people, Socialist Party president Fred M’membe says.

“Our opposition to the third term bid by those in government today doesn’t make us unpatriotic. Socialists are patriots and we wish to see our country succeed, with or without us,” he said in a statement from Mwika Royal Village, Chinsali.

“You will never see us gloat over national reverses, nor talk down the achievements of those running government. We wish to see the economy recover and do well. We do not look to defeat those running government today on the back of national failure. There will be sufficient grounds without that to argue for their removal. We will not win merely by default, but by our ability to capture the public mood.

“Those in government today seem to be guided by the wish to destroy any meaningful opposition; by the determination to have a third term of of-

fice for their supreme leader. That is not a recipe for governing well. Theirs is a political party held together by the fear of losing power and its benefits. That will to retain power is the one idea they hold in common. But with the passage of time, that will prove an insubstantial glue. The wheel of fortune turns and that which once appeared fresh, with the passing of time goes to seed.

“For us, there’s no choice between being principled and unelectable; and electable and unprincipled. We should win because of what we believe in. A new and complex era such as this requires principles more than ever. It requires a lot more awareness.

“It is our principles and values that make us a party of compassion, of social justice, of struggle against poverty and inequality, of liberty, of basic human solidarity, and the day we lose those things is the day we keep the name of the Socialist Party but lose the reason for its existence.”

We need healthy people to be able to achieve anything at all

Research is vital for success of farming and fish production

Kelvin Phiri

THE SOCIALIST Party says it will prioritise agriculture among other key sectors once it forms a government following the 2021 general election.

Speaking on “Let The People Talk” programme on Radio Phoenix, party president Fred M’membe said the Socialist Party, once voted into office, would pay a lot of attention to agriculture, as it was one of the three key pillars of its developmental agenda.

“The biggest priority comes from the biggest challenge that we face. What is the biggest challenge today? We are the fourth hungriest country in Africa. Whatever we want to do, if we are not able to feed our people we will have challenges, we will not even have the type of human beings we need to have, healthy human beings are what we need to have, so we will pay a lot of attention to agriculture,” Dr M’membe said.

He said the party would also put a development premium on health and education.

He expressed concern that Zambia had an agriculture sector that was not being informed by research.

Quality

“We don’t have research going on in agriculture, seriously. Take, for instance, rice production; I have heard people talking about how nice Mongu rice is, how nice Nakonde rice is, but you can’t sell it anywhere in the world, it’s of a very inferior quality, it’s substandard rice. We have not spent money to research rice. The last serious research on rice was in Sefula in Mongu, Western Province, by JICA in the early ’80s and since then nothing has happened,” he said.

Dr M’membe said research was vital. “If you go to Thailand today, a leading country in rice production, and you go to the University of Bangkok, there is a faculty just dealing with rice, from a bachelor’s degree to PhD, just dealing with rice production. Our rice can’t compete with that. There is investment in it, and Thailand is reaping huge benefits globally, just look, wherever you go you find Thai rice. Bangkok alone has more than 200 varieties.”

And Dr M’membe said it was a joke to hear Zambian leaders talking about fish farming. He said that while a lot of money had been wasted on the aqua-

culture industry, no meaningful research had been done to justify or support the investments, adding that research on fisheries conducted at Zambia’s universities was inadequate.

“I have been to all institutions of higher learning. My doctorate research is in fish farming and I have moved from Chiyawa to Kalulushi as a researcher, looking at all the fishponds that are around. I have moved to all the producers of stock feed for fish, I have moved to all the institutions that have something to do with fisheries. We are not there. I had 11 fishponds but they were a disaster under the guidance of the Ministry of Agriculture. There is very little we can get from fish farming unless we invest in research,” Dr M’membe said.

He said much of the country was underperforming and urged Zambians to invest in research.

“We have been growing beans in Mbala, Nakonde, Isoka, Mafinga, and other parts of Northern and Muchinga provinces. What research has gone into bean production? The quality of beans is diminishing. We have grown them for a very long time without any research. Our beans cannot compete with Brazilian ones,” Dr M’membe said.

The country was not even producing enough beans to feed the nation. “We don’t even have enough beans to feed our own people, and they are not just needed for human consumption, they are also needed for livestock. There are many things you can do with beans,” he said.



SP candidate John Zulu wins praise for maize seeds and help

KASENENGWA farmers have commended aspiring Socialist Party candidate John Zulu for distributing maize seeds, in addition to training in organic production.

Speaking with the Socialist Party media team during the delivery of seeds to youth and women groups in the constituency, James Mbewe, from Kaphinde village, said the people were greatly indebted to the party and Zulu for the support they had received.

Mbewe, who is also chairperson of Chinvano club,

said the support would increase food security for families and communities in the Kasenengwa constituency.

“We are very happy with the work comrade John Zulu is doing in this constituency. The way the comrade is working it’s as if he was the current area member of parliament,” Mbewe said.

Royd Nyau, from Ng’ongwe ward, also praised the Socialist Party and assured it of support in the coming elections. He said the party had shown its commitment

towards the poor in rural areas “Mr. Zulu has done a lot of work and shown that he really wants to develop Kasenengwa.

“We are also happy that Zulu has introduced to us Dr Fred M’membe, who is also showing how he wants us, the people of Kasenengwa, to be liberated from poverty.”

Nyau said he was optimistic that the Socialist Party would provide leadership that would respond to the aspirations of the people.



SP experts help Kasenengwa farmers with alternative agricultural methods and demonstrate how to benefit from organic fertiliser

Training in the use of organic fertiliser will reduce costs and protect the soil

SMALL-SCALE farmers in Kasenengwa constituency have expressed gratitude to the Socialist Party for carrying out training in organic farming.

Farmer John Musendo says rural farmers will benefit from the programme, especially as the price of inputs have increased exponentially, beyond their economic capabilities.

“We are so grateful to the party leadership for sending agriculture experts to our area to offer such benefiting and progressive programmes that will greatly uplift us farmers. The Socialist Party is indeed a party for the poor. It really stands with poor people,” Musendo said.

The party’s constituency candidate John Zulu said the gesture was humbling, and he urged farmers to take advantage and benefit from the farming methods that protect the environment and restore fertility to the soil.

“We are thankful for sensitising us to the importance of organic agriculture. As a constituency we are so grateful because agriculture is our only source of income here in Kasenengwa and, as you know, the cost of fertiliser is too high at the moment.”

Zulu said the price of fertiliser was as high as K600 per 50 kg.

“So, the initiative by the Socialist Party to

train us to use organic fertiliser is a very good initiative and cost effective,” he said. “We want to roll out this programme to the whole of Kasenengwa”.

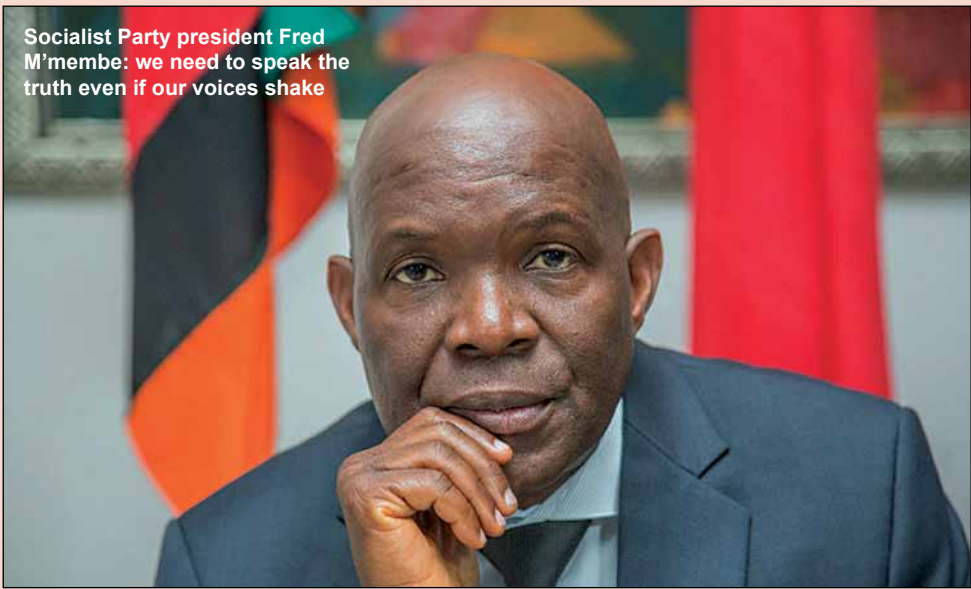
Zulu expressed optimism the programme would benefit all small-scale farmers regardless of the political divide.

“Everyone is so happy with the programme and it is going to help us. We are also extending our training programmes to cooperatives in Kasenengwa.

“We have started empowering clubs with seeds because we want to make use of the same organic fertiliser,” Zulu said.



Socialist Party president Fred M'membe: we need to speak the truth even if our voices shake



Classes, class hatred and class struggle

I HAVE heard some people accuse us socialists of inciting class hatred – that we are agitating for the poor to hate the rich. This is not right, it's not true. We socialists are not the inventors of classes and class struggles.

We have simply analysed, studied and demonstrated the existence of classes very clearly and went deeply into this phenomenon, into historic reality. We discovered the laws that rule these struggles and the evolution of human society. We didn't invent classes or class struggles, so those things can't be attributed to us. If there's anyone to accuse for this it is history, as it is mainly responsible for the problem.

We socialists are also not responsible for class hatred that exists, we don't cause or preach class hatred. We simply say that classes and class struggles exist and that struggles give rise to hatred. It isn't us socialists but the existence of classes and class struggles that causes hatred.

What really causes hatred is exploitation, oppression, marginalisation, humiliation and social injustice. That, objectively, is what causes hatred, not socialism and socialists. For us socialists, it's a question not of preaching class hatred but of explaining a social reality, something that has occurred throughout history. Our mission isn't a clarion call to hatred; rather, it is an explanation of the hatred that exists when people become aware that they are being exploited, oppressed, marginalised and humiliated.

Our experience and work over the last three years of the existence of the Socialist Party shows that it is possible to preach the spirit of struggle without preaching hatred of those who have perpetrated all sorts of injustice and illegalities against us.

We who are socialists don't preach hatred as a philosophy, the philosophy of hatred. But this doesn't mean that we have any friendly feelings for the oppressive system or that we are not struggling as hard as we can against it. I think we have one supreme test, which is we have been harassed, unfairly treated and humiliated by representatives of this oppressive system which we are struggling against, yet whenever and wherever we meet them we are considerate and treat them humanely and with respect, because we don't hate them. What we repudiate and hate is the system. For us, it's not a matter of hating individuals but of hating an iniquitous system of exploitation and abuse. It is not hatred of individuals.

Exploitation

What we are preaching is the repudiation, rejection and hatred of the system – hatred of injustice. We are not preaching hatred among human beings, because in the final analysis, human beings are victims of the system. If we have to fight the system, we will fight the system. If we have to fight those who represent the system we hate, we will do so.

And I don't think that would be against Christian teachings. I don't think that denouncing and fighting against crime, injustice, exploitation, abuses and inequalities among human beings goes against Christian teachings. Fighting for rights wouldn't be against Christianity either. Jesus made some very strong charges against the Pharisees and called King Herod a fox. What's more, Jesus tells us we must love our enemies – he doesn't say we mustn't have enemies – and there's no greater love for an exploiter, oppressor, abuser and humiliator than to prevent him from exploiting, oppressing, abusing and humiliating another.

We were taught that there was a constant struggle between good and evil, and evil had to be punished. We were taught that those who committed crimes and were responsible for injustice, evil, and all those other things that we are fighting against would be punished in hell.

Could that be interpreted as an expression of hatred? I have struggled a lot throughout the years, yet I can't say that there was a feeling of hatred or revenge against individuals. I have never felt personal hatred for individuals. It's not that I love my enemies. I don't, I haven't gotten that far. I understand why they are enemies and the extent to which this due to history, to the laws of history, to the social status of the individuals. I understand how many factors predetermined their becoming enemies. There may even be genetic, or biological, explanations. Some individuals are born with hereditary defects or with illnesses. That, too, is a fact. I believe that many criminals are psychopaths. The individual was often the result of a series of situations and circumstances and that a large proportion of his conduct was predetermined.

One of the things we debated in secondary school was whether the individual was predetermined to do certain things or whether he was fully aware of the seriousness of his actions and the harm he was doing, and consequently, was entirely responsible for his deeds. There was a lot of discussion about individual responsibility. Our teachers, the Sacred Heart Brothers, favoured the theory that nothing was predetermined in the individual and that everything was his personal responsibility. I believe that often it's a combination of the two: an important factor predetermines people's conduct, and there are also factors of responsibility and guilt in human beings - except for some cases of mental illness, for some people who are mentally ill kill. It's very difficult to hold those people responsible for their actions. Some individuals are taught an ideology that makes them act in a certain way, and their attitude has been predetermined to a certain extent.

That is how I view the issue of hatred. This lies at the heart of our political thinking. We don't hate individuals, we hate the system. We don't preach the hatred of individuals, we preach the hatred of the system. That is what the criteria and principles of class struggle mean, and also what class hatred means – not the hatred of human beings, but the hatred of a class system, which isn't the same thing.

It is a greater sin to tolerate injustice

IF THERE is one thing I can say to the Zambian people today, it is that I hate injustice. And I will say it at length.

Like Christ, we should tremble with indignation whenever an injustice is committed against anyone.

It is a sin to commit injustice, but it is a greater sin to tolerate injustice.

It holds true, that is, if one continues to tolerate the injustice being done now, then it gives the offenders the courage to continue with their sins and there shall be no end to it.

Unless one raises their voice for honesty, truth and compassion against injustice, greed and lies the situation will not change on its own. We need to speak the truth even if our voices shake.

People don't bother if injustice is being done to someone, but it makes a huge difference when the same situation is being faced by them or their loved ones.

If you see an injustice it's better to voice your opinion be it for yourself or others.

It takes a lot of courage and effort to stand up for what you believe in and it may involve a lot of risks as well.

What you allow is what you continue. Never ever be bullied into silence, for you will allow yourself to be made into a victim.

One needs to stand up for what one believes in even if it means standing alone. It does take a lot to stand alone.

We should voice our truth before all things get worse. Everything can be tolerated – except injustice.

The people who force us to tolerate injustice are the ones who are part of creating that injustice or a victim of it.

'Hypocrisy' is used as a tool to try to attack Christianity

Socialism subjected to similar arguments

● From Page 1

character or inclinations, especially in respect of religious life or beliefs; hence in general sense, dissimulation, pretence, sham. Also, an instance of this'.

"It defines hypocrite in this manner, 'One who falsely professes to be virtuously or religiously inclined; one who pretends to have feelings or beliefs of a higher order than his real ones; hence generally, a dissembler, pretender'. The Compact Oxford English Dictionary, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), s.v., 'hypocrisy', 'hypocrite'.

"In simpler terms, a hypocrite is someone who not only does not practise what they preach, but a person who does the opposite of what they preach. A parent holding a beer and smoking a cigarette who admonishes a child not to drink or smoke, for instance, may be viewed as being a hypocrite by the child.

"Similarly, critics of Christianity who raise the hypocrisy objection usually point to some moral failure in the lives of Christians they know as examples of Christianity being false or at least highly suspect. 'See,' they exclaim. 'There goes another hypocrite in the church. How can I believe Christianity if the church is full of hypocrites?'

"Hypocrisy or variations of it appear 17 times in the NIV translation of the Bible. Often it is Christ calling people hypocrites (see, for instance, Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; 7:5; 15:7; 22:18; 23:13, 15; 23:23, 25, 27, 29; 24:51; Mark 7:6; Luke 6:42; 12:56; and 13:15). 'You hypocrites!' in fact is a recurring phrase.

"Was Jesus guilty of pointing out the speck in someone else's eye when in fact he had a plank in his own? Not at all. Christianity does not stand or fall on the way Chris-

tians have acted throughout history or are acting today. Christianity stands or falls on the person of Jesus, and Jesus was not a hypocrite. He lived consistently with what He taught, and at the end of His life, He challenged those who had lived with Him night and day, for over three years, to point out any hypocrisy in Him. His disciples were silent, because there was none.

"Since Christianity depends on Jesus, it is incorrect to try to invalidate the Christian faith by pointing to horrible things done in the name of Christianity.

"Whether or not Christianity is true does not depend on how its adherents behave. This, of course, does not excuse hypocrisy in the church, but neither does it mean that hypocrisy is sufficient reason to dismiss Christianity.

"Second, Christ was not a hypocrite in any sense of the word. Often, even critics agree with this point, exalting the high moral standards of Christ without understanding His larger claims.

Courage

"Third, seemingly hypocritical behaviour on a large scale, such as the Inquisition, does not invalidate Christianity, either. Again, this does not excuse hypocritical behaviour, but separates it from the centre of Christianity: Christ and His claims.

"Are all Christians hypocrites? Not at all! In fact, the history of the Christian church is filled with examples of selflessness, courage, moral action and reform and many other positive influences on the world. These are not the acts of hypocrites, but of sincere believers transformed by the resurrected Christ and moved by the Holy Spirit to 'do to others what you would have them do to you' (Matthew 7:12; Luke 6:31).

"The church is a work in progress, and so are its members. Like a cathedral that may take decades or centuries to complete, the process is long and arduous, but someday it will be complete and stand as a beautiful testimony to the power of Christ to transform lives for the better.

"Remember, too, that only some professing Christians act hypocritically. What about all those who do not? What about all those who consistently live out the love of Christ in the world?

"Until the church and all followers of Christ are glorified, there will, unfortunately, be hypocrites in the church. What's important to remember, however, is that this does not negate Christianity or the claims of Christ. In addition, accusations of hypocrisy assume that there is a moral standard that hypocrites break. But where does this standard come from? In this sense, the hypocrisy objection actually supports the reality of a transcendent, moral lawgiver (that is, God), rather than argue against Him.

"We must also remember that, biblically speaking, 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus' (Romans 3:23-24). In other words, no one is perfect and all are dependent on Christ for redemption, salvation and growth in spiritual maturity.

"On the one hand, Christians should not act hypocritically, lest we provide critics with a flimsy reason to reject the gospel message. On the other hand, critics should know better than to attempt to throw out Christianity and all of Christ's claims on the basis of the hypocrisy objection," Dr M'membe said.

M'membe: we are not trying to copy any other country

WE ARE not trying to copy any country, says Socialist Party president Fred M'membe.

"Our opponents are often pointing to the collapse of the Soviet Union and East European socialist countries and the challenges facing blockaded Cuba, Venezuela and North Korea, to politically undermine us and discredit our socialist programme.

"But no one is pointing to the successes of China, Vietnam and the Indian communist-led states of Kerala and West Bengal," he said in a statement from Garden Compound in Lusaka.

"We are not in all ways trying to be like these countries or states. We are trying to build a socialist society in Zambia, and not in Cuba, Venezuela, China or Vietnam. Our history, culture, circumstances, and conditions are different. And, moreover, there's no one ideal political system in the extremely complicated world we live in today, and it is impossible to see one emerging in the light of constant change.

"Political systems are divided into various types. How can we judge which is the most appropriate? This is a matter that should not rely on subjective appraisal; neither should it be addressed purely in terms of standard Western values."

Dr M'membe says it is necessary to conduct an analysis based on the background details relating to a specific case, using quantified data, and employing objective facts.

"This must be accompanied by a scientific approach to development and establishing a governing philosophy characterised by harmony. In this way we will have a government that is supported by the Zambian people as a whole.

"How should government, cabinet, the presidency, be run politically? How should a good government, cabinet, presidency, be assured? Through what kind of processes does the government, cabinet, presidency, reach its decisions?

"According to what standards does it operate? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that the government, cabinet, presidency, makes the correct major decisions?"

Dr M'membe says the key to dealing with Zambia's problems is for the country to have a competent government, cabinet, and presidency.

"Zambia will record progress and enjoy stability if this competency can be assured. A leadership capable of introducing unique innovations and increasing maturity in political matters will help us produce a stable society and generate the conditions that will enable steady economic growth.

"The greatest challenge we face today is lack of a scientifically based, efficient decision-making mechanism for dealing with major problems. And because of this we are unable to achieve a stable society and economic growth," he said.

"As stated in our party's manifesto, the goals of our socialist programme are to move our country out of underdevelopment and poverty, creating a more advanced, more practical democracy and cultivating better human resources. The time it will take us to achieve these goals could be relatively long or short. It is necessary for Zambia to reach these goals. Thus, it is necessary to examine the best features of various institutions and assess whether or not they will be able to move Zambia towards these goals."

We're equal in the eyes of God so we need to work together

Socialist Party president Fred M'membe has pledged that SP is committed to fielding not less than 50 percent women in next year's elections. As part of that pledge, the party recently adopted another two women candidates for the Kalabo Central and Nkeyema constituencies. **Cecilia Lwiindi Nedziwe** talks to them about their ideals, beliefs, and the role of women in political leadership

Chiteo Singongi Nalishuwa Matindo

CHITEO Singongi Nalishuwa Matindo, Socialist Party parliamentary candidate for Kalabo Central constituency, has a teaching diploma from Copperbelt Secondary Teachers' College, a degree in home economics and social studies from the University of Zambia, and is a trained national examiner in home economics at grade 12 level in food and nutrition. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in educational leadership, administration and management with the University of Barotseland.

Nalishuwa Matindo started work as a secondary school teacher at Kalabo Secondary School and remained there for 14 years in different positions, including head of department and senior teacher.

In 1994 she was promoted to education officer with Kalabo's district education office, was made head of Kalabo Primary by the ministry of education in 2003, and was promoted to district education standards officer for the Sikongo district executive director board office in 2014. She retired in June this year.

Nalishuwa Matindo says she chose to run as a parliamentary candidate for the Socialist Party because she believed in the party's leadership and programme promoting justice, equity and peace.

Perception

"Women's participation in politics is still not embraced openly by a number of people in Zambia, and I mean by both men and women," she said.

"Actually, when you talk about patriarchy, it resides equally more in women than men in some cases. There is also a general view, and to a large extent a visible practice, where women appear not to support each other in the political arena, an attitude and perception that needs to be changed. It then becomes evident that they shun their fellow women only to support a man. But women have always supported each other in many areas and this should be extended to the political space.

"As a woman going into politics, I need to work hard on these perceptions with fellow women and colleagues to help change the mindsets of both men and women, that it is not the gender of a person that is required to perform, but his or her capabilities.

"For example, I am a mature woman who has served in many administrative positions and have demonstrated my capabilities. Therefore, I am positive I can work with people from diverse backgrounds to bring about inclusive development."

Nalishuwa Matindo said she advised women not to shy away from politics.

"I encourage female folk not to shun politics but openly participate in order to have the same sense of ownership that male folk do in the areas of governance in Zambia.

"As women we share the same status as men. We are equal in the eyes of God. Therefore, there is every need to work together with men to bring about development to ourselves".

Matakala Muso-Simbaubi

MATAKALA Muso-Simbaubi, Socialist Party parliamentary candidate for Nkeyema constituency, attended Olympia Primary School for grades one to seven (1985-1991), Roma Girls' Secondary School for grades eight and nine (1992-1993), and Senanga Secondary School for grades ten to 12 (1994-1996).

She went on to study at Lewanika School of Nursing Mongu (1999-2001), Ndola School of Nursing, where she obtained a diploma in nursing (2005-2007), Ndola School of Midwifery for an advanced diploma in midwifery (2010), and Rusangu University, where she was awarded as BSc in nursing (2016-2018).

Muso-Simbaubi started her career as an enrolled nurse in 2002 at University Teaching Hospital, remaining there until 2004. From 2005 until 2010 she worked with Ndola district health office as a registered nurse, followed by four years as a midwife with Konkola Mine Hospital (2011-2015). From 2018 until 2019 she lectured at Woodbridge School of Nursing.

Muso-Simbaubi said it was the Socialist Party's manifesto that led her to join the party.

"When I came across a copy, I couldn't help but read it from start to finish," she said. "The manifesto is very inclusive, and written in simple, easy-to-follow language."

She said the manifesto demonstrated that the Socialist Party was a people's party and open to working with anyone regardless of their status in society.

"I decided to stand as a member of parliament to break the bridge that has been there in our Zambian politics, of having few numbers of women folk.

"I decided to stand for the people who have shown great faith in



Matakala Muso-Simbaubi, candidate for Nkeyema (left), and Chiteo Singongi Nalishuwa Matindo, candidate for Kalabo Central

me to represent them well. I commit to executing my duties to the best of my abilities in order to bring about change and development in my constituency."

Muso-Simbaubi said women were "the custodians of revolutionary change and transformation, the custodians of a better Zambia, today and tomorrow" and should not shun politics.

"Politics is what makes our country what it is. What I mean here is that:

- Women mostly make good leaders in that they make sure things are done according to the laid-down protocols or procedures.
- Women mostly do not indulge in dubious deals when in leadership.
- Women in leadership usually carry along with them the people they are working with so that they feel included.
- Women mostly know how to manage the finances and when this is carried on into leadership

it stands out as an advantage, and, ● Women in leadership are usually good decision makers, focusing on decisions that bring in development."

Muso-Simbaubi said that women had been sidelined on the political front for too long.

"It is about time we stood up and were counted. So, my advice to women is, let's penetrate the political space without fear. Let's discard the mentality that we cannot actively participate in politics,

and that perpetuates the narrative that politics is only a man's game.

"We women are the ones who understand most problems that people face, starting from the household level onward. This deep understanding can make us naturally good leaders if voted into power. Hence, we need to participate in active politics."

Muso-Simbaubi said it was time women stopped thinking they couldn't stand alone and that they needed to lean on men.

Musole calls on women to register to vote

SOCIALIST Party parliamentary candidate for Mongu Central Christine Nawa Musole is calling for women to register to vote "in massive numbers".

Voter registration commenced on November 9 and will continue until December 12.

"This process is a big deal for the majority of Zambians, especially the youth and women," Musole said.

"We have noted growing interest among women across the country to stand as candidates in both local and parliamentary elections. However, the decision whether the majority of women will make it to parliament and win at local government level next year rests with the vote of the Zambian masses, particularly from women themselves."

Musole said that despite the fact that more women than men voted, it was "sad" that only 18.3 percent of women were represented in parliament.

"For example, the 2016 voters' roll shows that the total number of registered voters was 6,698,372 – 3,325,437 males and 3,372,935 females," she said.

"So according to the voters' roll there were 47,498 more women than men. This means that, while women vote the most, sadly, they remain under represented in matters of national governance. This in turn means that, while women make up the majority of voters,

their issues remain marginalised. "At present, our national parliament has fewer voices representing women on issues that affect them, such as gender-based violence, women's reproductive health, child marriages, gender inequality, and high poverty rates.

"What is also important to point out is that there is little realisation among us women that we have a huge responsibility to correct this anomaly.

"A country can never have real change and development without the meaningful participation of women, both as candidates and in the voting process itself, to ensure that female candidates win. The real change that we seek in Zambia will only become visible when we begin to channel our energy towards ensuring women's participation in politics."

Musole said Socialist Party president Fred M'membe was one of the biggest supporters of real change through women's participation in politics in the country today.

"Dr M'membe has openly acknowledged the critical role of women on issues of national governance requiring relentless support and effort that guarantees their full involvement and participation," she said.

"As the Socialist Party, we therefore call upon women to turn out in massive numbers to register to vote for themselves and for #realchange in 2021."



Mongu Central parliamentary candidate Christine Musole



Socialist Party national spokesperson Rehoboth Kafwambulula (above) and (right) parliamentary candidates (left to right) Moddy Nonde Chisha, Naome Nanyangwe, and Margaret Kangwa Pikiti



Politics is our way of creating the future we want for Zambia

POLITICS is women's route to creating the future they want, says Rehoboth Kafwambulula, Socialist Party national spokesperson, member of the central committee and general secretary of the youth league.

Speaking on the NGOCC programme "Women in politics: towards the 2021 general election", broadcast live on Diamond TV, Kafwambulula said, "Politics is our way of creating the future we want. Politics is a way of creating the parliament we want. So, women should be involved because their voices also matter in this process, and they should also participate in imagining the Zambia they want, creating that Zambia for themselves."

On the question of why women should take part in politics, Kafwambulula said that the bigger question that first needed to be answered was, "What is politics?"

"What is politics and what is politics for? Politics is what dictates the future, politics is what determines which neighbourhood should have water, politics is what determines which community we should pay more attention to, politics is our way of imagining our Zambia. Women and young people should participate in the process because they are also stakeholders in the country," Kafwambulula said.

Asked why women should come on board and join their male counterparts, Kafwambulula said women had always been on board, just not in the same numbers as men.

"Women should always have come on board in the first place, and women have, but not in the same proportion as men. But it is really about ensuring that everyone participates in the process."

Kafwambulula criticised the fact that there was little involvement by women in the recent Bill 10

process given the few numbers in parliament.

"Recently, we saw the fall of Bill 10 in parliament. That should not have been a decision left to only the majority of male folk, but should also have involved the women folk," she said.

Kafwambulula said women should be a part of the parliamentary process and address issues by answering questions such as, "Are we happy with the parliamentary process? Do we think it is as dem-

ocratic as should be? Do we think we should change it?"

Kafwambulula said it was almost entrenched in Zambian politics that women were excluded, and that education was a major issue.

"The nature of our politics is such that first you need to have a grade 12 certificate. Now if you want to be a parliamentary candidate, the great challenge that political parties have – not just the Socialist Party – is that there are fewer women with grade 12 O-

Level certificates than men. So, already it means that the number of people who apply, or who have the opportunity, especially when it comes to the adoption, you find there are more male applicants than women because fewer women with grade 12 certificates."

Writing on her Facebook page following the programme, Kafwambulula said, "Walking out of the studio, all I could think about was how women's representation in parliament is a great thing. But

what's even better is a party that has a concrete plan for actually improving the lives of women everywhere. The number of women in executive and parliamentary branches has stagnated over the years with little improvement. Representation does not always equal better living conditions for women. The Socialist Party has a 50/50 demand, 50 percent of our candidates will be women at parliamentary and local government level. What's even better is that our

manifesto pays attention to women's health and education. All socialist legislators sent to the house floor understand the mandate."

At present, Zambia only has an 18.2 percentage ratio of women in parliament. It is for this reason that women's and gender-based organisations, such as the Non-governmental Gender Organisations Coordinating Council, are calling for more women's representation in parliament as we head towards the 2021 elections.

There can be no true socialist revolution without the emancipation of women

THERE can be no true revolution, no true Socialist transformation, without the liberation of women. That was the view of Thomas Sankara, a Burkinabé military officer and socialist revolutionary who served as the President of Burkina Faso from 1983 until 1987.

Sankara, putting his case in a famous speech, argued that while their revolution had given birth to a potential achievement of freedom, honour, dignity and happiness, something crucial was missing – women.

Though men had "reached the edges of the great garden of revolution, women were still confined within the shadows of anonymity", he said, claiming that "nothing whole, nothing definitive or lasting, can be accomplished in Burkina Faso as long as women are kept in condition of subjugation, a condition imposed in the course of centuries by various systems of exploitation".

Three of the Socialist Party's latest parliamentary candidates have been speaking out about the role of women in political leadership, spelling out why Sankara's words are so important for Zambia.

Margaret Kangwa Pikiti, the candidate for Malole constituency, said that women naturally had a different level of compassion, which, combined with or working together with men's skills, could be capable of producing great results for an organisation or country.

"Lack of compassion produced the Hitlers of our history. It also ignores or becomes indifferent to the suffering of the poor.

"Zambia, like many 'rich' African countries, have high levels of poverty, and people struggle to meet every day basic needs. They are at the bottom level of the hierarchy of needs," she said.

"As women, we want justice and equity for all, and this can only be achieved by women participating in leadership at various levels. In class, girls/women perform just as well as boys/men, so why can't women transfer this to leadership?"

"Really, can you imagine a world or our nation without women in leadership?"

"Women should not shun politics. Our view is that women are at the core of communities and society, and decisions made in politics affect women immensely.

Astronauts

"Women are able to understand communities differently, they are the majority caregivers, and in many cases, breadwinners. They contribute to the economy." Pikiti said that women operated at many levels in modern society.

"Today we have female astronauts, presidents, and engineers, as well as home makers. It would be a drawback for women to change that direction and shun politics. We would be going backwards. Women need to be involved in decision-making for the country and for the people. Let's keep moving forward in politics."

Moddy Nonde Chisha, the parliamentary candidate for Chitambo constituency, said

women should see politics as their constitutional right and embrace it to create opportunities to bring about transformational change for their families, communities, and the country at large.

"Women must be active and practical and participate in political leadership and all other sectors of life," she said. "This should include their participation in their political parties at leadership levels to do with decision-making."

Chisha said the failure of women to participate in political decision-making would result in them being marginalised to "an undignified level".

"The women in this country are the majority and this is even more reason why they should rise up and contribute to the development of both their communities and the country at large."

Naomi Nanyangwe, the candidate for Mbalala, said women played an important role in the overall development of a country; socially, politically, economically, and culturally.

Echoing Sankara's words, she said, "When we speak about transformation, a revolution, it is impossible to carry out one without the meaningful participation of women."

"Despite the alarming oppression, discrimination, and marginalisation of women in our societies, in our country, history has always pointed us to women's abilities to rise and struggle for their liberation."

"Our country has struggled to develop, and it is where it is today because of the manner in which our women have been marginalised, discriminated against, and excluded at many

levels. Our situation has further worsened because we women have given in to the vices of discrimination, of exclusion, of patriarchy, that have told them politics is a man's game, as such, shunning politics. A dominant system that thrives on our cheap labour and marginalisation."

Nanyangwe said women needed to break free from their chains of oppression, discrimination and marginalisation, and struggle for liberation in both public and private spaces.

"As Socialist Party president Fred M'membe has rightly said, 'No one can do for us that which we can't do for ourselves'. So we, as women, should always keep in mind that truly, no one will liberate us, no one will save this country if we do not step up and participate in different ways."

"Against all odds, the ball is in our court to rise and make Zambia a happy country again, a country where women will stand and sing of Zambia, proud and free."

"Our independence, our liberation, a better Zambia, a transformed Zambia, greatly depends on the degree of women's participation and involvement in politics."

"No country can ever truly make it, can truly liberate itself from deep poverty and anguish without putting its women at the centre of decision-making and development."

"I truly applaud the leadership of the Socialist Party's central committee for taking the progressive stance of ensuring that at least 50 percent of women will stand at both the parliamentary and local government levels in next year's elections," Nanyangwe said.

Bolivian socialists pick up the pieces after 2019 coup

COVID-19, food, industry, debt and taxation, on the agenda

Vijay Prashad

ALMOST exactly a year ago, on November 10, 2019, a coup d'état struck down the Bolivian people after General Williams Kaliman "suggested" that President Evo Morales Ayma resign.

Morales left the presidency following acts and threats of physical violence against him, his family, and his political party, and went to Mexico, and then eventually into exile in Argentina.

The coup followed an election that would have resulted in Morales' fourth term as president, the results of which were questioned by the Organisation of American States or OAS (60 percent of whose funding comes from the US government).

That Morales's third term would not have ended for several months did not bother liberals around the world, who adopted the Washington-driven OAS view that there had been fraud in the October 2019 election.

It was later shown by US political scientists that no such fraud had taken place. Morales was ejected by an old fashioned coup. There is now a call by progressive governments in Latin America for the resignation of Luis Almagro, the head of the OAS.

Immense repression greeted the Bolivian people, who were told that "democracy" had arrived. This "democracy" was to wage an assault against the majority indigenous population, who faced a class war bathed in Conquistador imagery.

Patricia Arce Guzmán, mayor of Vinto in central Bolivia and a leader in the Movement to Socialism (Mas), Morales's political party, was dragged out of her office by thugs who threw red paint and gasoline on her and then hacked at her hair, cutting a part of her scalp. All this took place as the cameras rolled. "I am not afraid," Arce said defiantly, "I live in a free country."

Bravely, Arce refused to resign. She briefly went into hiding, reappearing within two weeks to take up her post as mayor. It was this courageous refusal that allowed Mas to build up their forces and triumph at the ballot box in October this year. An incredible 87 percent of the eligible voters cast their ballots, giving the presidential ticket of Mas – Luis Arce (president) and David Choquehuanca (vice president) – a victory with 55.1 percent of the vote, far ahead of the second place far-right candidate Carlos Mesa's 28.8 percent. Even more remarkable was that Mas swept the parliamentary elections, with 73 out of 130 seats in the lower house and 21 out of the 36 in the senate. One of the 20 female senators who was elected with a large margin was Patricia Arce. "With work, humility and with the support of the Bolivian people, we will recover our country with unity and courage for every one," Arce wrote on Twitter.



Bolivian President-elect Luis Arce and Vice President-elect David Choquehuanca celebrate their election victory

She thanked the people for helping Bolivia "recover the state after this coup d'état".

The United States, which had played a leadership role in the 2019 coup, congratulated the new government with a short statement, which ended with the anodyne phrase that Washington would work with the Arce-Choquehuanca government "on matters of mutual interest".

When Arce and Choquehuanca take office, their agenda will be full. The coup government that preceded them blocked any effective policies to break the chain of infection for COVID-19 and to cushion the blow to the people as a result of the economic disruptions. Arce, an economist, has laid out key policies for the continuation of the Bolivian socialist project that began under Evo Morales. There are five key components:

- Eradicating hunger. In September, the Mas-controlled Senate passed several important bills to offer relief to a population wracked by the chaos of the coup government and the pandemic: bills to provide healthcare (Bono Salud), support for the elderly and infirm, and a hunger bond (Bono contra el Hambre) that would give a fixed payment to every Bolivian. The coup government refused to sign the bills, rejecting the need for immediate relief to the population. Arce says one of the first acts of his government will be to put these measures for relief to work.

- Industrialisation. During the almost 14 years of Morales' government (2006-2019), he oversaw vast improvements in the lives of the Bolivian people, from cutting the poverty rate from 38.2 percent to 15.2 percent at the time he left office, to increasing average life expectancy by nine years and developing a universal healthcare system. The Bolivian state was able to fund such reforms largely by bargaining better deals with multinational mining firms. This was a form of resource socialism. Arce says the next step in the Mas project is to introduce import-substitution industrialisation. Production of basic consumer goods

would be a priority, since the import of these goods – fairly easy to manufacture – deplete Bolivia's foreign exchange reserves. Before the coup, Morales inaugurated a new electric car produced by Quantum Motors and Yacimientos de Litio Bolivianos, the state lithium company. At the time, the batteries were imported from China, but these state firms planned to develop Bolivia's capacity to process its own lithium and manufacture batteries for E2 and E3 cars. Arce said that he would put effort – likely with Chinese support – into the development of the cars, initially for the Bolivian market but then for export.

- Food production. Due to the break in the food supply chain, small farmers in Bolivia have struggled to get their produce to the market and have been supplanted by large agribusinesses, which charge higher prices for basic goods. Even before the pandemic, Bolivia had come to rely on exporting relatively unprocessed soybeans (such as oilcake, flour, and meal), mostly through foreign-owned companies. Arce seeks to increase food sovereignty for Bolivia, with an emphasis on technological innovations for small farmers.

- Debt cancellation. As neighbouring Argentina struggles with its massive external debt and obligations to the International Monetary Fund taken on during former President Mauricio Macri's tenure (2015-2019), Arce pledges that Bolivia will not take on further debt, which would only deepen the country's dependence on wealthy bondholders. Instead, Bolivia will pursue a renegotiation of its US\$11 billion in external debt. It is hoped that a suspension of debt servicing payments for the next two years will result in savings of US\$1.6 billion to finance hunger relief, industrialisation, and food production.

- Taxation. Additionally, Luis Arce has said that his government will tax the 0.001 percent of Bolivia's society (about 113 individuals out of a population of 11.5 million people) who sit on a comparatively obscene amount of cash. This would raise roughly US\$400 million for the exchequer.

Mas was returned to power, not merely because of Arce and Choquehuanca's platform, but also because of what the Morales administrations delivered for 14 years. During the length of the Morales tenure, the GDP grew by about 46

percent, with an annual average growth rate of per capita GDP by 3.2 percent. Crucially, most social indicators showed that people's nutrition, health, and literacy improved at a high rate.

Arce says Mas will continue this project, but the government will face considerable challenges. First, the international debt industry has refused to properly write off debt. Second, the US government is going to use every mechanism to counter the Mas project.

There is widespread recognition in Washington that portraying Arce as a "moderate" and trying to draw a line between him and Morales will not be possible. A combination of wealthy bondholders and the US government will make Arce's sensible left agenda difficult to implement.

It is here that China comes in. China and Bolivia have already established a commercial partnership, which includes collaboration on lithium development, hydroelectric expansion, and roadway construction, as well as the launching of the Tupac Katari telecommunications satellite in 2013. These projects were financed by a combination of Chinese bank loans and Bolivian savings.

There is a need now for a deeper development rather than a commercial partnership, which should include grants to propel Bolivia's industrialisation of its lithium resources and to expand Bolivia's food sovereignty.

Arce's agenda will need financing that does not trap Bolivia into debt dependency. Additional forms of funding – other than from the commercial sector or the World Bank – are necessary.

Juan Carlos Pinto Quintanilla, who worked with Morales, said recently that the Mas project must deepen the "perception of the political horizon", draw popular participation into the agenda, and create awareness of the entirety of the programme.

Such a decentralised perception will ensure that a new generation of Bolivians will defend a project that is truly their own.

Tricontinental

CHINA WATCH

INTEREST in China is growing, yet most news and analysis outside the country is produced by mainstream media from the global north. To provide access to Chinese perspectives, the *Dong Feng Collective* – researchers from various countries – offers a China digest of news. This is an edited selection.

Looking to the future

AFTER Joe Biden's victory, Beijing has reaffirmed its willingness for dialogue and cooperation in a "healthy bilateral relationship", but experts don't expect significant changes from Washington. Some collaboration in fighting the pandemic and climate change could be possible, but White House policies on trade, technology, Taiwan and Hong Kong, are likely to remain.

Global Times

Latin American drive

CHINA is to strengthen Latin American partnerships based on a three-pillar approach to imports, investment and political solidarity. As the key export market for Chile (32%), Peru (29%), Brazil (28%), Uruguay (27%), and Argentina (10%) in 2019, China also supported Venezuela, Cuba and Bolivia, whose new president Luis Arce has indicated a commitment to lithium cooperation for battery production.

People's Dispatch

Action on monopolies

CHINA has issued draft antitrust rules to rein in internet-based monopolies, protecting market fairness and the interests of consumers. Online monopolistic practices will be outlawed, including forcing merchants to choose between platforms or providing differentiated prices based on customer information.

South China Morning Post

Pudong capital draw

AFTER 30 years of opening up, Shanghai's Pudong district has attracted 35,000 foreign enterprises from 168 countries and regions and US\$95.86 billion of foreign capital. From January-August, foreign investment in Pudong free trade zone surpassed US\$5.9 billion, up 9.2% year-on-year.

China Daily

New housing boost

SINCE 2015, China has invested US\$91 billion in new housing for 9.6 million peasants in 35,000 communities. The biggest challenges are job creation and the adaptation of families to new environments, but communities have health clinics and schools, guaranteeing rural children access to healthcare and education.

South China Morning Post

Import expo record

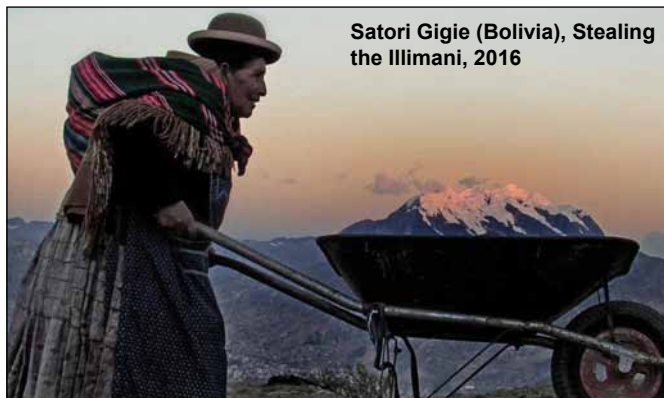
THE third China International Import Expo saw a record total of deals signed (US\$72.6 billion), up 2.1% on last year. Despite the pandemic, more than 2,700 businesses from 120 countries and regions participated in the five-day expo in Shanghai, with US firms holding the largest exhibition area.

Global Times

PLA in hi-tech focus

CHINA has announced the modernisation of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) based on "disruptive technologies". To safeguard national security and leading up to 100th anniversary in 2027, the PLA will focus on breakthrough industries where it has strategic advantage, including quantum systems, hypersonic weapons and AI-driven unpiloted technologies.

South China Morning Post



Satori Gigie (Bolivia), Stealing the Illimani, 2016

● AS NEWS of Bolivia's election was released, the Swiss Bank UBS released its new billionaires report.

The wealth of the billionaire class increased by 27.5 percent between April and July of 2020, with a record high at US\$10.2 trillion, distributed between just 2,189 billionaires.

Meanwhile, the World Bank announced that poverty rates will rise for the first time since 1988.

This is the essence of the class struggle, with Jeff Bezos of Amazon sitting on US\$203 billion, and with half the world's population going to bed hungry at night.

The new Bolivian government, like all movements and political parties that are sensitive to the value human life, will have to struggle to get food to everyone in the country.

Trickle-down economics don't lead to social benefits – Pope

‘Dogma of neoliberal faith’ boosts powerful in ‘the empire of money’

POPE Francis says the COVID-19 pandemic is the latest crisis to prove that market forces alone and “trickle-down” economic policies fail to produce the social benefits their proponents claim.

In an encyclical on the theme of human fraternity, Pope Francis also said private property could not be considered an absolute right in all cases where some lived extravagantly while others had nothing.

Called “Fratelli Tutti” (Brothers All), the encyclical’s title prompted criticism for not using inclusive language after it was announced in October.

In Italian, Fratelli means brothers, but it is also used to mean brothers and sisters. The Vatican

said it was taken from the “Admonitions”, or guidelines, written by St Francis of Assisi in the 13th century to his followers and could not be changed.

The Pope says in the first line of the 86-page encyclical that St Francis had “addressed his brothers and sisters” that way. In the document, he uses the term “men and women” 15 times and speaks several times about defending the rights and dignity of women.

Encyclicals are the most authoritative form of papal writing, but they are not infallible.

The encyclical, which Pope Francis signed in Assisi in October, covers topics such as fraternity, immigration, the rich-poor gap, economic and social injustices, healthcare imbalances, and the widening political polarisation in many countries.

The Pope took direct aim at trickle-down economics, the theory favoured by conservatives that tax breaks and other incentives for big business and the wealthy will eventually benefit the rest of society through investment and job creation.

“There were those who would have had us believe that freedom of the market was sufficient to keep everything secure (after the pandemic hit),” he wrote.

Pope Francis denounced “this dogma of neoliberal faith” that resorts to “the magic theories of ‘spillover’ or ‘trickle’ . . . as the only solution to societal problems”. A good economic policy, he said, “makes it possible for jobs to be created and not cut”.

The 2007-2008 financial crisis was a missed opportunity for change, instead producing “in-



Pope Francis: racism is a virus that quickly mutates

creased freedom for the truly powerful, who always find a way to escape unscathed”. Society must confront “the destructive effects of the empire of money”.

Pope Francis repeated past calls

for redistribution of wealth to help the poorest and for fairer access to natural resources by all.

“The right to private property can only be considered a secondary natural right, derived from the principle of the universal destination of created goods,” he said.

A Vatican official said the Pope was referring to those with massive wealth. The Pope wrote that the belief of early Christians – “that if one person lacks what is necessary to live with dignity, it is because another person is detaining it” – was still valid.

Those with much must “administer it for the good of all”, and rich nations are obliged to share wealth with poor ones. But he said he was “certainly not proposing an authoritarian and abstract universalism”.

Some ultra-traditionalist Catholics have accused Francis of se-

cretly backing a perceived plot for a “one-world government,” a debunked conspiracy theory.

Without naming countries or people, Pope Francis condemned politicians who “seek popularity by appealing to the basest and most selfish inclinations” or who enact policies of “hatred and fear towards other nations”.

Addressing racism, a key issue in the United States following the Black Lives Matter movement, Pope Francis said, “Racism is a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting.”

He repeated calls for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the death penalty, positions which have been assailed by conservative Catholics, particularly in the United States.

Reuters

It's business as usual as governments put profits before lives in the COVID-19 fight

Andre Damon

THE ANNOUNCEMENT from Pfizer and German partner BioNTech that there has been progress in the development of an effective vaccine against COVID-19 is a promising and encouraging development.

It makes all the more necessary urgent measures to contain the spread of the virus and save lives until a vaccine is widely available.

Pfizer announced that patients in clinical trials who received two injections of the vaccine, spaced three weeks apart, had 90 percent fewer cases of COVID-19 than a control group. By way of comparison, the typical yearly flu vaccine is only 40 to 60 percent effective.

The findings were based on initial data from a clinical trial of over 43,538 participants, which were reviewed by an independent board, but which have not yet been made public. The company intends to file for an emergency use authorisation once half of the participants in the study have been observed for safety issues for at least two months.

If approved, Pfizer’s vaccine (as well as one being developed by rival Moderna) would be the first mRNA vaccine in widespread use. This would open a new age for the rapid treatment of infectious diseases with a whole new class of low-cost vaccines.

The progress toward a vaccine should be greeted with enthusiasm by workers throughout the world. However, significant questions and issues remain.

In its report on the vaccine, medical journal *Stat* noted that, “there is no information yet on whether the vaccine prevents severe cases, the type that can cause hospitalisation and death. Nor is there any information yet on whether it prevents people from carrying the virus that causes Covid-19, SARS-CoV-2, without symptoms”. The latter would be critical in determining how effective the vaccine is in preventing transmission rates.

It is also still too early to say how long the vaccine protects against infection. *Stat* also noted that the results announced by Pfizer and BioNTech have not yet been peer reviewed by scientists or published in a medical journal.

Provided that the initial results hold, even under the best of conditions, Pfizer said that only 50 million doses will be available by the end of the



Medical personnel work in the intensive care ward for Covid-19 patients at the MontLegia CHC hospital in Liege, Belgium

year, with 1.3 billion produced in 2021. The vaccine must be stored at super-cold temperatures, which could make it extremely difficult to deliver to many places.

The availability and distribution of the vaccine, moreover, will be hampered by the subordination of production to the profit motives of the giant pharmaceutical companies and the conflicting interests of competing nation-states.

That being said, it does appear that progress is being made. Director of the US National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Anthony Fauci, noted that the initial results from Pfizer also bode well for the vaccine being developed by biotechnology firm Moderna and the National Institutes of Health based on similar technology. The Russian health ministry issued a statement indicating its Sputnik V vaccine would also be over 90 percent effective.

All of this means that an effective vaccine will likely be available for broad distribution sometime next year.

The progress toward a vaccine makes all the more criminal the policy of “herd immunity” that is being implemented by governments throughout the world. Just as one begins to see a light at the end of the tunnel, the argument that it is neces-

sary to “live with the virus” becomes absolutely unacceptable.

News of the vaccine comes as the pandemic is surging in the United States and Europe. The US has surpassed 12 million cases, and around a quarter million people have died in the United States alone.

Despite this disaster, there is no plan to contain the pandemic. US President Donald Trump, who remains in office for at least one-and-a-half more months, has publicly advocated for “herd immunity,” declaring that the spread of the disease to be positive. President-elect Joe Biden has already rejected calls for more widespread lockdowns.

While the UK, France, and Germany have announced minor restrictions on bars and gyms, they have categorically refused to close non-essential workplaces like factories and schools.

The current catastrophic state of the pandemic is the direct consequence of the fact that government policy has been determined not by public health, but by the interests of profit. Once the bailout of the banks was secured in March, the ruling class worked to implement its back-to-work policy.

As a result, hundreds of thousands have died.

If emergency action is not taken now, hundreds of thousands more will die before a vaccine is widely available.

The senseless loss of life must be stopped. Non-essential businesses must be closed, with full compensation for all lost wages for workers and earnings for small businesspeople due to the pandemic. The terrible trade-off between risking one’s life and one’s livelihood cannot be accepted.

Where production is essential to the functioning of society, safe working conditions must be overseen by workers’ rank-and-file safety committees and healthcare professionals, with no concern for corporate profit.

There must be a massive investment in public healthcare infrastructure, including universal testing, contact tracing and free treatment for all. Once a vaccine is available, it must be freely distributed and not subject to the profit interests of private corporations or the competition of nation-states.

The working class must now intervene to ensure that hundreds of thousands do not needlessly die in the coming weeks and months because the capitalists must have their profits.

wswg.org

'A cascade of defaults' threatens economies

Zambia 'can only pay if it ignores its people'

Vijay Prashad

ZAMBIA'S missed US\$42.5 million interest payment on US\$1 billion of Eurobonds risks it becoming the first African country to slip into sustained debt default.

It can only pay interest on its US\$3 billion dollar-denominated bonds if it totally ignores the needs of the Zambian people.

The country has suffered from the slowdown of the world economy, which impacted the sale of its copper for a part of this year (although copper prices and future prices have now begun to rise).

Cosmas Musumali, Socialist Party general secretary, says the convulsions of indebtedness are not only due to the coronavirus recession but also to the wealthy bondholders and the "cluelessness" of the government of President Edgar Lungu of the Patriotic Front.

Zambia is one instance of what will be a cascade of defaults. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated in April 2020 that at least 39 million people in sub-Saharan Africa would be forced into extreme poverty. Ken Ofori-Atta, the finance minister of Ghana, said in early October that "the ability of central banks in the west to respond [to the pandemic] to an unimaginable extent and the limits of our ability to respond is quite jarring".

Ofori-Atta's comment should be taken very seriously. In its October 2020 Fiscal Monitor Report, the IMF said that governments around the world had thus far spent or cut taxes to the tune of US\$11.7 trillion, or 12 percent of global GDP.

Infrastructure

Through low-interest rates, financial institutions are encouraging governments in Europe and North America to borrow money to exit the coronavirus recession. The IMF's managing director Kristalina Georgieva regularly says that countries must "spend, keep the receipts, but spend", and that this expenditure should go towards infrastructure.

The World Bank's chief economist Carmen Reinhart has said that even developing countries must take on new debt.

"While the disease is raging, what else are you going to do? First you worry about fighting the war, then you figure out how to pay for it," he said. To people like Ofori-Atta and Dr Musumali, this is strange advice.

In November 2019, before the

pandemic, Stephanie Blankenburg gave a presentation at the Debt Management Conference of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

As the head of the Debt and Development Finance Branch of UNCTAD, Dr Blankenburg keeps a keen eye on the escalation of debt and its social impact. "Developing country external debt surpasses combined export earnings since 2016," she said.

The World Bank's international debt statistics 2021 show that at the end of 2019, the total external debt of the developing countries was more than US\$8 trillion. Ten months into the coronavirus recession has led close observers to estimate that the burden has increased to at least US\$11 trillion. Since 2016, developing countries have been unable to finance their debt through export earnings. Now, none of the poorest countries will be able to service this debt, few will be able to ever clear it.

During the week of the annual IMF meeting, I asked Dr Blankenburg whether the richer states – the G20, for instance – were serious about debt relief of any kind. "It depends what you mean by 'serious', but I assume you mean debt write-offs that return highly-indebted countries to a sustainable growth and development path," she answered. "If that is so, then no, or not in any orderly and bal-



Blessing, Ngobeni, South Africa Oppressed and Shall Rise, 2019

anced fashion," she said. "Eventually, debt write-offs in the most vulnerable developing countries will be inevitable, and everybody recognises this, but the question is on what terms this will happen."

As countries slip into default, their finance ministers find that they have almost no power to bargain their way out of a crisis. The terms are dictated to them. "Short-term creditor interests," Dr Blankenburg said, "Are likely to keep the upper hand."

This means that financial institutions – driven by the compulsions of wealthy bond holders – will set the terms for the repayments of the odious debts.

These terms are by now familiar; the financial institutions – and the governments of the richer countries that back them – will demand "conditionalities that favour austerity", which, she said, will "undermine future growth prospects and carry high social costs for the population in the affected countries".

"In a nutshell," Dr Blankenburg told me, "The question is not so much whether there will be debt relief – there will have to be – but how this will come about."

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the "Basic Principles on Sovereign Debt Restructuring Processes". This resolution noted that any debt restructuring must follow the customary principles of sovereignty, good faith, transparency, legitimacy, equitable treatment, and sustainability.

Behind this resolution lay another aim, namely, to overhaul the debt process and create a mechanism for a comprehensive agreement over debt. This mechanism, it was hoped, would have the power to develop a comprehensive agreement on the galloping debt burden.

Complicated

Attempts by the richer nations to handle debt – such as through the G20/Paris Club's Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI) – have not borne fruit.

As Dr Blankenburg explained, the DSSI "was monumentally complicated and only brought limited relief on commercial debt" for the most indebted states; anything for the rest of the indebted poorer countries "would have to be bigger, faster, and smoother". Mechanisms proposed by UNCTAD, she

told me, are "not on the horizon so far".

The problem is that the terms for the conversation are entirely set by the richer countries, led by the G20. They are of the view that only the creditors – and at most the IMF – should be in charge.

"The danger here," Dr Blankenburg told me, "Is that short-term creditor-led considerations of the repayability of external debt prevails as the main criterion, and long-term sustainability and development concerns are disregarded." In other words, the rich want their money, while the poor are left without any means to survive, let alone thrive.

The IMF's Georgieva is trying to rebrand the Fund as somehow no longer committed to structural adjustment and austerity. But her advertising campaign falls short compared to the policies of the IMF. An Oxfam study found that 84 percent of the loans offered to 67 countries during the coronavirus recession came with fiscal consolidation – or austerity – measures. These loans came through the IMF's Rapid Credit Facility, and the Rapid Financing Instru-

ment, both set up in April 2020, as well as the Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust.

On October 16, Zambia's finance minister, Bwalya Ng'andu, told parliament that his government was working with the G20/Paris Club's DSSI for a six-month suspension in debt servicing payments.

"Although we have obtained some relief under the DSSI window, particularly from official creditors," Dr Ng'andu said, "Engagements with commercial creditors have not yet yielded the expected results." And they likely will not, because – as Dr Blankenburg told me – they are focused on short-term interests and have little care for the long-term wellbeing of countries such as Zambia.

The Socialist Party's Dr Musumali told me the situation was bleak for his country, since the proportion of concessional lending had relatively declined, sovereign debt had increased for most developing countries, and "the global campaign for debt forgiveness and cancellation is much weaker today".

Strengthening that campaign is vital.

Tricontinental (updated)

The game's up . . . you can run but you can't hide

STATEMENT of the Socialist Party on the Zambian government's failure to honour its debt servicing obligations:

On September 22 this year, the Minister of Finance announced that he had made a request to bondholders to suspend debt servicing for six months because Zambia was not in a position to meet its debt servicing obligations due on October 14.

As you may be aware, 40 per cent of bondholders immediately refused to grant Zambia debt servicing suspension.

The Zambian government had hoped that when 60 per cent of bondholders met on the last day of the one month grace period given to pay from the initial due date, the bondholders would agree with their proposals. But they too refused.

Consequently, Zambia officially became the first country in Africa to default, even if it had already defaulted on other unknown Chinese debt obligations.

As the Socialist Party, we are concerned with the lack of seriousness from the treasury when

dealing with these important issues.

We have plenty of human resources that we have invested in as a country and worked at the highest level of both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It is an embarrassment to the nation that the Minister of Finance lied about his engagement with bondholders, only for them to issue a statement the following day that there had been no direct contact between them and the Zambian government.

Why did Dr Bwalya Ng'andu lie to the nation? Is he covering up on the debt that was borrowed under the cover of darkness?

They say, "You can run but you can't hide . . . you can fool some people all the time, but you can't fool all the people all of the time."

Reality has finally dawned on this Patriotic Front government.

What the international community is demanding is transparency on the Chinese debt obligations. The demand by the



Socialist Party president Fred M'membe

Minister of Finance through his representatives that bondholders should sign a non-disclosure agreement before he discloses the extent of Chinese debt and the conditions attached thereof should be of interest to every Zambian because this is public debt which you will all pay for.

As the Socialist Party, we wish to announce to the nation that the reason why this government has since 2016 refused to open its books to the IMF on the Chinese debt is because that

would reveal the Patriotic Front's massive penchant for bribes.

Most of the loans have inflated figures because of amounts that a few greedy individuals have collected as "facilitation" fees.

The International community is well aware of the extent of corruption and is now collaborating with bondholders to expose how corrupt this government is.

Once that information on the Chinese debt is given, it will reveal how much money was shared and by whom. At the

moment, Ministry of Finance officials have been struggling to balance the figures before the IMF team comes in.

Dr Ng'andu must not continue protecting criminals. There is no place for them to hide anymore. He has two options: either he reveals the actual figures of the Chinese debt and the Patriotic Front goes down so that we can protect our economy, or he lets the Patriotic Front continue hiding its nefarious acts and we all go down.

Dr Ng'andu has to make that choice because time is of essence. Thankfully, since we can't demand accountability and transparency from the powerful politicians and their fellow gangsters outside government, a far more powerful group has come to our rescue.

Lelo balasebena ba pompwe mushibila nsala!

● Issued by Socialist Party president Fred M'membe on behalf of the party politbureau. Garden Compound, Lusaka.

US recruits India as a strategic ally in fight for Asian influence

Move comes to contain China as IMF World Economic Outlook data predicts the country will account for 51 percent of world growth as the rest of the world's GDP stagnates and declines. **Vijay Prashad** reports

IN MID-OCTOBER, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released its World Economic Outlook report, which offered some dizzying data.

For 2020, the IMF estimates that the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will decline by 4.4 percent, while in 2021 the global GDP will rise by 5.2 percent. Stagnation and decline will define the economic activity in both Europe and North America, as well as in large states such as Brazil and India.

With a second wave of coronavirus infections in Europe and the first wave not having been controlled in Brazil, India, and the United States, it appears that these IMF estimates might sink further downwards.

Meanwhile, the data on China is quite astounding. China will account for the absolute majority, namely 51 percent, of world growth. Based on the IMF numbers, the other contributors to world growth will be mainly Asian economies that have strong trading relations with China, namely South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia.

In 2020, China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) did not set any growth targets due to the occurrence of the great lockdown. However, at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the NDRC head Ning Jizhe said targets would be set for 2021, although he reiterated that the growth targets would not be merely towards GDP growth, but towards "a steady improvement in quality", which means poverty alleviation.

After the meeting, Yu Xuejun, deputy head of the National Health Commission, said that the ten million families who fell into poverty due to the coronavirus disruptions had now been lifted out of poverty.

Given the continued disruptions caused by the virus and the uncertainty about a vaccine, it would behave the countries of the world to dial down tensions and expand collaboration. Exchange of information and personnel to break the chain of the infection – organised by the World Health Organisation – would enhance eroded public health systems. Yet, this is exactly what the countries most impacted by the coronavirus – Brazil, India, and the United States – refuse to do (and this is precisely what is being encouraged by the socialist states such as China and Cuba).

While the United States drives a "vaccine nationalism" agenda,



US policy atrocity in Asia: a mother and her children wade across a river in Vietnam to flee US bombing, 1965. Kyōichi Sawada (Japan)

using whatever means possible to secure a vaccine for US residents with no regard for the rest of the world population or the viruses' disregard for borders, China and Cuba have called for a "people's vaccine".

This approach, placing public health before profit, advocates for all those seeking a vaccine to pool their patents and share COVID-19 related technology.

China has now formally joined the COVAX collaboration, a platform organised by the WHO and others to "support the research, development and manufacturing of a wide range of COVID-19 vaccine candidates".

Rampage

The platform includes 184 countries, but not the major capitalist powers. At a press briefing, Zhao Lijian said, "With four vaccine candidates entering phase-3 clinical trials, China is self-sufficient in vaccine production. Nevertheless, China decided to join COVAX. The purpose is to promote equitable distribution of vaccines through concrete actions, ensure the supply of vaccines in developing countries, and motivate more capable countries to join and support COVAX."

Meanwhile, as these international initiatives developed, the United States went on a rampage across the world to diminish China's role but offer nothing productive in its place. In South America, the US has developed a programme called Growth in the Americas (or América Crece), the purpose of which is to draw US private-sector funding to crowd out Chinese public investments.

In Africa and Asia, the US has



Prakash Karat, Indian Communist Party politbureau member

developed the Millennium Challenge Corporation to provide modest funds as a challenge to China's Belt and Road Initiative. Apart from these investment vehicles, the United States has sharpened its military alliance with Australia, India, and Japan, known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad).

India and the United States recently signed a Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA), when US Secretaries of State (Pompeo) and Defence (Esper) visited India in October. To better understand the context of this significant Agreement, Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research spoke to Prakash Karat, politbureau member of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and author of *Subordinate Ally: The Nuclear Deal and India-US Strategic Relations* (LeftWord Books, 2007).

Tricontinental: India's external affairs minister Dr. S. Jaishankar says that India is not part of the US "alliance system", but with the signing of BECA it seems that that hesitancy is now gone. Is India now fully in an alliance with the US against China?

Prakash Karat: The forging of a military alliance between the US and India has been in the making for a long time. What we are witnessing is the unfolding of the defence framework agreement, which was signed in 2005 by the then UPA [United Progressive Alliance] government. This framework was renewed after ten years by the Modi government in 2015.

The institutionalisation of various aspects of that framework has now been completed with the signing of the BECA. It is after the Modi government took office that the process was speeded up.

The Logistics Supply Agreement was signed in 2016. This was a turning point. For the first time, India agreed to host a foreign country's armed forces in ports and air bases for fuelling, repairs, and maintenance. This is like the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreements that the US has with its NATO allies.

This was followed by COMCASA (Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement) for maintaining the confidentiality of US communications equipment supplied to India and now the agreement for geospatial cooperation.

Agreements

All these so-called foundational agreements have interlocked the Indian armed forces with the US military. There is also a provision for joint operation in third countries in the framework agreement.

If this is not a military alliance, then what is it? The Foreign Minister was dissembling to keep the fiction going that India is not part of any alliance system.

Tricontinental: The war games being planned bring in all the Quad members. Is this especially significant?

Prakash Karat: The Quadrilateral Forum was first conceived of in 2007, consisting of Japan, Australia, US, and India. But it could not take off for various reasons. China objected to such an anti-China platform. Australia, after the Labour government took office, backed out. But before that, there were joint naval exercises between the four Quad members and Singapore, off the Bay of Bengal.

In 2017, the Quad was revived as part of the Indo-Pacific strategy of the Trump administration. In Obama's time, it was called Asia-Pacific strategy. With the rising confrontation of China by the US, the Quad has assumed a military shape. The Malabar exercises were, for three decades, annual joint naval exercises between the US and Indian navies. The left parties were opposed to them from the outset. Now, under US direction, it has expanded, first to trilateral exercises, including Japan, and this year (from 3 November) it is a four-nation affair, with the addition of Australia.

The significance of the Quad is that it shows India has become a military ally of the US, like the US's traditional allies, Japan and Australia. This is a success for the three-decade-old Pentagon plan to enlist India as a strategic ally in Asia designed to contain China.

Tricontinental: Is it a good idea for India to antagonise China merely on economic grounds? Shouldn't India seek dialogue and greater commercial ties with China rather than move to a war-like footing, particularly as the GDP in India will also decline further?

Prakash Karat: In the post-pandemic period, India will need to expand its economic and trade relations with China to assist in its recovery and further growth. Given the fact that China's economy will be a major factor in the global economic recovery, it is extremely short sighted to think of restricting investments and trade with China. Already some restrictions have been put in place. According to the Indian finance minister, in some sectors production has revived, like the steel industry, because of export orders from China.

It would be in India's interests to resolve the India-China border issue through high-level talks and let that not affect other spheres of our relations. But then, the government and the Bharatiya Janata Party (the ruling party) have ideological blinkers on.

Tricontinental

A poem for our times

IN 1965, as India and Pakistan slipped into another war, Sahir Ludhianvi, one of the great Urdu poets of his generation, wrote a poem called *Ai Sharif Insano* (O Nobel Souls).

It begins with a summary of why war is so atrocious; for, after all, war brings fire and blood, hunger, want, and scarcity.

What about a war against capitalism, suggests Sahir, rather than a war that takes the "blood of human beings"?

*Wage war against the grip of capitalism
Seek peace for the commoner's happiness
Wage war against the philosophy of war
Seek peace for a peaceful life*

These are wise words for our times.



JOIN WITH US TO CREATE A FAIR, JUST AND HUMANE SOCIETY

The masses of our people are engaging themselves in these struggles to gain material benefits, to live better lives and in peace, to have **free education, quality healthcare, clean water, decent sanitation, a solid roof over their heads,** and all the services required in an organised society

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*Manifesto of the Socialist Party
2021-2026*

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