

You, the poor, must rule yourselves

Socialist staff reporter

SOCIALIST Party president Fred M'membe told a presentation of parliamentary and local government candidates that it was the majority who should be ruling Zambia.

"Who are the majority in this country? They say democracy is majority rule. If it's the poor who are the majority, why don't they rule? This year, you, the poor, should rule," he said.

Dr M'membe was speaking at Kingfisher Garden Court in Lusaka at the unveiling ceremony for 34 parliamentary and three local government candidates.

He asked them, "Was Jesus rich or poor? Were his disciples rich or poor? When choosing a chief, did they choose the rich or the wise?"

"Does having money amount to being wise? Is leadership about money?"

Dr M'membe said that, for the most part, those who ruled lived well but those who were governed suffered, adding that the poor had not ruled Zambia since independence.

"They use you like a ladder when climbing on to a wall and when they are at the top they drop the ladder," he said.

And he warned what would happen if the poor did not take control in the August elections this year. "If you, poor people, don't rule, poverty will not end," he said.

"This year, for the first time in our history, we will have a Parliament dominated by the poor. We will have a Parliament where the poor have a direct voice, where the poor are speaking for themselves, where the poor are representing themselves."

Dr M'membe said the wealthy and their political parties had made themselves rich by exploiting the poor.

"You have been represented by the rich for too long. But what have they done for you? They have enriched themselves. What you can't do for yourselves, nobody will do for you. You have sent *abakankala* to represent you, but they have not represented you. This time, go and represent yourself."

Dr M'membe told the candidates that no other political party would adopt them.

"How many of you have K2,000 or K5,000 to pay for adoption? These other political parties you see all have owners," he said.

"These political parties you have voted for [in the past] are owned by the rich, you have just been used."

"But your party, the Socialist Party, is for the poor. You can't be adopted in the political parties owned by the rich."

Dr M'membe told the candidates to go out and educate people who were used to voting for people with money, to vote for themselves this time instead.

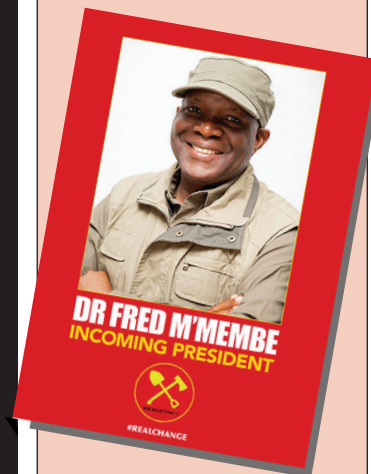
Fred M'membe says majority can end poverty



Socialist Party president Fred M'membe speaks at a presentation of parliamentary candidates (above) at Kingfisher Garden Court in Lusaka

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The August elections give us a chance to change everything and build a more just and caring society



FRED M'MEMBE, incoming president, offers #realchange with the Socialist Party's policies based on justice, equity and peace. Manifesto download details and info about how to join the party are on our back page

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Buying off election candidates 'shames Zambia'

Musumali – Page 3



Barbra Chekuda Maramwidze (above) helps oversee the supply of water to Matero residents. Right (clockwise from top left): Christine Musole, Hope Kalenge, Biggie Mukubola and Margaret Sikalonza

We're not playing the game of the quick fix . . . we want real change

Candidates deal with injustice and suffering on a day-to-day basis

Christine Nawa Musole
Parliamentary candidate
Mongu Central constituency

THE GAME of fixing, promises of fixing things, will take this country nowhere.

It will be the same circle of capitalist-oriented approaches that yield similar results to the ones we have seen before, that is, uplifting a few bwanas here and there, and leaving the rest of us behind, leaving the majority of us to wonder what happened, and then back again to the same circle of poverty, hunger and frustration, writes **Christine Nawa Musole**, parliamentary candidate for Mongu Central constituency.

We need to look to true alternatives. We need real change, not fixing. When you fix something it breaks, you fix again, again, again and again, and it still breaks.

A broken system can't be fixed and is not sustainable. And that is what capitalism and capitalist-oriented parties have been doing to our country. This has led us nowhere except into deepening poverty, hopelessness, despair and never-ending human suffering. But what we, the youth in Zambia, want is real change in its real, tangible sense, not fixing. The Zambia we want, desire, dream of and long for, cannot be attained through fixing. The Zambia the youth deserve needs committed leadership grounded in the people's ideology that serves the struggling, toiling masses, that struggles for a better, transformed Zambia.

We also need a leadership that truly involves the youth, that is true to our realities, a leadership with a vision to change and transform the education system, our universities, the agriculture sector, the health sector, mining, and create more jobs for us.

Today, despite the degrees and diplomas to our names, a number of us continue to languish on the streets.

The Socialist Party is clear about the change it proposes under the humble leadership of Dr Fred M'membe. The SP has put forward a vision through its manifesto to qualitatively change this country and move it back on track. Our change agenda speaks to how we will ensure free healthcare, free education, transformation of peasant agriculture, new approaches to mining – a mining sector that takes a diversified approach – and all these sectors creating multiple jobs for many Zambians. This is real change.

We invite Zambia's young men and women, as well as all well-meaning Zambians, to join the revolutionary movement for real change today.

Barbra Chekuda Maramwidze
Parliamentary candidate
Matero constituency

THE SOCIALIST Party in Matero is supplying up to 30,000 litres of water a day to help deal with a chronic shortage in the area.

Barbra Chekuda Maramwidze, the party's parliamentary candidate for the Matero constituency in Lusaka Province, says some residents have been without clean water supply for eight months.

"Certain areas of Matero have been hit terribly with the shortage of water despite the fact that it is a basic necessity," she said. "It's sad to see women, men and children lining up, an act that deters them from carrying out more productive activities."

"A number of people complained of not having water supply for days, weeks, and some for as long as eight months. This is unacceptable on every level, and the Socialist Party refuses to

be dehumanised and humiliated to such an extent. The party believes in equity for all; equity of water supply, sanitation, shelter and nutrition, among other needs.

"It is our fundamental goal to ensure that every household has access to clean and safe water. The Socialist Party says no to social inequality and believes that no one should be discriminated against because of where they come from, whether ku or kwa."

Maramwidze said the shortages prompted the party and the community to take action to find a lasting solution to the injustice by supplying a maximum of 30,000 litres of water every day.

"By taking this action we are ensuring members of our communities don't have to waste time in long queues for water, but are able to devote their time to other activities, such as youths studying, women working, and men providing for their families."

She said the Socialist Party vowed to work with the people of Matero to ensure such inequalities were brought to an end.

Hope Kalenge
Parliamentary candidate,
Milenge constituency

REAL democracy praised by Socialist Party general secretary and first vice-president Cosmas Musumali is represented on the ground by people from all walks of life – peasant farmers, marketers, hairdressers, teachers, a bricklayer – and now also a charcoal seller.

That's the profession of 27-year-old **Hope Kalenge**, who is the parliamentary candidate for Milenge constituency.

Although Kalenge is a trained teacher of art and design, and studied at Lusaka's Mwarona College of Education, she sells charcoal because she can't find a job in her profession.

"What am I going to do? Should I stay at home and say, 'I don't have a job?' No. I'm proud of selling charcoal because that's what puts food on the table," she said.

Milenge is in Luapula Province, and Kalenge is hoping to represent her rural constituency, populated by mostly Ushis.

Her constituency is beset by the usual rural hardships, including poverty, poor roads and substandard hospitals and schools. She is hoping to fight for improvements and equity once she is elected to the Zambian parliament.

"We need to work together to achieve our goals," she said, adding that people should vote wisely and never allow anyone to buy their support.

Biggie Mukubola
Parliamentary candidate
Dundumwenz constituency

BIGGIE Mukubola says his Dundumwenz constituency in the Kalomo District of Southern Province is an example of everything that is wrong with the agricultural sector in Zambia, and desperately in need of the Socialist Party's visionary approach to peasant farming.

"The people of Dundumwenz have suffered for a long time because they have held on to one unyielding crop seed that has failed to produce a good harvest for the past 20 years," he said.

"It's my motive to struggle and show the people of Dundumwenz constituency that you can't improve the lives of people by holding on to one failed seed, but by instead opting for other high-yielding crops that can change the harvest."

He said the agriculture situation was like a parable, with failed politics the same as failed crops.

"The people of Dundumwenz

have been holding on to the UPND, which has been a failed party for more than 19 years, but they have now seen the sun rising from the east and come to realise that joining the Socialist Party is the only solution. The constituency faces many challenges, including roads, healthcare and education," he said.

"I joined the party because of my zeal, zest and enthusiasm to strive for justice, equity and peace for my constituency. Once in power, this party will not bribe or issue cash or material things to impress the people in the nation, but will instead concentrate on its three key programmes: education, health and agriculture."

Mukubola said the Socialist Party was committed to creating jobs as well as providing access to clean water and sanitation for every Zambian, adding that its literacy programme was already "proof enough" that it would fulfill its promises.

Margaret Sikalonza
Parliamentary candidate
Luanshya constituency

SUFFERING isn't limited to shortages of food and money, there is another form of deprivation that makes us "constantly debased and humiliated as second-class citizens in our own country," **Margaret Sikalonza**, parliamentary candidate for Luanshya constituency, says.

"Many people are suffering because solidarity is not within us, the ability to feel the pain and suffering of another human being and be moved to do something about it. Zambia is two nations: the poor and the well-to-do."

"It's very hard to own land in our own country while a visitor can own as much as they want as long as they have money," she said.

Sikalonza said Luanshya Mu-

nicipal Council could help end the more urgent land problems by not allocating plots where there was a danger of houses being submerged in the rainy season.

"The lives of the poor are neglected, mostly poor people are helpless," she said.

"Many houses here in Luanshya have cracks or have fallen due to the heavy rain on the Copperbelt."

"It's been a month now since we engaged the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit, and they came and brought sacks of mealie meal. We were left wondering whether the mealie meal was for reconstruction of the fallen houses or whether families were supposed to sleep in the bags."

Sikalonza said maize was not the problem as there was still enough left from last year's season.

"People need cement and bricks or even tents, not mealie meal," she said. "We are still waiting for help from the government, although we understand that this is not a battle for the government alone. The government can engage youths from within the community to do building. That will also put food on people's tables. These houses are getting worse – they are death traps – but many have no choice but to continue sleeping in them. We call upon the government to hurry with a solution before lives are lost."

Sikalonza said many people had mud floors, the majority being unable to afford concrete. "A mud floor cannot be cleaned properly, it cannot be mopped effectively, leading to germs in the rainy season," she said.

"This unbearable situation of injustice and inequality in our country today is what the Socialist Party in government is committed to struggle against."

Buying off election candidates shames Zambia and democracy

Musumali: Stop this malicious, targeted, corrupt campaign

Socialist staff reporter

NO POLITICAL party has ever shamed Zambia the way the Patriotic Front is at the moment by trying to buy off Socialist Party election candidates, party general secretary and first vice-president Cosmas Musumali told a televised and radio broadcast press conference.

Speaking at Kingfisher Garden Court in Lusaka – where only days before the party’s latest candidates had been celebrated – Dr Musumali said he was sorry to have to share “a massive, malicious, targeted buying off of our candidates happening on an unprecedented large scale”.

He said first reports of an approach by the PF at Luapula had been treated by the party as “just one of those issues, uncomfortable, but we have at times unruly adversaries who see solutions in buying people”.

The parliamentary candidate had been offered 200,000 Kwacha (US\$9,015) to stand down. But since then there had been a total of 17 incidents involving 25 candidates – eight as MPs and 17 local councillors – touching all provinces except Southern.

“The impression we are getting is that this is well coordinated and well funded,” Dr Musumali said. “This cannot be the work of a few misguided individuals in the PF, this is something that is coordinated from the top.”

Blackmail

He said the approaches involved constituency level officials, civil servants, district commissioners, and intelligence officers, who were “basically blackmailing people to step down”. “You also have potential PF candidates participating in this, everyone is involved in it.”

Dr Musumali said cash offers ranged from 100,000 Kwacha (US\$4,500) to 250,000 Kwacha (US\$11,248), but there were also other bribes.

“If you are building a house they will offer you bricks or plumbing materials, they will offer you iron sheets and so forth,” he said.

The inducements also took the form of job offers. “Our trained teachers standing to be members of parliament are being told, ‘if you step down we will deploy you,’” Dr Musumali said. “Some of these people have been without jobs for the past four or five years, but now they are being assured they will get jobs. All they have to do is step down. Some of our youngest candidates are being told, ‘we will reserve a university place for you’. This is serious, extremely serious. Jobs are for sale, school places are for sale.”

Dr Musumali said that, in addition to coaxing SP candidates to cease campaigning, the corrupt PF tricksters were also taking a more

sinister approach. “In one case, the candidate was told, ‘go ahead, but slow down with your campaign. On the nomination day, don’t appear. That way the Socialist Party will not have a parliamentary candidate’.”

Dr Musumali told his TV and radio audience that the Zambian people were being insulted by the dirty tricks campaign.

“The Socialist Party came to you and asked for candidates. We worked together for weeks, for months, and you provided us with the candidates,” he said.

“Today you are being insulted, your poverty is being used against you. Your suffering is being used against you. The people you gave us to represent you in parliament have become attractive, not attractive in that they are going to save you, but attractive as commodities. They are on the market. They are for sale. This is unacceptable.”

Dr Musumali said there was “a great possibility that this won’t stop and a high probability that we will lose some of our candidates”.

“So far, the 25 candidates have done well, except one, and we are investigating the case of Mufumbwe, our adopted MP, and this is a very sad situation.

“To those comrades who were entrusted by the masses of our country to represent them and who are today being bought for pieces of silver, we wish them good luck. But what they should know is that they are betraying the Zambian masses who put trust in them.”

Dr Musumali said that if the PF saw itself as the strongest party in the country and thought it was performing well, why did it have to sink to such a low level?

“This is stooping very low,” he said. “It’s unacceptable, it’s a mockery of our democracy, it’s big shame for this country. No political party has shamed this country as you are doing. Stop it!”

Sangwa: Socialist Party is the only one with a clear agenda setting itself apart

LUSAKA lawyer John Sangwa says the Socialist Party is the only that has a “clearly set agenda that distinguishes itself from the others”.

Speaking on Radio Phoenix’s *Let the People Talk* programme, Sangwa asked what kind of principles the other parties had.

“They haven’t been articulated,” he said. “And that’s why it is so easy for somebody to jump from one political party to another because there’s no clear-cut principles and values.

“Maybe the only distinction is my friend’s political party, which is the Socialist Party, which has a clearly set agenda and which distinguishes itself from the others. It has given its own identity. It has articulated its position to say, fine, we are Socialist Party and this is what we stand for.” But Sangwa said for someone to go socialist, it meant they must buy into the values of the Socialist Party.

Sangwa said the only difference between PF and UPND was the fact that one was led by Edgar Lungu and the other by Hakainde Hichilema.

He also condemned the money being “thrown at voters” and said anybody who did that was “ignorant of the dynamics of politics”.

He said he had faith in the Zambian voter. “If the Zambian voter was stupid, Rupiah Banda would have won in 2011. RB had more money than Michael Sata,

but in the end the people collected the money and still voted the way they did.

“Even in this election, I believe people are wise enough. You cannot buy votes. It is an investment the returns of which cannot be guaranteed.”

Sangwa said giving handouts to voters was insulting to people. He pointed out that Dr Kenneth Kaunda ruled for 27 years because he delivered and was only kicked out when his system collapsed.

He said people did not care who was in power as long as their lives were OK.

“But when their lives are affected, they begin to ask, who is responsible for this mess? And then they find that it is you who was voted in power who has messed up and they will throw you out,” he said.

He said there was no need for anyone who had delivered to bribe voters.

Sangwa said claims by any party that it would win a landslide victory in August were wishful thinking. If an election was free and fair, there was no way a party could predict it would win such a victory. Voting was secret, and there was no way of knowing who the next person would vote for.

“Anything can happen between now and August when the elections are held so it is irresponsible for anybody to make such pronouncements,” he said.



Socialist Party president Fred M'membe is greeted by supporters and residents of Mkushi North constituency in Central Province

Fred M'membe's messages of solidarity

SOCIALIST Party president Fred M'membe has been out and about meeting residents in various constituencies and provinces to listen to their needs and tell them how the party will revolutionise life in Zambia once it is voted into power in August.

Below is a selection of the messages he spread as he was greeted by the Zambian masses:

- In casting our votes in August, we should never be swayed by personal profit, tribal or religious bias, but solely by the consideration of which of the conflicting issues or candidates is better for the nation.
- Our struggle is about fighting the injustice and inequity that is growing in our country today. We, the Socialist Party will continue to mobilise Zambians to fight corruption, greed, joblessness, poverty, hunger and all forms of injustices. Join us today in this noble struggle for a better Zambia.
- We have hard work ahead. There's no resting 'til we redeem the pledge of our national anthem to make Zambia a “land of work and joy”; 'til we make the poor of Zambia what destiny intended them to be.
- The highest level of political thought I believe was reached when some people became aware that no people and no person had the right to exploit others, and that the

fruits of the efforts and intelligence of each human being should reach all others. This is the main essence of the premises of socialism.

- It can't be denied that for the great majority of us, our people, this year's elections will offer a once-in-a-generation chance of revolutionary change. In August, we will have a chance to end despair. We will have a chance to end hopelessness.
- Nothing is permanent; everything is under motion. Everything is undergoing change. It gets dark sometimes; but the morning comes. Don't give up. Don't despair.
- A revolutionary struggle is a mass undertaking; it is often not a matter of first learning and then doing, but of doing and then learning, for doing is itself learning.
- Nothing in the world is difficult for one who sets his mind to it. To cross the threshold is not difficult, and mastery, too, is possible provided one sets one's mind to the task and is good at learning. We must not pretend to know when we do not know.
- Things are not as they ought to be. Things are not what our leaders want us to believe they are. We shouldn't stop with the way things are; let's dream of things the way they ought to be. It gets dark sometimes, but the

morning comes. We shouldn't surrender to tyranny and abuse of power. We shouldn't give up.

- A human being finds fulfilment in committing their whole person in freedom to the service of one's fellow human beings.
- As a country, I know there is a very rough road ahead of us before we can truly get to the Zambia we want – a Zambia that embraces justice, equity and peace. I know before us there's sorrow, despair and hopelessness. I will do whatever I can to end it. What do you think is your duty in this situation?
- The election campaigns we are entering should not be confused with a battlefield where the aim is to destroy the other. This is simply a competition to serve and not the annihilation of one another. To have peaceful, free and fair elections, certain conditions have to prevail in our country and in our hearts.
- This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless it's a good place for all of us to live in.
- The fundamental value we must have is a respect for diversity and acceptance of pluralism. Gone are the days when everyone was supposed to think the same way, belong to the same political party, and support the same programme.

World Health Day: time to reflect on Zambia's needs

AS ZAMBIA celebrated World Health Day on April 7, Socialist Party president Fred M'membe said there was a need to reflect on disease and the lack of healthcare in the country.

“Squalor, disease and lack of healthcare are basic aspects – together with hunger – characterising the dramatic social situation in Zambia,” he said.

“We are losing so many lives every day due to lack of adequate health facilities. This lack of adequate healthcare is also reflected in premature aging and the relative deterioration of individual health.

“Malnutrition, squalor, as well as infectious and parasitic diseases – factors closely associated with poverty and social and economic backwardness – are today the leading causes of child deaths in Zambia. Hunger and malnutrition are directly responsible for the so-called deficiency diseases.”

Dr M'membe said most people, especially in rural areas, had no access to a doctor at all.

“The health situation of our people is revealed to be all the more serious when such factors as the true quality of, and access to, medical services or the mere possibility of purchasing medicines – in the case of the large segment of the population who lack sufficient income to afford the cost of these services – are included in the analysis.”

He said the population's access to drugs and biological products was essential to health.

“The bleak reality is that this fundamental item, far from becoming more accessible, has been turned into a source of exploration and economic plunder.

“If these conditions and tendencies continue, there will be relatively little change in the health situation of our people,” he said.

Free trade area an opportunity under socialism

Musumali: scheme needs concrete action to benefit Zambian masses

Socialist staff reporter

THE SOCIALIST Party views the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) treaty as an opportunity to reduce poverty and enhance equity in Zambia, but only in the context of socialist economic policies in the country, the party's general secretary and first vice-president Cosmas Musumali has said.

He was responding to a question about how SP perceived the AfCFTA agreement and how it fitted in with the party's manifesto emphasis on developing peasant agriculture.

The AfCFTA treaty involves the fifty-five member states of the African Union establishing a continental free trade area to create a single continent-wide market for goods and services and facilitate the movement of capital and people. So far, 36 countries have ratified the treaty – including Zambia, in October, last year. It entered into force on May 30, 2019, and started trading on January 1, this year.

"It is not possible to achieve these aspirations in Zambia without a socialist-oriented economic programme," Dr Musumali said.

"Our investments in agriculture aim at achieving the production of healthy food for all, the adoption of agroecology, adoption of mechanisation compatible with nature and rural labour, adoption of cooperative agribusiness, agricultural education, as well as empowering peasants and the people in the rural areas as keepers of the collective goods of nature," he said.

"These are the prerequisites for our food sovereignty as well as for turning this natural resources endowed country into a hub for manufactured food exports.

"Our socialist government will systematically link investments in peasant agriculture to value addition through food processing and



Cosmas Musumali

the expansion of continental export markets.

"Special attention will be played to the attainment of viable economies of scale, product branding, flexible export financing and improved logistical arrangements. These are critical in order to catapult us into being a major continental player in the AfCFTA."

Dr Musumali said that at present there were only about five Zambian companies among the top 100 in food manufacturing on the continent, including Africa Milling Limited, Zambeef Products, Trade Kings, Yalelo, and Pembe (which originated from Kenya).

"This is highly insufficient given our immense comparative advantages and the urgency for export diversification," he said. "We will therefore enable six more food manufacturing companies to join that league of continental players within 10 years.

Traditional

"Leading this drive will be a tertiary cooperative venture processing cassava, beans, groundnuts, millet and other traditional peasant farmer produce. Its medium-term continental and global revenue prospects are worth billions of US dollars.

"The second venture will be for meat processing. A publicly owned company (along the lines of the Botswana Meat Commission) will fill today's regional export gaps for

meat, leather, and other livestock products.

"A third venture will focus on aquaculture. This will require a cluster of companies and cooperatives that, as a conglomerate, will create enough economies of scale to compete against seawater fishery products. The venture will have to extend beyond Zambia to incorporate regional rivers and lake bodies.

"Sugar manufacturing presents the fourth pillar. Four to five sugarcane plantations will aim to produce sugar, methanol and molasses to provide sufficient continental exports.

"The fifth venture will be based on the processing of agricultural products – especially grain, fruit and vegetables – into alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. The technological requirements and sophisticated distribution networks can be a challenge, but a public-private partnership arrangement can help resolve the intricacies.

"The sixth venture involves milling, with special emphasis on nutrition and health diets."

Dr Musumali said that in revenue terms, the six new ventures could generate around US\$1.2 billion per annum in 10 years' time.

"They would connect some 200,000 peasant farmers to the export value chain while increasing their revenues fivefold," he said. "This would make our peasant farmers the pillar of export growth, that is sustainable poverty reduction at its best. Thousands of quality manufacturing jobs will be created.

"Last but not least, it will add resilience to our macro economy since the effective demand for regionally manufactured food is less volatile.

"Again, the AfCFTA provides an opportunity. However, as with most opportunities, it needs concrete action and processes embedded in achieving the collective and common good for the masses of our people, otherwise it will quickly vanish or even become a liability."

Level playing field pledge 'a bit late'

ASSURANCES that the political landscape in the run-up to August's elections will be a "level playing field" are a little late, Socialist Party president Fred M'membe says.

"While the assurance or promise by the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Charity Katanga, to level the political playing field as far as the administration of the Public Order Act is concerned is welcome, it has come rather late," Dr M'membe said.

"Deputy Inspector General Katanga says the police will not allow a situation where one political party monopolises the holding of campaigns ahead of the presidential and general elections.

"This was supposed to be the policy and practice of the police over the past five years and not just over the 30 days to August 12, 2021," he said.

"And given the record of the police, as we know it, we doubt the police's ability to deliver on this assurance or promise of a level political playing field.

"There is indeed a need to level the political playing field so that no political party has the advantage of running downhill against opponents who are handicapped by having to run uphill.

"Arguably, one way to ensure that each party and each candidate is treated fairly is to provide precisely the same opportunities, as they all require an equal opportunity to put their case to the voters."

Dr M'membe said an uneven playing field was a central component of the current regime's political survival strategy.

"In today's Zambia, multiparty democratic competition is undermined not only by fraud or repression, but also by unfair administration of the Public Order Act and unequal access to resources, public media, and state institutions. When opposition parties are denied the right to hold rallies, meetings, access to public mass media, their ability to compete in elections – and survive between elections – is often impaired.

"Where the playing field is skewed, the weakening, collapse, and/or co-optation of parties may effectively depopulate the opposition, even in the absence of large-scale repression.

"A skewed playing field may thus allow this autocratic regime to maintain power without resorting to the kind of fraud or repression that can undermine its international standing, allowing it, in effect, to have its cake and eat it too."

REFLECTIONS

Fred M'membe



Socialist Party president Fred M'membe meets villagers

Fighting for the heart, soul, and future of our country

THIS IS going to be the first time I will have contested an election in my life. And it will be against key opponents who have stood for elections several times – some of them very experienced losers.

But the Zambian people and I have stood together many times on many issues, challenging this or that, campaigning against or for this and that. In this year's elections we have to stand together. And no time has been more important than this – the August 12 elections.

The election campaigns that are before us, that we are about to embark on are for the heart, the soul and the future of our country.

It's a lot of work and responsibility for the Nsingu Elections Campaign Brigade leading our campaign. We are more than our nascent political party – the Socialist Party – more than its manifesto and programmes, more than all our election strategies and prospects put together.

We are the trustees of the struggle and dreams that began in the Cipeta area of our homeland by our Ngoni ancestors, those brave and selfless young warriors and their leaders. They lost the war on February 4, 1898, against the much better equipped and resourced capitalist, imperialist, army of Cecil John Rhodes and his companies. Nsingu, the commander-in-chief of the Ngoni warriors was executed on February 5, 1898, at dawn. But they left their vision, their values and the hopes they awakened.

In the thousands or millions of Zambians whose hearts, whose consciences, they touched and aroused, we remember them now to remind ourselves that the struggle they started is unfinished, that we stand for real change, revolutionary change – not any other change – in order to march again towards enduring ideals, that we do not have to settle for things as they are.

We are today a struggling people with no time to lose. Our tomorrow has become our today. And as they say, we are confronted with the fierce urgency of now, in the unfolding life and history – and there's no such a thing as being too late. We can't wait for 2026. Now is the time.

We must struggle without respite, we must work ceaselessly to lift the downtrodden masses of our people to the higher destiny – a more just, fair and humane society full of honesty, equity, humility and solidarity; a new plateau of compassion.

We are socialists. We care all the time. And for us, care is the essence of power, of strength. Strength without care is savage, brutal and selfish. Strength with care is compassion, the strength needed to help our poor people lift themselves out of poverty and to their full stature. That is what socialism is about.

But where do we get the strength to provide that care? From some Macgyver, some 21st century Moses? No.

We cooperate, we collect, we coordinate so that everyone has responsibility, everyone has rights. That is how we make the weak strong, that is how we lift the poor out of poverty, that is how we cure the sick, that is how we give talent a chance to flourish. We do it together.

This is what socialism is about. This is socialism. This is the true meaning of revolutionary democracy – people deciding together, building together to transform their country and thus transform themselves. It is a growth in fraternal love.

The meaning and purpose of our radical changes

HUMAN liberation is basically a question of moral and spiritual values. If a person sees the meaning of their life in material wellbeing, accumulating wealth becomes an end in itself – "eat and drink for tomorrow you will be dead". If, on the other hand, a person sees the meaning of their life in spiritual values, that is the love of God and the love of one's neighbour, then material possessions become merely means towards an end.

Faith in God should free a person from enslavement to material possessions and enable them to use the riches of this world towards truly human ends, that is living a life of love in communion with God and one's fellow persons.

The radical transformation that is necessary to free a human being in the very depth of one's heart from selfishness and greed is a gift from God. No one can give oneself this "new heart" (Ez 11: 18-19).

It's not by fighting to the bitter end, but by analysing the causes of the conflict and by resolving it, that we can create conditions in which the self-reliant efforts of our people will bear fruit. We can only build such a society with the free cooperation of all its members.

Our party has adopted many pastors or reverends as parliamentary and local government candidates. For them, only with God's help can we transform a society inclined to greed, selfishness and hatred into a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17), capable of love, compassion and generosity. It's God's work through them. As followers of Christ, put all their trust in the kingdom of God. Far from waiting its arrival in passivity, they strive with all their might towards its realisation here and now, well knowing, however, that God alone, who has announced its coming through Christ, will bring about its completion. This is the way in which we are pursuing our aim of radical transformation of our people and society.

Spirituality refers not only to our spiritual life. It refers to a human being as a whole, in his or her spiritual and bodily unity. In the Gospels, the totality of the human being is what brings life to the spirit. Thus, spirituality isn't the way you feel the presence of God. Nor is it the way you believe. Jesus said, "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." Thus, spirituality is a way of living life according to the spirit. For Christians, living is the best way of believing. Faith without deeds is worthless. As James said, "What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is all-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled', without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith, by itself, if it has not works, is dead" (James 2:14 -17).

Our way of life is the result of what we believe. If we consider the Gospel accounts, we can clearly see that Jesus' spirituality wasn't one of withdrawal from the world, of moving away from everyday life in order to better serve God, or of denying earthly realities. In John 17:15, Jesus asked his Father to keep his disciples from evil without taking them out of the world.

Jesus' entire existence was one of immersion in the ideological conflict, in the arena where different concepts and options for or against the oppressed, exploited, humiliated, marginalised were discussed. Nor was Jesus' spirituality that of moralism. That is the spirituality of the Pharisees, who turn their moral virtues into a sort of conquest of sanctity. Many Christians have been trained along these lines and lose strength in their faith because they don't manage to adjust to the pharisaical moralism they seek. God seems to live on top of the mountain, and spirituality is taught as a manual for mountain climbing to be used by Christians interested in scaling its steep slopes. Since we are of a fragile nature, we begin our climb over and over again – it is the constant repetition of the Sisyphus legend, rolling the stone uphill.

Socialism is a very simple concept: it's about equity

HOW can people fail to understand that which speaks for them? How can they fail to identify with that which speaks for them? How can people fail to understand Socialism?

Socialism is a very simple concept. It is about equity in terms of access to education, access to health services, housing, sanitation, clean water, food, and all the services required in an organised society.

These are the things that people need every day. These are what define the lives of our people.

The Zambian people on the ground understand this. They understand that their children are not going to school, that there are no drugs in hospitals, that they are hungry and cannot afford three meals a day, that they don't have access to decent housing, sanitation, clean water, food, and all the other services required in an organised society.



People power = real democracy

Men and women who are committed to their constituencies

Socialist staff reporter

MARKETEERS, peasant farmers, a chicken seller, hairdressers, unemployed trained teachers, and a mobile money booth agent who also sells tomatoes and fish, were among the 37 parliamentary and council adoptees presented to the world recently at Kingfisher Garden Court in Lusaka.

Speaking at the first of two presentations in late March and early April, and Socialist Party general secretary and first vice-president Cosmas Musumali praised the candidates as representing “real democracy”.

“These are the men and women who are committed to and live in their constituencies,” he said. “This is real democracy, and real democracy entails people taking power into their own hands. Democracy can never be delegated.”

Gender

Dr Musumali said the Socialist Party was proving to the world that women and men could represent the values of equity in action.

“We are proving to the world that how much money you have is not a determinant for you to get into political office,” Dr Musumali said.

“We are proving to everyone today that age can never be limiting, in terms of you governing yourselves.”

Out of the 37 candidates, there were 34 parliamentary candidates, and three hoping to be Lusaka councillors.

“We have a total of 18 men

and 19 women,” Dr Musumali said. “We don’t just talk about gender equity, we practise it as the Socialist Party.”

He said there was one candidate from Northern Province, one from Copperbelt Province, two from Muchinga, 10 from Luapula, six from Southern Province, five from Central, one from North-Western, five from Eastern, one from Western, and five from Lusaka.

“Out of these candidates, 15 are below the age of 30,” Dr Musumali said.

Separately, party president Fred M’membe told the candidates that it was time for the poor to rule both themselves and Zambia.

He said poverty would not end if the poor did not take control in the August elections and reminded people how the rich, who owned other parties, had backed leaders who had exploited the poor ever since independence.

He said it was important to educate the poor who had previously voted for people with wealth to instead vote for themselves this time.

● **Parliamentary adoptees are:** Levy Songiso (Sikongo), Janet Zimba (Lumezi), Misozi Kaleya (Chasefu), Lovemore Mvula (Kaumbwe), Edna Lungu (Luangeni), Alice Phiri (Msanzala), Precious Samalesu (Ikkeleng’i), Oswald Chikwaba (Serenje), Simon Bwalya (Bwacha), Peggy Siamundele (Mumbwa), Laston Chibuye (Muchinga), Jonathan Katoota (Lufubu), Fitzwell Moomba (Chikankata), Carolijne Simwala (Namwala), Victor Siamulonga (Mapatizya), Teinson Musanje (Kalomo), Chilema Caesar Machila (Bweengwa), Gertrude Chikampa (Sinazongwe), Astridah Mubanga (Chi-



Above and below: parliamentary and local government candidates who were presented at Kingfisher Garden Court, Lusaka, on March 31



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pili), Clara Chomba (Mansa Central), Cleopatra Mweemba (Bahati), Hope Kalenge (Milenge), John Chenge Kasanda (Pambashe), Miriam Mwewa (Chifunabuli), Margaret Na-

kanga (Mwense), Justine Ngosa (Mwansabombwe), Charles Friday Kalumba (Chembe), Jackson Mukupa (Nchelenge), Purity Ng’ambi (Chama North), Agness Mwila (Mfuwe), Lilian Matowe

(Kafulafuta), and Lewis Chizu (Mpulungu).

● **Parliamentary candidates for Lusaka are:** Henry Kalolo (Mandevu) and Eucridy Mwiinga (Chirundu).

● **The local government candidates for Lusaka are:** Newton Ng’ambi (Mwembeshi, ward 27), Ronald Mutale (Matero, ward 28), and Treza Kayanda (Muchinga, ward 24).



The 11 latest parliamentary and council candidates adopted at Kingfisher Garden Court in Lusaka in early April, when Cosmas Musumali said Socialist Party was ready to help Zambians gain emancipation

You're like Lazarus, eating scraps that fall from tables of the rich

Enough is enough. You are fed up with being harassed, being abused, **Cosmas Musumali** tells his audience as he introduces the Socialist Party's latest adopted parliamentary and local council candidates

THE ZAMBIAN people are like the beggar Lazarus in the Bible, eating filthy scraps that have fallen from the tables of the rich, Socialist Party general secretary and first vice-president Cosmas Musumali has said.

He was speaking at the second of two adoption ceremonies in late March and early April at Kingfisher Garden Court in Lusaka.

"The masses of our country have become, as a collective, a modern day Lazarus. And if you are the Lazarus of today, you have no say in your governance. If you are Lazarus, you don't qualify to be a leader," he said.

"Those who eat at the high table will pretend they will speak on your behalf, that they will bring development to you, that they will be the ones who will take care of you. But this is a lie. It's evil actually. They only use violence and intimidation.

"Enough is enough. You are fed up with being harassed, being abused. This has gone on for too long. They will come with tokens of money, make you drunk, give you some salt, sugar, pieces of chitenge, to buy you off. But you are not that cheap," he said.

"Your status as Lazarus will not change because of that. They are taking away your dignity. They are using your poverty to come back to you with hand-outs. They come to you to campaign but they don't have issues to bring to you. They

leave you hanging four or five years, but at the last minute they come up with a manifesto. Cut and paste. They know you don't even have time to read and understand it. That's what is happening today."

Dr Musumali said the adoption of a further 11 candidates – nine for parliament, one for a mayoral position and one as a councillor – would be the last official event. While there might be "one or two more" candidates, the party was by-and-large through with adoptions.

Of the 11 latest candidates, seven are female, with six below the age of 35.

Dr Musumali said there was a world of difference between the Socialist Party's manifesto, pledges and ideas, and parties that had nothing to offer the Zambian masses.

"We produced a manifesto two or three years ago and you have had the chance to look at it. This is your manifesto, these are your ideas," he said. "Those who come to you without ideas are basically saying remain where you are. And because they don't have much to offer you, they will resort to insults and jokes. The whole campaign becomes a cracking of jokes. Of course, we all like jokes, and at times even insults can be quite interesting."

But he said jokes and insults from ordinary politicians would not put food on tables or build schools.

"This has gone on for too long. This has to change. Zambians are fed up with the greedy, irresponsible, corrupt establishment in Zambia. We are taking over," Dr Musumali said.

"The Lazarus of today is saying 'we want to rule ourselves', and that is also in tandem with what democracy is. When you go to the villages today, people tell you they are fed up."

Dr Musumali said the Zambian masses were cynical and no longer trusted the political establishment or what politicians had to say.

"The people of Zambia feel betrayed. We have been in those villages. My brother, comrade Fred

M'membe, more than any Zambian leader, has spent days, weeks, months and years in the villages. He has not been in Lusaka, he doesn't belong to Lusaka."

Dr Musumali said Zambia was ready for political change. "People want self-emancipation, they want to change their own situation, and the Socialist Party is ready."

● **Parliamentary adoptees are:** Goma Dydas (Chama South), Mary Bukisa (Lukashya), Dorothy Mashingwele (Kabwe Central), Sharon Fulani (Lufwanyama), Ireen Musela (Mufulira), Sharon Muyupa (Kankoyo), Constance Bwalya (Kantanshi), Kalota Morris (Solwezi West) and Stanley Tembo (Kafue). In addition, Moses Makondo will contest to be mayor of Solwezi, and Ngulube Mukuka will stand as councillor in Kupumaula ward, Kasama.

PROFILES

Marie-jessy Banda

PARLIAMENTARY candidate for Lundazi constituency in Eastern Province, Marie-jessy Banda, says "the issues close to my heart" form the core of the Socialist Party's manifesto, with the poor at the centre of its policies.

"I wasn't seeking a political audience, but I want the working class to be free from the exploitation we see today," she said.

Banda says education, healthcare, and agriculture are pressing issues in Lundazi.

"We need to build lower primary schools in the communities as the majority have been upgraded to secondary schools," she said.

"When you go into a health institution today at 06 hours you will leave the place at 15. The ratio of patients to doctors needs seriously addressing because lives are being lost in the process." She said pharmacy prescriptions also needed attention. "What happens to those who can't afford to buy the prescribed drugs?" she asked.

It was vital to implement the Socialist Party's policies on agricul-

ture. "The cost of farming inputs in my constituency is beyond unbelievable," she said. "And it gets worse at harvest time. Farmers have absolutely no say on the pricing of their harvests."

Banda was educated at Lusaka Girls' Basic, Kudu, and First Rate International schools, as well as Lusaka Learning Centre. She holds an advanced certificate in marketing from the National Institute of Public Administration.

Mary Bukisa

MARY Bukisa, parliamentary candidate for Lukashya constituency in Northern Province, is the granddaughter of the chief in Lunte district and dedicated "to bring change in my area".

Bukisa says once in power, she and the Socialist Party will deal with the pressing issues that include poor education, poor roads and inadequate markets.

"My government will introduce free education for all, build more schools and higher institutions, construct good roads with proper drainage, and build sheltered markets and toilets," she said, adding that all this would be carried out "by our people after equipping them with skills because education will be free for every Zambian citizen".

She says women should "turn up in numbers and join politics to bring about change", especially regarding the high incidence of gender-based violence.

Bukisa was educated at Mubanga Chipoye basic and Ituna high schools. She has worked as a DJ with Northern FM Zambia radio station in Kasama, and studied for a secretarial qualification at Kasama Skills Centre.

Stephen Chewe

STEPHEN Chewe, parliamentary candidate for Chimwemwe constituency in Copperbelt Province, defected from the Patriotic Front to the Socialist Party because he says "it is the only one committed to ending poverty and to the cause of the working class".

"The Socialist Party is the only one with a clear ideological grounding," he said.

Chewe says the most pressing issues in his constituency are poor water supply, poor healthcare, and youth unemployment – Chimwemwe has more than 65,000 youths and young adults between the ages of 16 and 25.

Chewe says there are around 30 companies in Chimwemwe owned by foreigners. "The Socialist Party will ensure that fair taxes are collected and partners fulfil their obligations of cooperative responsibility, including as they relate to the environment," he said.

"The Socialist Party government in Chimwemwe will also focus on job creation in the education, health and agriculture sectors. Most importantly, the people of Chimwemwe will be empowered to govern themselves and contribute to the development of their constituency. Cooperatives will be formed and women will actively participate in all the sectors."

Chewe attended Mitanto primary and Mukuba secondary schools and has worked for Drilltech Engineering Services. He is currently studying business management.

Lewis Chizu

LEWIS Chizu, parliamentary candidate for Mpulungu Constituency, Northern Province, says he joined the Socialist Party because he wants to be a part of "the radical changes transforming our country".

Chizu holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of Zambia (UNZA), a bachelor of arts degree in marketing from the University of Greenwich in the UK, a postgraduate diploma in marketing, advertising and public relations from Evelyn Hone College, and an advanced certificate in business economics from UNZA.

Chizu said there were many pressing issues in his constituency, including unemployment, the supply of clean water, and sanitation. The water and sanitation situation was especially worrying because

it had resulted in outbreaks of cholera and dysentery, and much of the infrastructure needed to be replaced.

Chizu said he would be proposing "capital projects" to create jobs as well as business loans at low interest rates to enable people to run their own businesses.

"My message to the people in my community and Zambia at large is: vote for the Socialist Party, Dr Fred M'membe, myself, and party councillors on August 12."

Sharon Fulani

SHARON Fulani, parliamentary candidate for Lufwanyama constituency in Copperbelt Province, says she is standing "for good health, good education, good farming, and peace in Zambia".

Fulani, who was educated at Lumanto School in Kalulushi, says it is time for women to drive change.

"Let's vote for ourselves now and wipe away all our tears. Female voters, let's vote for development, good farming, more fertiliser, a good road network, good healthcare and good education.

"The Socialist Party is the only party that can change these things, together with you, the people," she said.

Morris Jempa

MORRIS Sautu Jempa, parliamentary candidate for Chilanga in Lusaka Province, says he has always been impressed by revolutionary leaders and was nicknamed "a Che Guevara" at school.

"I was born a socialist," he said. "I am an individual who does not like seeing oppressed people and because of this, I opted to join a political party whose ideology is rooted in my heart. Socialism is the best governance system and all well-meaning Zambians should embrace it."

Jempa said that although Chilanga was near Lusaka, it suffered all the deprivations of a rural area.

"Although Chilanga is 15km from Lusaka, we still use pit latrines," he said. "Water consumed in Lusaka is purified in Chilanga



Beckham Mudenda



Lindiwe Mawere



Lydia Kasonya



Lewis Chizu



Precious Samalesu



Stephen Chewe



Kalota Morris



Juliet Nalwimba



Morris Jempa



Thelma Nkoloma



Blessings Mwale



Marie-jessy Banda



Mary Bukisa



Sharon Fulani



Caroline Simwala



Christine Mulenga

but we have no water here, and civic leaders in Chilanga are only interested in land, not people. Even our burial space has run out.”

Jempa gained his grade 12 at St Marks Secondary School and holds a diploma in human resources management from the University of Zambia. He worked for the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Service as a human resources manager until his retirement in 1999.

Lydia Kasonya

LYDIA Kasonya, parliamentary candidate for Chavuma constituency in North-Western Province, says she is representing the Socialist Party because she believes it can transform Zambia, and people’s lives.

Kasonya was educated at Moses Luneta Primary School but suffered at grade 8 when her parents passed away and there was no one to pay her fees. She says things got tougher when she became pregnant and decided to ask social welfare for help, eventually finishing grades 10 to 12 and completing her senior secondary in 2014, gaining five O-levels.

“I am passionate about my work, I am a natural leader, I am highly organised, ambitious and driven, and an excellent results-oriented communicator,” she said.

Kasonya knows from her own experience how hardship can affect people’s lives and is determined to focus on the issue of empowerment for women and young people. “A lot of youths and women have knowledge, skills and experience but no empowerment,” she said.

Unemployment and farming were two other pressing issues. “There are a lot of farmers in the area, but a lack of good machinery. Chavuma is in a region that receives a high amount of rain and if it had the equipment it could help Zambia with food security.”

Kasonya said there was an urgent need to change the government and said women could be a driving force. “It’s women who know pain and how it feels to have a family and what the family needs,” she said, adding that things could only get better if empowered women supported each other.

Lindiwe Mawere

WHEN she is voted in as MP for Kawambwa Central constituency in Luapula Province, 21-year-old

Lindiwe Mawere will make history as the youngest person to be elected to parliament.

A hairdresser by trade, Mawere completed her grade 12 at Ng’ona Secondary School.

“I joined the Socialist Party because of its desire to entrench justice, equity and peace in this great country, Zambia. This is a political party that puts the interests of people first, regardless of status,” she said. “Frankly speaking, I joined the party because I was attracted by the humility of its leaders and their genuine consideration for any human being.”

She said the people of Kawambwa Central desperately needed proper roads, a reliable water supply and business ventures for youths and women.

“The humble people of Kawambwa Central should vote for me because I’m committed to lobbying for development in the area,” she said. “I will lobby from the central government as well as from progressive movements interested in spreading wealth to rural areas. I encourage female political candidates to look up and aspire for any office. They shouldn’t be intimidated by anyone.”

Mawere said people would only see justice, equity, and peace in their communities if they fully supported the Socialist Party and its president, Dr Fred M’membe.

Kalota Morris

KALOTA Morris, parliamentary candidate for Solwezi West constituency in North-Western Province, says the Socialist Party is the only one “that can deliver people from the bondage of slavery, fight corruption and create jobs”.

Morris says agriculture and a lack of clean water are urgent problems in his constituency.

“There is a lack of markets where farmers can sell their products, and the water is dirty,” he said. “Local people and the Socialist Party government are going to work together to solve these problems by creating job opportunities and making organic fertilisers, which are cheaper.”

Morris is a teacher by profession with a qualification from South West College of Education in Solwezi, and also holds certificates in psychosocial counselling from the Full Life Institute, and human resources management from Molex College of Education.

Beckham Mudenda

BECKHAM Mudenda says his mission is to “bring about change to our country and change the lives of the suffering masses in my constituency, and to help lead the people as they govern the country and ensure that the masses are saved from this capitalist government”.

Mudenda, parliamentary candidate for Magoye constituency, is from Mazabuka in Southern Province and is a single father with two sons. He was educated at Nkonkola High School.

He said his priority is to work together with the people of his constituency to address the problems of poor roads, making sure children are educated and don’t drop-out of school, and focus on peasant farming practices.

“We can’t bring about community change apart, but we can move mountains as a team,” he said. “Development lies with the people.”

Christine Mulenga

CHRISTINE Chomba Mulenga, parliamentary candidate for Kalulushi constituency, Copperbelt Province, works with a number of youth organisations and joined the Socialist Party because “it is a movement fighting for everyone, especially the less privileged”.

“There is a lack of proper women and youth empowerment,” she said. “Giving is not a problem but how you give is what matters. As a leader you can give money and food when someone doesn’t have them but the question is, will you always provide?”

“I believe it’s better to empower a person with a skill that they can use as their source of income. Instead of providing money, I’d rather build a skills and recreation centre that can be teaching women and youths different skills that will also benefit the community at large. If this is implemented the we can fight joblessness in our community,” she said.

Mulenga said her constituency had long suffered from water and sanitation issues and there was a lack of proper infrastructure for developmental services. “Kalulushi is a very big town for people to be going to Kitwe for everything,” she said.

Mulenga said it was time to “rise up and fight for change and refuse to be intimidated”.

“Let’s fight for our rights, our wealth. We need to voice out, fight hunger, joblessness, and lack of proper healthcare. We deserve recognition and respect as citizens of this country, we deserve better. Mother Zambia is for all, not just the rich.”

Mulenga was educated at Masamba and Chavuma primary, and Kalulushi secondary, schools. She has worked for One Square Limited and Kalulushi Municipal Council but now runs her own business. She is secretary of Kalulushi Council for Catholic Youths and a project administrator for Shalom Youth Club.

Blessings Mwale

HONESTY, humility and the wisdom of socialist leadership are what inspired Blessings Mwale to join the revolutionary movement.

Mwale, parliamentary candidate for Masaiti constituency in Copperbelt Province, was born in Ndola and attended Masaiti Primary School in Luanshya, and Samfya Secondary School.

He says his main concerns are the very high level of unemployment, inadequate education facilities and poor agricultural sector input in his constituency.

“These can be solved by opening up the manufacturing industries of fertiliser and jam-making,” he said.

Mwale described party leader Fred M’membe as “a patriotic Zambian who will look into the equality of the living standards of our people, not only in Masaiti, but Zambia at large”.

Juliet Nalwimba

GOD sent Moses to rescue his people who had suffered for so long, and now Zambians must rise to take charge of their nation by voting for Dr Fred M’membe, Juliet Nalwimba, parliamentary candidate for Isoka constituency in Muchinga Province, says.

“The time has come to change things, not in words, but serious change,” she said.

Nalwimba, a teacher by profession but also an entrepreneur, said she knew what suffering what was “and knowing it well” would do her level best to work with the community “to change our beautiful nation which has been turned into a beast by selfish people”.

“I will work together with people to bring about equality in education and hospitals, where at the moment

only those with connections can receive services. We will also do our best to create independence for the youths to allow them to do things on their own.” Other constituency issues included a lack of health posts, poor agricultural results in an area where the soil was fertile with good rainfall, a lack of employment and empowerment, poor roads, and a lack of clean water.

“The reason I joined the revolutionary party is that in the history of Zambia none of the parties that have come and gone ever thought of helping the poor,” she said. “They all had their own selfish motives. The Socialist Party’s aim of restoring poor people’s hopes in life gave me the excitement to join the race.”

Nalwimba was educated at Nsamsamwenje, David Ramusho, Kasanda Malombe, and Highridge schools, before studying for a teaching diploma at Immaculata College of Education.

Thelma Nkoloma

THELMA Nkoloma, parliamentary candidate for Mazabuka Central constituency in Southern Province, joined politics and the revolutionary movement “after seeing how those in power use and mislead youths in my area”.

“This is our opportunity to be part of decision-making in Mazabuka,” she said. “Let’s end this trend of being used for political violence. Let’s choose to stand and challenge these political leaders who have no vision for us. Let’s stand as one and fight the injustice, inequity and lack of peace in Mazabuka and the country at large.”

Nkoloma says that in addition to the lack of opportunities for women and the young in her constituency, the issues of a lack of clean water and sanitation, and poor roads, also need addressing.

“The Socialist Party, anchored on the policy pillars of education, health and agriculture, has the best of intentions for every Zambian,” she said.

Nkoloma was educated at Namulonga primary, Arakan junior, and Arakan high schools. She has been a psychosocial counsellor with the district AIDS task force and recently completed a short course with the University of Zambia Students’ Empowerment Association.

Precious Samalesu

ZAMBIANS must fight to save themselves from “calamity and

ruin”, says Precious Samalesu, parliamentary candidate for Ikelengi constituency in North-Western Province.

“There’s no justice in Zambia, there’s nothing Zambian people can be proud of unless they save themselves from calamity and total ruin,” she said.

“Let’s fight for justice, equity and peace for all Zambians. All patriotic citizens need intervention, which will only be brought about by the Socialist Party.”

Samalesu says people need to work together to solve the country’s problems that, in her constituency, include a poor road network, polluted drinking water, education, healthcare and agriculture. It’s also time for women to take control.

“We should never look down on ourselves,” she said.

“We have been given an opportunity to be leaders, we have to take politics as a right, question everything, make informed decisions and demand all that we are entitled to.”

Samalesu attended Kambanda, Kasumbalesa, Chililabombwe primary and Konkola Basic schools, completing her grade 12 at Ikelengi Secondary School. She holds a secondary diploma in teaching from South West College of Education under the University of Lusaka.

Caroline Simwala

CAROLINE Simwala, parliamentary candidate for Namwala constituency in Southern Province, says she joined the Socialist Party because its manifesto “touched my heart”.

Simwala was educated at Mapanza primary and St Mark’s secondary schools and trained as a teacher at Paglory College of Education.

“I joined this revolutionary movement because I want to make sure that I can help my community with the problems we are facing together,” she said.

“I will address the people and tell them that it’s only if we work together as a community that we can solve our problems.”

Simwala said unemployment, poor roads and a shortage of medicines in hospitals were the pressing issues. “My message to the people in my community and Zambia at large is: let’s vote wisely so we can bring about change.

“I would like to tell all women also to vote wisely so that our problems, as mothers, are solved by choosing the Socialist Party and Dr Fred M’membe.”

China lifts more than 15.6m out of poverty

White paper sets 2035 as target date to become ‘a modern socialist country’

MORE than 15.6 million people in the poorest parts of China, including areas with the highest concentrations of ethnic minorities, have been lifted out of poverty in the past five years, according to a new government white paper released in April.

Xu Lin, director of the State Council Information Office, said at a press conference to introduce the paper that the 100-year history of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was about eradicating poverty and leading people's fight for a better life.

The white paper said the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the establishment of the socialist system provided basic institutional guarantees for addressing the root causes of poverty.

The reform and opening up, which started about four decades ago, had accelerated the country's development and poverty alleviation.

The paper said China had developed a set of standards and procedures to accurately identify the poor, as well as the causes of their poverty and their needs. These were summarised as targeted efforts in six areas; arranging targeted programmes, utilising capital efficiently, taking household-based measures, dispatching first party secretaries based on village conditions, and achieving set goals.

For example, the paper said, poor households were identified primarily based on their incomes, with consideration given to other factors, including housing, education and health; while for villages, consideration was given to the incidence of poverty, the per capita net income of villagers, and income from businesses run by village collectives.

Individuals and villages confirmed as poor were then registered and a national poverty alleviation information system was created.

“Through this registration system, for the first time in the history of poverty alleviation, China has identified every poor individual in every village,” the paper said.

The strategy of targeted poverty alleviation was China's strongest “weapon” in its final battle against poverty, and a major innovation in the theory and practice of poverty reduction, which “highlighted the CPC's sound approach”.

The paper said development was

the most effective way to eradicate poverty, and China had taken five measures to implement it:

- Boosting the economy to provide more job opportunities,
- Relocating poor people from inhospitable areas,
- Compensating for economic losses associated with reducing ecological damage,
- Improving education in impoverished areas, and,
- Providing subsistence allowances for those unable to shake off poverty through their own efforts alone.

The paper said: “We have made great strides in our decisive battle against poverty in ethnic minority areas. From 2016 to 2020, the populations living in poverty in Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Tibet, Ningxia and Xinjiang autonomous regions, and Guizhou, Yunnan and Qinghai provinces, fell by 15.6 million.”

Earlier this year, the country officially declared that it had eradicated extreme poverty and said it was entering a new phase of economic and social development that would see it become a “modern socialist country” by 2035.

Xia Gengsheng, deputy head of the National Administration for Rural Revitalisation, attributed the success to heavy investment and policy support from the central government.

“For instance, specialised funds provided by the central government for these eight provinces and autonomous regions during this critical period reached almost 300



Above: villagers in an impoverished district of Sichuan Province move to new homes as part of a poverty reduction scheme. Below: China hails the success of its anti-poverty programmes



billion yuan (US\$45.7 billion) or about 45 per cent of the national total,” he said.

“Beijing has also granted policy support in areas such as finance, land use and human resources, providing powerful backing in winning the battle against poverty in these ethnic minority areas.”

Xia said the per capita net income of low-income residents in the eight provinces highlighted had passed 10,000 yuan (US\$1,520) by the end of last year, over and above the international benchmark for abject poverty. “It should be said that this was no easy achievement,” he added.

Remote

The paper said Beijing had made great efforts to help ethnic minorities move to jobs outside their home provinces and dispatched three million cadres to support anti-poverty work in remote, impoverished areas.

The paper did not break down the figures for each province, but said the number of nationwide transfers had more than doubled from 12.3 million in 2015 to 32.4 million in 2020.

According to a working report released by the Xinjiang government earlier this year, more than 14.3 million jobs were arranged for rural labourers in the region through organised government programmes in the past five years, and about 2.7 million were expected to be made available this year.

Xing Chengju, an associate professor at Northwest A&F University in Xianyang, Shaanxi Province, said Beijing attached great importance to poverty alleviation as a way of maintaining unity and stability in ethnic minority areas and border regions.

“Success is vital in defeating the lure of extreme religious ideologies and foreign separatist forces among the poor as it means that the ethnic minority people can share the fruit

of China's economic and social development,” Xing said.

Wu Qiang, a political analyst in Beijing, said the focus on lifting people's living standards was China's shield against Western criticism of its policies in Xinjiang.

“Beijing is trying to use this white paper to divert the attention of the international community on Xinjiang and other human rights issues, and respond to criticism with the ‘right to development,’” Wu said.

He said the paper indirectly suggested that the cause of the problems in Xinjiang was not terrorism but decades of poverty.

China officially recognises 56 different ethnic groups, with the billion-plus Han Chinese citizens representing the vast majority at 91.5 per cent of the population. The other 55 ethnic minority groups include the Zhuang (16.9 million), Hui (10.5 million), Manchus (10.3 million) and Uygurs (10 million).

Xinhua, South China Morning Post

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.

GDP hits 30-year high

CHINA'S first quarter GDP has hit a three-decade high, growing 18.3% year-on-year to US\$3.82 trillion. Key economic indicators expanded by more than 20%, such as retail sales (33.9%), fixed-asset investment (25.6%) and industrial production (24.5%).

Global Times

Trade with US rises

CHINA'S trade surplus with the US has jumped to US\$72.6 billion in the first quarter (US\$40.7 billion, 2020 1Q), despite the trade war. Chinese imports (US\$46.5 billion) grew 69.2% year-on-year, while exports to the US rose 74.7%, due to the pandemic-driven demand for Chinese goods.

South China Morning Post

Hi-tech firms banned

THE US has sanctioned seven Chinese supercomputer companies for allegedly helping develop “weapons of mass destruction”. The companies are key to China's goal of self-sufficiency in chips (70% by 2025) but are barred from accessing US technology without authorisation. China has 214 of the world's top 500 supercomputing companies. The US has 113.

Nikkei Asia

New city under way

THE new Xiong'an city construction is under way with over 160,000 people employed in 120 major construction and ecological projects. Announced in 2017, the city is expected to relieve Beijing of non-essential functions (universities, hospitals, business headquarters, financial institutions), with 70 to 80% of its economy in high-tech and high-end industries, and 30% of its 1770km2 area forested.

Xinhua

25-year deal with Iran

CHINA has signed a 25-year strategic cooperation deal with Iran, whose economy is suffering from US sanctions. While partnership details are yet to be disclosed, China could invest up to US\$400 billion on infrastructure in exchange for Iranian oil; between 2014-20, bilateral trade fell (US\$52-20 billion) due to US sanctions.

New York Times

Uyghur population up

XINJIANG'S capital Ürümqi has seen its population surge, with the fastest growing and youngest demographic in China. Ürümqi's population grew from 1.5 to 3.5 million people between 1990 and 2018 as youths migrated for jobs and living standards. Xinjiang's Uyghur growth rate (25%) surpassed that of the Han people (2%).

South China Morning Post

Migrant rules boost

THE government is to increase access to public services for 230 million migrant workers by 2035 to reduce inequality and expand the middle class. It will invest US\$5.3 billion to relax residency rules for migrants, increasing their spending power by about a third.

Caixin Global

US policy ‘pours petrol on Asia flashpoint’

THE US Pacific Fleet commander, Admiral John Aquilino, has testified that he regards a Chinese attack on Taiwan as the most threatening flashpoint for war in the Indo-Pacific region and advocated a further build-up of US military force in the western Pacific to counter China.

His remarks underscore the mounting bipartisan clamour in Washington against Beijing and the accelerating danger of the US, not China, provoking a war.

Aquilino was testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee at his confirmation hearing to replace Admiral Phil Davidson as head of the US Indo-Pacific Command – the largest US military command.

He told the committee that “the dangerous concern is that of a military force against Taiwan”. He referred to the previous testimony of Davidson, who had warned of a Chinese takeover within six years, then added, “My opinion is this problem is much closer to us than most think.”

Significantly, Aquilino agreed with the assessment of Trump's former national security adviser H.R. McMaster, who told a Senate committee that Taiwan was “the most significant flashpoint now that could lead to

a large-scale war”. In his bellicose anti-China remarks, McMaster argued that, “China has a fleeting opportunity that is closing”, and the months between next year's Winter Olympic Games in Beijing and the Chinese Communist Party congress later in the year presented the “greatest danger”.

These declarations stand reality on its head. It is not Chinese “aggression” that threatens a devastating nuclear war between China and the US, but rather the relentless US military build-up throughout Asia.

Combined with naval provocations in the South and East China seas and trade war measures against China, this has dramatically escalated geopolitical tensions.

Aquilino, Davidson and McMaster all used the alleged threat posed to Taiwan to justify their demands for a further major expansion of armaments and military spending for the US Indo-Pacific Command.

The deliberate US ramping up of confrontation with China began under the Obama administration's “pivot to Asia”, which called for the deployment of 60 percent of the Pentagon's naval and air assets to the region by 2020.

The Trump administration then launched

what amounted to economic warfare against China, directed in particular at preventing its development of rival hi-tech products. This was combined with accelerated provocative “freedom of navigation” operations in Chinese-claimed territorial waters in the South China Sea.

After three decades of US-led wars, the outbreak of a third world war, which would be fought with nuclear weapons, is an imminent and concrete danger.

Within weeks of being installed, President Biden has accelerated the war drive against China. In his recent press conference, Biden declared there would be “steep, steep competition” with China. He said his administration would nearly treble research and development funding to ensure US supremacy in hi-tech areas, and again insisted that China had to abide by the “international rules” – that is, those set by Washington.

By heightening tensions with China over Taiwan, the Biden administration is pouring petrol over what is correctly regarded as the most dangerous flashpoint in Asia, threatening to not only trigger war between the US and China, but drag in the entire world.

wsws.org



A barricade in Chaussée Ménilmontant, March 18, 1871

In memory of the Commune

April marked the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune, and this essay by **Vladimir Lenin** was published in the Russian-language newspaper *Rabochaya Gazeta* in April 1911, on the 40th anniversary of the historic event

FORTY years have passed since the proclamation of the Paris Commune. In accordance with tradition, the French workers paid homage to the memory of the men and women of the revolution of March 18, 1871, by meetings and demonstrations.

At the end of May they will again place wreaths on the graves of the Communards who were shot, the victims of the terrible “May Week”, and over their graves they will once more vow to fight untiringly until their ideas have triumphed and the cause they bequeathed has been fully achieved.

Why does the proletariat, not only in France, but throughout the entire world, honour the men and women of the Paris Commune as their predecessors? And what is the heritage of the Commune?

The Commune sprang up spontaneously. No one consciously prepared it in an organised way. The unsuccessful war with Germany, the privations suffered during the siege, the unemployment among the proletariat and the ruin among the lower middle classes, the indignation of the masses against the upper classes and against authorities who had displayed utter incompetence, the vague unrest among the working class, which was discontented with its lot and was striving for a different social system, the reactionary composition of the National Assembly, which roused apprehensions as to the fate of the republic—all this and many

other factors combined to drive the population of Paris to revolution on March 18, which unexpectedly placed power in the hands of the National Guard, in the hands of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie which had sided with it.

It was an event unprecedented in history. Up to that time power had, as a rule, been in the hands of landowners and capitalists, i.e., in the hands of their trusted agents who made up the so-called government. After the revolution of March 18, when M. Thiers’ government had fled from Paris with its troops, its police and its officials, the people became masters of the situation, and power passed into the hands of the proletariat. But in modern society, the proletariat, economically enslaved by capital, cannot dominate politically unless it breaks the chains that fetter it to capital. That is why the movement of the Commune was bound to take on a socialist tinge, i.e., to strive to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie, the rule of capital, and to destroy the very foundations of the contemporary social order.

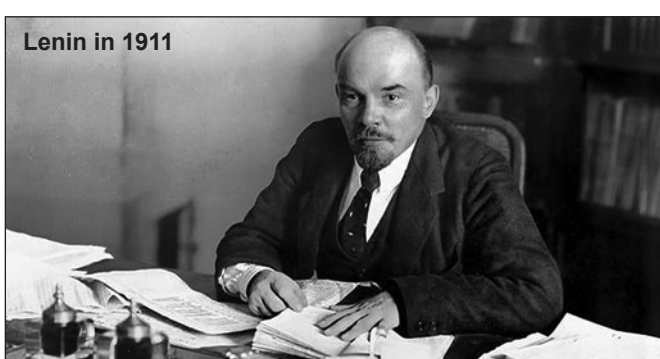
At first, this movement was extremely indefinite and confused. It was joined by patriots who hoped the Commune would renew the war with the Germans and bring it to a successful conclusion. It enjoyed the support of the small shopkeepers who were threatened with ruin unless there was a postponement of payments on debts and rent (the government refused to grant this postponement, but they obtained it from the Commune).

Propaganda

Finally, it enjoyed, at first, the sympathy of bourgeois republicans who feared that the reactionary National Assembly (the “rustics”, the savage landlords) would restore the monarchy.

But it was of course the workers (especially the artisans of Paris), among whom active socialist propaganda had been carried on during the last years of the Second Empire and many of whom even belonged to the International, who played the principal part in this movement.

Only the workers remained loyal to the Commune to the end. The



Lenin in 1911

bourgeois republicans and the petty bourgeoisie soon broke away from it. The former were frightened off by the revolutionary-socialist, proletarian character of the movement; the latter broke away when they saw that it was doomed to inevitable defeat. Only the French proletarians supported their government fearlessly and untiringly, they alone fought and died for it—that is to say, for the cause of the emancipation of the working class, for a better future for all toilers.

Deserted by its former allies and left without support, the Commune was doomed to defeat. The entire bourgeoisie of France, all the landlords, stockbrokers, factory owners, all the robbers, great and small, all the exploiters joined forces against it. This bourgeois coalition, supported by Bismarck (who released a hundred thousand French prisoners of war to help crush revolutionary Paris), succeeded in rousing the ignorant peasants and the petty bourgeoisie of the provinces against the proletariat of Paris, and forming a ring of steel around half of Paris (the other half was besieged by the German army).

In some of the larger cities in France (Marseilles, Lyons, St. Étienne, Dijon) the workers also attempted to seize power, to proclaim the Commune and come to the help of Paris, but these attempts were short lived. Paris, which had first raised the banner of proletarian revolt, was left to its own resources and doomed to certain destruction.

Two conditions, at least, are necessary for a victorious social revolution—highly developed productive forces and a proletariat adequately prepared for it. But in 1871 both of these conditions were lacking. French capitalism was still

poorly developed, and France was at that time mainly a petty-bourgeois country (artisans, peasants, shopkeepers, etc).

On the other hand, there was no workers’ party, the working class had not gone through a long school of struggle and was unprepared, and for the most part did not even clearly visualise its tasks and the methods of fulfilling them. There was no serious political organisation of the proletariat, nor were there strong trade unions and co-operative societies.

But the chief thing the Commune lacked was time—an opportunity to take stock of the situation and to embark upon the fulfillment of its programme. It had scarcely had time to start work, when the government entrenched in Versailles and supported by the entire bourgeoisie began hostilities against Paris.

The Commune had to concentrate primarily on self-defence. Right up to the very end, May 21–28, it had no time to think seriously of anything else.

However, in spite of these unfavourable conditions, in spite of its brief existence, the Commune managed to promulgate a few measures that sufficiently characterise its real significance and aims. The Commune did away with the standing army—that blind weapon in the hands of the ruling classes—and armed the whole people. It proclaimed the separation of church and state, abolished state payments to religious bodies (i.e., state salaries for priests), made popular education purely secular, and in this way struck a severe blow at the gendarmes in cassocks. In the purely social sphere, the Commune accomplished very little, but this

little nevertheless clearly reveals its character as a popular, workers’ government. Night work in bakeries was forbidden; the system of fines, which represented legalised robbery of the workers, was abolished. Finally, there was the famous decree that all factories and workshops abandoned or shut down by their owners were to be turned over to associations of workers that were to resume production. And, as if to emphasise its character as a truly democratic, proletarian government, the Commune decreed that the salaries of all administrative and government officials, irrespective of rank, should not exceed the normal wages of a worker, and in no case amount to more than 6,000 francs a year.

All these measures showed clearly enough that the Commune was a deadly menace to the old world founded on the enslavement and exploitation of the people. That was why bourgeois society could not feel at ease so long as the Red Flag of the proletariat waved over the Hôtel de Ville in Paris. And when the organised forces of the government finally succeeded in gaining the upper hand over the poorly organised forces of the revolution, the Bonapartist generals, who had been beaten by the Germans and who showed courage only in fighting their defeated countrymen, those French Rennenkampfs and Meller-Zakomelskys, organised such a slaughter as Paris had never known.

Bloodthirsty

About 30,000 Parisians were shot down by the bestial soldiery, and about 45,000 were arrested, many of whom were afterwards executed, while thousands were transported or exiled. In all, Paris lost about 100,000 of its best people, including some of the finest workers in all trades.

The bourgeoisie were satisfied. “Now we have finished with socialism for a long time,” said their leader, the bloodthirsty dwarf, Thiers, after he and his generals had drowned the proletariat of Paris in blood. But these bourgeois crows

croaked in vain. Less than six years after the suppression of the Commune, when many of its champions were still pining in prison or in exile, a new working-class movement arose in France. A new socialist generation, enriched by the experience of their predecessors and no whit discouraged by their defeat, picked up the flag that had fallen from the hands of the fighters in the cause of the Commune and bore it boldly and confidently forward. Their battle cry was: “Long live the social revolution! Long live the Commune!” And in another few years, the new workers’ party and the agitation work launched by it throughout the country compelled the ruling classes to release Communards who were still kept in prison by the government.

The memory of the fighters of the Commune is honoured not only by the workers of France, but by the proletariat of the whole world. For the Commune fought, not for some local or narrow national aim, but for the emancipation of all toiling humanity, for all the downtrodden and oppressed.

As a foremost fighter for the social revolution, the Commune has won sympathy wherever there is a proletariat suffering and engaged in struggle. The epic of its life and death, the sight of a workers’ government which seized the capital of the world and held it for over two months, the spectacle of the heroic struggle of the proletariat and the torments it underwent after its defeat—all this raised the spirit of millions of workers, aroused their hopes and enlisted their sympathy for the cause of socialism. The thunder of the cannon in Paris awakened the most backward sections of the proletariat from their deep slumber, and everywhere gave impetus to the growth of revolutionary socialist propaganda. That is why the cause of the Commune is not dead. It lives to the present day in every one of us.

The cause of the Commune is the cause of the social revolution, the cause of the complete political and economic emancipation of the toilers. It is the cause of the proletariat of the whole world. And in this sense it is immortal.

Billionaires' wealth up by 60pc as pandemic rages

Profits appropriated as states' policies cost millions of lives

Niles Niemuth

THE COLLECTIVE wealth of the world's billionaires exploded by more than 60 percent last year, from US\$8 trillion to US\$13.1 trillion, according to *Forbes* magazine's annual list of global billionaires, released on April 6.

"COVID-19 brought terrible suffering, economic pain, geopolitical tension, and the greatest acceleration of wealth in human history," *Forbes* writes.

The number of billionaires in the world grew by 660 to 2,775, the biggest total number and the largest annual increase ever. A new billionaire was minted every 17 hours.

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos and Tesla CEO Elon Musk lead the pack with US\$177 billion and US\$151 billion, respectively. They are followed by Bernard Arnault and family (US\$150 billion), who control the French luxury goods company LVMH, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates (US\$124 billion) and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg (US\$97 billion).

Press reports discuss how Zuckerberg "earned" US\$50 billion and Elon Musk "earned" US\$130 billion last year. But the very term is an absurdity. One cannot "earn" a figure equivalent to the gross domestic product of a mid-size country.

This wealth is socially appropriated. First, through the exploitation of the working class in the process of production. Secondly, and no less important, the wealth is appropriated as the result of state policy, designed to ensure the perpetual rise of the stock market through a combination of monetary stimulus from the Federal Reserve and the provision of an endless supply of cheap labour for exploitation. As a result, the S&P 500 stock index has nearly doubled since its low in March last year.

Amid a raging pandemic, every country in Europe and the Americas has refused to shut down non-essential production, claiming the cost would be too high. This policy, which has led to the deaths of more than three million people, has the deliberate aim of expanding the wealth of the financial oligarchy.

With each death, an average of US\$1.7 million was added to the net worth of the billionaires. Hundreds of millions of people around the world got sick on the job or were thrown out of work. Hundreds of millions went hungry. But the stock portfolios of the wealthy soared to ever-greater heights.

As Karl Marx noted more than 150 years ago in *Capital*, it is a basic law of capitalism that, "accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole".

The piling up of immense sums at the top of society is made possible by the immiseration of the working class and poor.

As global markets entered freefall in March last year, the US government and Federal Reserve,



Above: Jeff Bezos. Right: Workers wearing PPE bury bodies in a trench on Hart Island, New York City, in April last year

along with governments and central banks around the world, stepped in with trillions of dollars to buy up the bad debts of the banks and corporations and prop up the markets. No expense was spared to guarantee and expand the wealth of the richest, while destroying the wages and conditions of the working class. In other words, governments oversaw the massive creation of public debt, which was transferred, by the mechanism of the markets, into the private fortunes of the financial oligarchy.

Wildcat

As soon as the bailouts were secured, the push came to reopen the economy and overturn the lockdowns and other basic public health measures that had been put in place after wildcat walkouts by workers forced shutdowns in Europe and North America.

As President Trump declared, echoing the line pioneered by the New York Times writer Thomas Friedman, the "cure can't be worse than the disease". Workers were forced back into deadly factories and workplaces, and children were packed into schools, so that

profit making could be resumed. The capitalists were determined to ensure that the working class paid the full cost of the pandemic, and more.

Virtually every government around the world refused to carry out measures shown in the few countries that employed them, such as China and New Zealand, to be effective in containing the virus and minimising the loss of life. It was no secret that what was required was an extended shutdown of nonessential industries and schools, strictly enforced social distancing, testing, quarantining and contact tracing.

All such serious and scientifically based measures were rejected because they impinged on the personal wealth of the financial oligarchs. The interests of the masses – the working class – coincided with the implementation of internationally coordinated measures that prioritised saving lives and protecting the income of the population. The economic interests of the capitalist class required a rapid and full resumption of profit making in unsafe factories, offices and warehouses – and the herding of youth back into unsafe schools to facili-

tate their parents' return to work. Bezos and Musk have been among the most handsomely rewarded for rejecting any serious public health safeguards in their plants to protect the workforce and slow the spread of the virus.

Musk reopened his Tesla auto factory in Fremont, California, last May in defiance of public health orders, resulting in more than 440 workers contracting COVID-19.

Amazon has sought to cover up COVID-19 outbreaks and workers' deaths at its plants around the world.

Rebates

The company finally admitted in November that nearly 20,000 of its employees had tested positive since the start of the pandemic. The number of workers who have died as a result of these infections has yet to be disclosed.

Thanks to tax cuts included in the CARES Act bailout and Trump's tax cuts in 2017, 55 of the largest corporations in America, including FedEx, Nike and Salesforce.com, paid no federal income taxes in 2020, with most receiving rebates. All told, these companies received US\$3.5 billion in tax rebates from

the US government. Just over one year into the pandemic, as a fourth wave of infections surges around the globe, and vaccine distribution remains limited, it is increasingly clear that the ruling class is prepared to send millions more to their deaths to satisfy its drive for profit.

Stopping this deadly accumulation of wealth in the hands of the oligarchy is critical to preserving the safety and wellbeing of the world's population.

Just as the spread of the pandemic is inseparable from the enrichment of the financial oligarchy, the ending of the pandemic is inseparable from the expropriation of the oligarchs.

The vast wealth piled up by the financial elite must be used to finance emergency measures to stop the spread of the virus and save millions of lives.

As workers all over the world enter into social struggle, they must take up the demand for the expropriation of the wealth of the financial oligarchy as a pillar of the socialist programme to reorganise society to meet social needs, not private profits.

wsws.org

Capitalism, spoiled vaccines, 'lobbying'

REPORTS widely circulated in April that 15 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been spoiled in a Baltimore production facility described the incident as a "mix-up" or "human error".

With coronavirus cases once again trending upward globally, it is especially important to examine the systemic causes of this waste of badly needed vaccine doses.

American pharmaceutical giants Pfizer and Moderna expect to reap tens of billions of dollars in sales of their vaccines this year. Public funds have been provisioned by the US government's questionably named "Warp Speed" project to pay private, for-profit pharmaceutical companies to produce them.

Emergent BioSolutions is a contractor that handles the actual creation of doses for both Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca in its problematic Baltimore facility.

The specific problem that resulted in the ruin of 15 million vaccine doses was the consequence of Emergent handling two different vaccines at the same facility. Ingredients from one vaccine were mixed with the other, wasting time and around estimated US\$150 million.

The US Food and Drug Administration knew about problems at the Baltimore Emergent plant before the company was contracted to produce COVID-19 vaccines.

Most of the deficiencies cited in FDA investigation reports from 2020 indicate the lack of rigour that capitalism incentivises with its "race-to-the-bottom" profit motive: lax safety practices, missing documentation, and little-to-no training for workers in a facility manufacturing life-saving medicines. This is "efficiency" of the capitalist type. Companies spend as little as possible on production, and safety is secondary to profitability.

But how was Emergent even allowed to produce crucially needed vaccines when the government already knew about these problems? The individual in charge of the matter who awarded Emergent the "Warp Speed" contract happens to have worked for the company in the past.

Robert Kadlec, former assistant secretary of the Department for Health and Human Services, previously worked as a consultant for Emergent and is also a business partner in a different venture with Emergent's chairman. This is the ruling class's revolving door between industry and government. In many countries it is called corruption, but in the United States it is legal and called "lobbying".

The FDA and White House both declined to comment on the loss of the 15 million vaccines at their preferred for-profit facility.

Liberation

Brazil set for strike as deaths pass grim milestone

BRAZIL passed the grim milestone of 300,000 COVID-19 deaths at the beginning of April and in each of the country's states and regions the population has witnessed a brutal waste of lives, the result of the criminal indifference of its ruling elite.

The deteriorating situation comes as leadership of the major trade union federations in Brazil have said they will officially announce on May 1 – International Workers' Day – a general strike to take place across Brazil on June 14.

Brazil's COVID-19 catastrophe is now having an impact far beyond its national borders, with the Pan American Health Organisation warning of the devastating threat to neighbouring South American countries.

The regions in Venezuela, Peru, and Bolivia that border the northern part of Brazil have reported serious increases in cases. On Brazil's southern border, Paraguay is facing a hospital collapse, and Uruguay, which had exceptionally low numbers during the first wave of the pandemic, is suffering a rapid escalation of infections and deaths.

The efforts of the governments in these countries to wall off their populations with border controls and restrictions on the entry of Brazilians are seriously undermined by the deep cross-border integration of economic and social life. Moreover, the more infectious Brazilian P.1 COVID-19 variant, a major factor in the explosion of cases in Brazil, has already spread widely to neighbouring countries, as well as other parts of the world.

President Bolsonaro is fighting to ensure that no measures to contain the spread of the virus conflict with the economic interests of capitalism. Reaffirming his dictatorial threats, he warned that his government and army were preparing "harsh measures" against any lockdown decree, in order to guarantee the "right of the people to work".

To force workers into super-infected workplaces, he relies, above all, on the enormous economic pressures people face. The explosion of unemployment, rising food prices, and the cutting of emergency aid by the government is imposing unprecedented levels of social desperation.

A statement by the National Political Commission of the Brazilian Communist Party, announcing the plan for a general strike, said the government had "blown away" the policy of readjustments to the minimum wage, attacked the labour unions' resources, expanded cuts in education and health, and legitimised the persecution of social activists, among other things.

"The way out [for Brazil] is not to favour capitalist profits and exploitation. It is, on the contrary, to create the means to build popular power in the direction of socialism, the only way to combat unemployment, misery and hunger once and for all, and to solve the grave problems and misfortunes experienced by the Brazilian people."

Liberation, wsws.org

Women do US\$11 trillion worth of unpaid care work every year

COVID-19, austerity cuts increase pressure on families and institutions

Vijay Prashad

WOMEN around the world spend an average of four hours and 25 minutes per day on unpaid care work, while men spend an average of one hour and 23 minutes per day on it. This was the finding of an International Labour Organisation (ILO) study from 2018.

What is care work? The ILO study defines it as “consisting of activities and relations involved in meeting the physical, psychological, and emotional needs of adults and children, old and young, frail and able-bodied”.

There are two main kinds of care work, as described by the ILO. The first is characterised by direct care activities (sometimes referred to as “nurturing” or “relational” care), such as “feeding a baby, nursing a sick partner, helping an older person to take a bath, carrying out health check-ups, or teaching young children”.

The second is characterised by indirect care activities, “which do not entail face-to-face personal care, such as cleaning, cooking, doing the laundry and other household maintenance tasks (sometimes referred to as ‘non-relational care’ or ‘household work’), that provide the preconditions for personal caregiving”. Direct and indirect care work operate in tandem, the physical and emotional labour that holds together the fabric of society.

Women and girls, the ILO study shows, carry out three-quarters of the unpaid care work that is required to maintain families and society. If those who performed unpaid care work received the minimum wage in their respective countries, the annual wage bill would amount to US\$11 trillion (or up to roughly 15 percent of the global gross domestic product, the size of the total digital economy).

The necessity of this unpaid care work – including taking care of children and the elderly – has prevented women, and some men, from entering the paid workforce. In 2018, according to the ILO, 606 million women said that unpaid care work meant they could not seek paid employment outside the home; 41 million men said the same thing.

During the pandemic, 64 million women lost their paid jobs, while most found themselves spending more time on unpaid care work than before the “great lockdown” of 2020-21.

In the Tricontinental study, CoronaShock and Patriarchy (November 2020), we note that during the pandemic, “care work has increased exponentially, and the extra burden continues to fall on women”. It is largely women who are overseeing the education of their children, maintaining households that struggle with diminished incomes, and taking care of the elderly in times when they are most susceptible to the dangers of COVID-19. UNICEF reports that 168 million children have not been to



Ailén Possamay, What they call love is unpaid labour, Buenos Aires, 2019

school for almost a full year. At the same time, many of the frontline care workers in our societies, from nurses to cleaners, are women. It is these women who find themselves being applauded as “essential workers” at the same time as their working conditions deteriorate and their wages stagnate, putting them at risk of contracting the virus.

Last June, in a dossier called Health is a Political Choice, we documented how women health workers in Argentina, Brazil, India, and South Africa were struggling to improve their working conditions and to earn enough to care for their families. Our sixteen-point list of demands that ended the dossier came out of the struggles of unions in these countries, demands that remain as fresh now as they were last June. This pandemic has uncovered and sharpened our sense of how patriarchy blocks the advance of social progress.

Our team in Argentina, along with the collective Mapeos Feministas (Feminist Mapping), developed a podcast to explore the uneven impact of the pandemic through a feminist lens. This work of documenting the crisis and the struggles of people in Argen-

Frontline care workers, from nurses to cleaners, are women. It is these women who find themselves being applauded as “essential workers” at the same time as their working conditions deteriorate and their wages stagnate, putting them at risk of contracting the virus

tina led to the publication of our recent dossier, Uncovering the Crisis: Care Work in the Time of Coronavirus (dossier no 38, March 2021).

The pandemic has put immense pressure on families, with women at the centre of the increased workload. This pressure is the result of a long period of austerity cuts made to state institutions, which has resulted in a deterioration of social wages (including pre-school care for children and nutritious food in school).

This long-term problem is captured in the phrase “care crisis” (crisis del cuidado), coined by the UN’s Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) in 2009. Due to the austerity regime, the notion of family has been broadened as caregivers draw resources from others in their community. These wider networks

of family surpass kinship, emerging as an essential foundation for survival during the pandemic.

Luz Bejerano of the Transgender Movement of Argentina reports that a transgender comrade opened an outdoor kitchen to feed people, which also provides snacks for children. Silvia Campo of Encuentro de Organizaciones explains how her organisation is working to trace cases of COVID-19 and disseminate information to the public about health clinics and services. María Benítez of the Federation of Grassroots Organisations organised her neighbours to go to the landlords and tell them – successfully – that they cannot evict families during the pandemic. Against all the odds, Luz, Silvia, María, and their organisations have held the social fabric together. Their stories are inspirational and instructive.

Elizabeth Gómez Alcorta is the

first Minister of Women, Gender, and Diversity in the Argentinian government. In December 2019, her ministry set up the National Directorate of Care (Dirección Nacional de Cuidados), which has worked along four main axes.

First, to draw up a federal map of care and training facilities for care work.

Second, in February 2020, the directorate instituted an Inter-ministerial Roundtable on Care Policies (Mesa Interministerial de Políticas de Cuidado) to bring together 14 ministries whose agenda intersects with care work.

Third, in August 2020, the directorate started a campaign, Caring with Equality: Necessity, Rights, and Work, which holds “Parliaments of Care” to listen to the care workers and care givers to get their perspective on the key issues. And, lastly, in October 2020, Gómez Alcorta’s team formed a drafting commission comprised of nine experts who will write a bill for a comprehensive care system for the country.

‘The slogan of the campaign – “care with equality” (Cuidar en igualdad) – seems to summarise a large part of our concept of care,

Gómez Alcorta told me recently. “Care is a necessity, since all of us need to be cared for at some point in our lives, and if it is a necessity, then there must be rights for the care givers. We have before us the great challenge of laying the foundations for a comprehensive care system with a gender perspective,” she told me, and this system must take into account the “complex and heterogeneous reality” of Argentina. That is why, she said, “The dialogue being carried out by the drafting commission is so important . . . we know that the current composition of families is diverse, so on the one hand, we work in terms of the diversity of families and identities, trying to contemplate all situations. On the other hand, our country has a great social debt, we have high poverty rates, and we know that women are the most affected by economic crises. That is why we maintain that a better redistribution of care tasks not only generates greater gender equality but also results in greater social justice.”

Patriarchal systems and customs are “breaking down”, Gómez Alcorta said, but “there is still a long way to go”. Shared responsibility for care work is seldom a reality, which is why “men have to be more involved, but we also know that deconstructing habits and stereotypes can take time”. Nonetheless, Gómez Alcorta told me, “We have the strong conviction that we are moving towards a scenario in which care is better distributed and socially recognised and valued for what it is: the work that makes the world work.”

● In a recent newsletter, I highlighted the assembly election campaign in Kerala. Now that the manifesto of the Left Democratic Front has been released, there is a point that bears special mention: that if the left returns to power, it would institute a pension for housewives.

“The value of domestic labour will be recognised, and pension will be instituted for housewives,” the manifesto says.

The implications of this pension plan are enormous – it recognises that domestic labour has value and shakes the foundations of patriarchy, which is built on the financial dependence of women.

Tricontinental

Cubans honour memory of ‘first lady’ Vilma Espín

CUBANS, socialist comrades and supporters paid tribute to the legacy of Vilma Espín Guillois (pictured right), revolutionary fighter and defender of the full rights of women, on April 7, the 91st anniversary of her birth.

Born in the eastern province of Santiago de Cuba, she was an underground fighter under the orders of Frank País, especially during the uprising of November 30, 1956, in that city.

She had held revolutionary political positions since her youth and actively participated in student demonstrations after the March 10, 1952, coup d’état by dictator Fulgencio Batista.

She joined the Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra when her life was in extreme danger in the urban uprising. Vilma Espín was a member of the 2nd Guerrilla Front,

led by Commander Raúl Castro, who she later married. After the triumph of the Revolution in 1959, she led political and state actions to materialise Cuban women’s full realisation and enjoyment of their rights.

Vilma Espín is remembered as the founding president of the Federation of Cuban Women, created in 1960 to promote policies and programmes aimed at achieving the full exercise of women’s equality in all areas and at all levels of society.

She was also a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba from its foundation in 1965, a deputy in the National Assembly of People’s Power from its first legislature, and a member of the Council of State.

Vilma Espín chaired the parliamentary committees on prevention and social care, as well as the committee on children,

youth, and equal rights for women in the legislative body.

As the wife of Raúl Castro, the younger brother of longtime Cuban leader Fidel Castro, she was for decades regarded as the unofficial first lady of Cuba and was the most politically powerful woman in the country.

Espín married Raúl shortly after the overthrow of the regime of Fulgencio Batista, and because Fidel was divorced at the time he came to power, Espín assumed the first lady’s responsibilities, a role she continued to play even after her brother-in-law remarried.

She officially became first lady in 2006 after Fidel ceded power to Raúl, who assumed the title of acting president. She died on June 18, 2007.

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