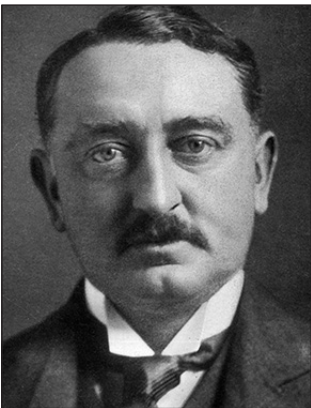


Treading in the footsteps of Rhodes and Oppenheimer



Cecil Rhodes, who plundered the resources of southern Africa until his death in 1902

PRESIDENT Hakainde Hichilema “is a continuation of the businessmen and politicians who colonised, exploited, brutalised and dehumanised us for decades”, Fred M’membe says.

The Socialist Party President says Mr Hichilema, “in a new time and new way, is following in the footsteps of Rhodes and Oppenheimer by using his political position as President of the Republic of Zambia to expand and consolidate his business empire”.

“But we all know that using political office to advance personal or associates’ business interests amounts to grand corruption,” Dr M’membe said in a Facebook post.

“Following this path of businessman/politician, Mr Hichilema may turn out to be the most corrupt President of our country.

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Brenthurst Foundation meeting revealed – Page 6

“It is not a secret that Mr Hichilema’s businesses, like those of Rhodes and Oppenheimer, are doing business with the government he controls and directs. This is a very primitive, crude form of insider dealings.

“Mr Hichilema is without shame or restraint directing government business to businesses he is associated with or is in one way or another gaining a benefit from.

“Civil servants are in a very serious and painful debt trap that is benefiting their political leaders, who are connected to Bayport and other companies that are mercilessly exploiting them,” he said.

“There is no doubt that the key leadership of this government is also associated with companies getting government tenders to supply fertilisers.”



Socialist Party President Fred M’membe says the commercialisation of traditional ceremonies affects their meaning and risks their loss

Warning over loss of traditional ceremonies

TRADITIONAL ceremonies are being taken over by ruling parties, their leaders, cadres and those with deep pockets, Socialist Party President Fred M’membe has warned.

“When a baby is born, a child is being named, when somebody dies, and when a child becomes of age, there are ceremonies taking place all over Zambia,” he said.

“A ceremony is a formal public occasion, it is an event of ritual significance, performed on a special occasion. Ceremonies therefore hold an extremely important place in our lives. They mark life’s essential moments. They reflect our beliefs, hopes, traditions, culture and spirituality. A ceremony can help to show people they are united and that they belong. They can motivate us, stimulate our emotions and prompt memories.

“The positive effects of a ceremony are universal across civilisations. It can have many different elements, but a ceremony will usually integrate a procession, poetry, music, choreography and symbolism with the aim to emotionally embed and imprint the event into the memory of each individual present. A well thought out and lovingly conducted ceremony can provide a gateway for those involved to move from one phase of their life to another.

“But we have some fears; these ceremonies are being taken over by ruling parties and their leaders and cadres and those with deep pockets,” Dr M’membe said. “And because of this, these ceremonies are being turned into something else – a parade of who is who.

“There’s a competition, a scramble for a reservation seat, recognition and identity. And in the process the real owners of the ceremonies are being relegated to the margins. In the process, the meaning and purpose of these ceremonies is being lost. Some see them much more as tourist attractions and try to commercialise them at the expense of their real traditional value or purpose.

“There’s a need to rescue our traditional ceremonies from these unbridled political and business interests. If we don’t, we risk losing them,” Dr M’membe said.



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Destroying compassion
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Evidence of AFRICOM talks
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THE SOCIALIST PARTY stands for #realchange with policies based on justice, equity and peace. Manifesto/policies download details and information about how to join the party are on our back page
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Fulfil your promises, Musumali tells UPND

Unfair treatment, cost of living 'are the opposition'

HUNGER, unfulfilled promises and treating people unfairly are the UPND government's real opposition, Socialist Party first vice-president and general secretary Cosmas Mush-
eke Musumali says.

"What the UPND must focus on is addressing the high cost of living and high taxes, reducing the price of fuel and generally fulfilling the many promises it made to Zambians in August last year," Dr Musumali said in a statement.

"The UPND thrived on maligning people while in opposition and it thinks that doing so while in government will save it or stop people from questioning it about its promises."

He said the government was also treating people unfairly and cited Bowman Lusambo in Kabushi and Joseph Malanji in Kwacha as examples.

"The Socialist Party took the decision to support the candidature of Bowman Lusambo in Kabushi and Joseph Malanji in Kwacha constituencies in order to protect democracy in this country."

"It is evident that the two comrades were unfairly treated, and regardless of the differences in political ideologies, they need the support of everyone who values the protection of the rule of law, and to put a stop to the abuse of state institutions to fix perceived political opponents."

"The Socialist Party is a champion of democracy and a protector of the rule of law. Therefore, whoever abuses the law becomes its enemy."

"We have said this time and again; the nullification of the two seats was purely an act of vengeance and an abuse of the law by the UPND administration with the aim of fixing its perceived opponents."

"We will never blow with the wind. The PF did many wrong things while in government, and the Zambian populous gave it a

red card, but we will not accept the abuse of the law by the UPND in the name of fixing people."

"We are very aware that the UPND is trying to increase the number of its members of parliament by all means possible so it can change the constitution and make Zambia a one-party state."

"This will never happen. Not in our lifetime. We believe in protecting the constitution and the people of Zambia. We are not going to preach constitutionalism if we are not practising it."

"In Bemba we say, *ushilwila mutembo wamubiye nowakwe wine mupokwa. Elo kabili echili pamunobe mailo chikaba pali ive.*"

"If we allow the UPND to rape the constitution with impunity to fix members of the PF – or any other political opponent – it will become a tradition and happen to us one day."

"The UPND must know that one cannot stop a wrong by doing another wrong. If the PF abused the constitution to fix the UPND, it is not necessary to reciprocate. Instead, leadership has to be shown by not following the steps of a failed regime that Zambians passed a vote of no-confidence in due to its abuse of the constitution, among other wrongs."

Dr Musumali said SP's duty was to protect the constitution and democracy regardless of who was involved.

"When the UPND was unfairly treated by the past regime, we stood firm and condemned the act," he said. "However, the lies being peddled by State House propaganda tool *Koswe* about the Socialist Party and its leadership are unfounded and will not derail us from protecting what is noble and fair."

"No form of attack will stop us talking. The Socialist Party is not premised on an individual like the UPND is, our party is based on ideas that will live on to protect the rights of every Zambian, including those in the UPND."

"In 2026 we will show you true leadership," Dr Musumali said.

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Villagers from Silai in Kalabo, Western Province, take part in the Fred M'membe Literacy and Agroecology campaign

Words and the World

THE FRED M'membe Literacy and Agroecology Campaign is continuing with its campaign to facilitate literacy in English using the "Speak, Read and Write Words and the World" method of teaching.

The latest success is in Silai village in Kalabo, Western Province, where villagers meet weekly to learn not only words, but also claim their place in access to education.

The Silai campaign follows hard on the heels of success in Shangombo district, Western Province, where a monitoring of classes recently witnessed women stepping forward to write their names on a board and read words in the new language they are learning. There have also been recent classes in Chadiza, Eastern Province.

Since its start, the campaign – run jointly by the Socialist Party and the Samora Machel Internationalist Brigade from Brazil's Landless Workers' Movement (MST) – has been based on a learning method focusing both on classes and practical skills.

Now in its second phase, it has been a collective process that integrates students, educators and collaborators from various teams, including youths, women, and representatives from education, agroecology, health, and communication.

The first phase of the campaign concluded on February 12 this year with an official graduation ceremony attended by around 200 students.



Kaunda: nothing has been done to address youth challenges

ONE YEAR under the UPND government has been "a long walk to nothing for youths", Socialist Party national youth and security chairman Kelvin Kaunda says.

Kaunda said that despite the government employing 30,000-plus teachers and 11,000 health workers, nothing was being done to resolve youth challenges.

"It is my honest assessment that it's been a year of a long walk. A long walk not to anything, a long walk to nothing," he said.

"We have not seen anything unique or anything special so far. Yes, one may argue about the issue of employment or the recruitment of teachers and health workers, but we are dealing with obvious things. The recruitment of public service workers is an obvious thing. We are looking for something extraordinary."

Kaunda said that not everybody could be a teacher or a health worker. "There are many young people in the areas of accountancy, marketing,

entrepreneurial activities, you name it. This is where we want to see real jobs being created."

"And from where we stand we have not seen any policy pronouncements which have been made with the intention of dealing with these issues, because this is where the real jobs will come from. So the recruitment of teachers and health workers is obvious."

"There is really nothing extraordinary that the new dawn government has done in resolving the issues of our youths. We expect the government to do much more in resolving the challenges of our young people."

Kaunda said there needed to be a change in policy direction towards employment. "Not too long ago our young people were removed from the streets in a bid to impress individuals of a certain class. To this day the young people, who were surviving on MTN and Airtel booths, have no jobs. And these are

the young people who voted this party into government. It is also surprising that our leaders, when they are voted into office, get bodyguards to protect themselves from those same poor youths who voted for them. Shame!" he said.

"We must see change from the policy position. We have line ministries in charge of the youths, tell me if there has been any major policy pronouncement made towards the welfare of the youths. Nothing!"

"We have a ministry of so-called small- and medium-size enterprises. Even before they met the young people here they had the 'courage' to go and meet businessmen in other countries in the name of the diaspora community – and then you expect to change the narrative on the ground?"

"Tell me one single meeting that has been held where the young people have been engaged by these institutions in trying to resolve some of the challenges of their time."

SP pays tribute to murdered leader Mnguni

THE SOCIALIST Party has paid tribute to Lindokuhle Mnguni, the 24th leader of the South African Abahlali baseMjondolo shack dwellers' movement to be killed.

"To our dear friends in mourning, the family in grief and comrades at loss; we received the news of the heartless murder of comrade Lindokuhle Mnguni, the chairperson of the eKhenana Commune and the Youth League, with great sorrow and deep sense of loss," SP President Fred M'membe said.

"Losing a young man whose commitment to the struggle for justice, equity and peaceful co-existence that epitomised selfless service is profoundly distressing."

"Although the death of our beloved comrade has carved a void in the struggle for a fairer, more just and more humane society, we find immeasurable hope in the certainty that one day justice will be served. Rest in power comrade," Dr M'membe said.

SP ON THE MOVE

Njobvu joins SP, files for Luangwa election

LUANGWA UPND strongman Christopher Shitima Njobvu has resigned from the ruling party. Njobvu was campaign manager for UPND council chairperson Luangwa district candidate Author Lungu in the 2021 general election.

In a letter of resignation addressed to the Luangwa district chairman, Njobvu thanked the UPND for giving him the opportunity to serve in various capacities.

He has since joined the Socialist Party and filed his nomination ahead of the Luangwa by-election slated for September 15.

Speaking after the filing, Lusaka Province chairman Ashell Kampengele de-

clared the Socialist Party and its candidate ready for the by-election.

Kampengele says his team will conduct issue-based campaigns "devoid of violence and character assassination".

Sakala leaves UPND over 'poor leadership'

RULING UPND Pwazi ward chairman in Luangwa district, Teddy Sakala, has ditched the ruling party citing injustice and poor leadership.

Sakala has since joined the Socialist Party and pledged support for the SP candidate in the Luangwa council chairperson by-election, Christopher Shitima Njobvu. The by-election is scheduled to take place on September 15.



Bwalya on Copperbelt formation drive

SOCIALIST Party member of the national mobilisation committee Frank Bwalya has embarked on a branch formation drive in

Copperbelt Province, with his first stop being the Kwacha constituency in Kitwe. Bwalya is accompanied by Copperbelt provincial secretary Henry Chilombo, provincial chairperson Twiggy, and provincial youth chair Martin Ba Kopala Baletila.

Socialist Party member of the national mobilisation committee Frank Bwalya on his Copperbelt formation drive

Ex-MDC Western Province team defects to SP

FORMER MDC Western provincial chairman Fulayi Goodson Mboma has joined the Socialist Party. Mboma joins the party alongside his entire provincial committee. The team is currently attending Socialist Party ideological training in the Copperbelt.

Forrie Tembo appointed to mobilisation committee

FORRIE Tembo has been appointed to the Socialist Party national committee for mobilisation. The party and comrades congratulated him on the appointment in a Facebook post.

Demolition of homes in Chingola demonstrates lack of compassion

Zambia's standing as a Christian nation 'is being seriously compromised'

THE DESTRUCTION of people's homes in Chingola is not a small thing and shouldn't be played down. It shouldn't be hidden in the afterthought of DMMU small relief of foodstuffs and promises of new land reallocations. Without compassion, everyone is worse off, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

"What happened in Chingola is what happens when a government loses its moral footing, when elected officials seem to be operating without compassion," he said. "This is what happens when our politicians and their officials lack any semblance of compassion."

"Destroying more than 300 homes inflicts terrible and needless trauma and stress on families, especially on young children, and that hampers and damages their development, causing long-term damage."

Dr M'membe said the destruction of people's homes was "morally unconscionable".

Deficit

"That such egregious actions be employed in a nation that calls itself Christian and is supposed to put human beings above all other considerations is unjustifiable on any level."

"When compassion is absent, all suffer, including those who withhold it. What happens to us when there is such an extreme deficit of compassion in certain quarters of our country? I am convinced that harm results for all."

"We know that compassion enhances the welfare of those who receive compassion and benefits those who are compassionate. It even benefits those who simply observe an act of compassion. Compassion is one of those experiences that deeply affects us – whether we give it, receive it, or observe

it. When compassion is absent, all suffer, including those who withhold it."

Dr M'membe said being compassionate upheld moral principles. "When we restrain compassion we feel that our moral identity is compromised. That's because compassion is central to being fully human. It is the key to reducing systemic oppression and nurturing a culture of respect, civility, and belonging."

"Please know that I am not a moral philosopher. Yet understanding the nature of integrity and morality has been an important part of my life," he said.

"When I was an undergraduate university student, I discovered that there are many moral platforms. Ideas of what is right and wrong vary from culture to culture, even from person to person. But the Catholic social teachings have also given me a different way to understand human dignity, integrity, one that looks at it through the lens of suffering. When we cause suffering to others or ourselves, our integrity is violated. When we alleviate the suffering of others, our integrity is affirmed."

"At this time in our country, when we are witnessing unbridled capitalist approach to life, we need strong moral sensitivity. We need the ability to recognise moral violations and discern which government actions are morally justifiable and which are not. We also need a large dose of moral nerve, a term used to describe someone who has non-negotiable virtue when standing above the abyss of harm," he said.

Dr M'membe said Zambia's Christian integrity was under threat with the kind of actions taking place in Chingola and elsewhere.

"As I consider what is happening in our country now, I believe our standing as a Christian nation is being seriously compromised by a deficit of compassion and a pervasive absence of integrity. We are facing a moral crisis that is reprehensible. We need to manifest moral nerve and compassion, now, for the sake of all."



Children play among the rubble of people's demolished homes in Chingola, on land supposedly earmarked for an airstrip

Why would poor people need an airport?

WHY would the government deem it necessary to preserve land in Chingola for an airstrip while sacrificing the investment poor people have made over the years by demolishing their homes, SP national chairperson in charge of youths and security Kelvin Kaunda asks.

Kaunda said he was saddened that the government, "which promises to protect its people", would demolish houses belonging to the poor.

And he questioned why houses in forest 27 hadn't been demolished while the poor had been left without shelter.

"The question which begs answers is why houses in forest 27 have not been demolished. Is it because the owners of those houses belong to an elite class? Why is it that the houses of the majority poor in Chingola have been demolished? Is it because they are poor?"

"We have been given reason to understand that these houses were demolished

because they were built on a reserved airstrip," he said, asking who would benefit from it.

"Can our people in Chingola even afford an air ticket? Can they afford an aircraft? So if the people in Chingola themselves don't see the need to have an airstrip in their vicinity, why should the government see it necessary to preserve that space for it and sacrifice the investment our poor people have made over the years?"

Kaunda demanded the government compensate all the victims. He said the act by government to demolish the poor people's houses was evil, adding that it must be condemned by all well-meaning Zambians.

"Is this government telling us it has no interest in the poor people of this country? We want answers. As Socialist Party youths, we are demanding that the government compensate these families without exception," he said.

"Surely, in the face of these harsh eco-

nomic realities, how can you even think of taking away your neighbour's roof? The President promised the Zambian people in 2014 that there was a much more humane way of dealing with these issues," he said.

He asked how the government could claim it was a government for all Zambians when some people were left out in the cold.

"Let him come and tell us what has changed," he said. "The President in 2014 condemned these kind of acts. So what has changed? Is it because he now has an aircon in his office that he has forgotten about the promises he made to the Zambian people?"

Kaunda said, "If this country is not safe for any of us, it can never be safe for all of us."

"If our neighbour has no shelter, how can we say it's One Zambia, One Nation? When other families spend a night in the cold how can you claim to be a government of the people? We feel this government could have handled this matter in a much more humane way."

Hichilema promised to depoliticise the public service, but it hasn't happened

PRESIDENT Hakainde Hichilema promised the Zambian people he would depoliticise the public service but that seems to have changed, Socialist Party national chairperson for youth and security Kelvin Kaunda says.

Kaunda questions why UPND members have been appointed to the civil service without relinquishing their active political positions.

"We have seen a situation where party members in the UPND have been assigned public service jobs without having to relinquish their portfolios. We are talking about facts, and these are facts that we can prove beyond any reasonable doubt," Kaunda said.

"The first example is Levy Ngoma, political adviser to the President, who is chairperson for agriculture in the UPND national management committee. The current Luangwa district commissioner is also a UPND district chairperson – and you expect the forthcoming by-election in Luangwa to be free and fair?"

Patrick Mucheleka, Brian Nduba, Rosa Zulu and Canadian-based lawyer Elias Munshya are also cited as examples.

"We have Patrick Mucheleka who is PS spe-

cial duties. As we speak, he is still the deputy secretary general of the UPND. We have Brian Nduba, who is deputy chairperson of the local government service commission and a UPND vice-chairperson. Rosa Zulu, current Lusaka district commissioner is also the provincial chair of UPND," he said.

"What is even more surprising is that even citizens with dual citizenship have been given diplomatic appointments. People like Elias Munshya. Tell me, where is his allegiance, is it to Zambia or Canada? I leave it for the Zambian people to decide."

Languishing

"Are you telling me this country is short of young people who can take up some of these positions?"

"I come from Matero constituency and I am alive to the fact that in Matero, the UPND had a candidate in the name of Tom Michelo. This is a guy who got 48,000 or more votes for the President," he said.

"Today, some of these people are languishing in the streets. Are they not better placed to be

given some of these assignments rather than individuals with dual citizenship, who don't even stay in this country?"

Kaunda asked why young people had been left out, "only to appoint senior comrades, such as Panji Kaunda".

He also cited the example of "Mrs Kabwiko", a known senior member of the UPND, now serving in the Zambia Police Service.

"We have Mrs Kabwiko, who is still a member of the national management committee and yet serving as a commissioner with the Zambia Police Service," he said.

"Could it be possible that we will have to fear for our lives as we are not sure whether the police will work independently without any form of interference from their leaders?"

Kaunda said Zambians did not want a politicised public service. The President had promised he was going to depoliticise it, yet we now had more people with active party positions serving in it.

"And this the public service you expect to serve the Zambian people's best interests. Can such a public service give the Zambian people the very best? The answer is no," he said.

Ngoma calls for measures to break the glass ceiling

FOMER Movement for Democratic Change chairperson Mary Ngoma, who joined the Socialist Party in July and is national women's league coordinator for mobilisation in Southern and Western provinces, says women struggle in Zambian politics.

"Women in Zambia have suffered from massive inequalities for many, many years, especially in the political arena, as in many African countries," she said.

"Governments have come, governments have gone, yet the challenges that women face in their quest to attain recognition and equality in decision-making positions remain unchanged."

"Male economic dominance, stereotypical, traditional myths and a lack of solidarity among women can be adjusted, but those adjustments are a drop in the ocean compared with the challenges women face in politics."

"The violent political atmosphere that accompanies elections of whatever kind in Zambia is an often-ignored deterrent factor in the involvement of females in politics."

"It is common knowledge



Mary Ngoma

that many women are economically dependent on their male counterparts in Zambian society, giving men the probability of dominating them in the struggle for power," Ngoma said.

"Exorbitant nomination fees charged by the Electoral Commission of Zambia is another stumbling block to women's participation in politics, and the Socialist Party calls on the government to come up with deliberate mechanisms to break the glass ceiling that prevents them from participating in politics."

"This is the only way that equality in leadership and politics can be attained," she said.



Left: Coloniser Cecil John Rhodes towards the end of his life after plundering the resources of southern Africa. He died in 1902. Right: Mining magnate, financier and industrialist Sir Ernest Oppenheimer in 1945

Using power for business, insider dealings and corrupt practices

Difference from the past is that the people now demand transparency

SOCIALIST Party President **Fred M'membe** says there is a direct comparison between the way Hakainde Hichilema's UPND government is conducting its business dealings and the exploitation of Zambia's colonisers

WE HAVE consistently and repeatedly talked about President Hakainde Hichilema as a continuation of the businessmen and politicians who colonised, exploited, brutalised and dehumanised us for decades.

His admiration for Cecil Rhodes and the Oppenheims has inspired him to follow their corrupt path of combining business with political leadership at the highest possible levels.

Cecil John Rhodes was a British mining magnate and politician in southern Africa who served as Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896.

Like Mr Hichilema, who is the 7th President of the Republic of Zambia, Rhodes was the 7th Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, and was in office from July 17, 1890, until January 12, 1896.

An ardent believer in British imperialism, Rhodes and his British South Africa Company colonised the southern African territory of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia), which the company named after him in 1895.

The son of a vicar, Rhodes was born at Netteswell House, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire. As a sickly child, he was sent to South Africa by his family when he was 17 years old in the hope that the climate might improve his health. He entered the diamond trade at Kimberley in 1871 when he was 18, and, thanks to funding from Rothschild & Co, began to systematically buy out and consolidate diamond mines. Over the next two decades he gained near-complete domination of the world diamond market, forming a massive monopoly.



The downfall of Cecil Rhodes: A photogravure of the disastrous Jameson Raid that led to Rhodes's resignation as Prime Minister in 1896

His diamond company, De Beers, formed in 1888, still retains its prominence into the 21st century under Anglo and the Oppenheims.

Rhodes entered the Cape Parliament at the age of 27 in 1881, and in 1890, he became Prime Minister. During his time as Prime Minister, Rhodes used his political power to expropriate land from black Africans through the Glen Grey Act, while also tripling the wealth requirement for voting under the Franchise and Ballot Act, effectively barring black people from taking part in elections.

Attack

After overseeing the formation of Rhodesia during the early 1890s, he was forced to resign in 1896 after the disastrous Jameson Raid, an unauthorised attack on Paul Kruger's South African

Republic (or Transvaal). Kruger was Rhodes's main business competitor.

Rhodes's career never recovered; his heart was weak, and after years of poor health he died in 1902. He was buried in what is now Zimbabwe – his grave has been a controversial site.

Rhodes's racial views are a subject of scrutiny and debate. He believed the natives of the Cape to have existed in a state of barbarism.

Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, (born May 22, 1880, Friedberg, Hesse-Nassau, Germany – died November 25, 1957, Johannesburg, South Africa) was an industrialist, financier, and one of the most successful leaders in the mining industry in South Africa and Rhodesia.

Oppenheimer became a junior clerk at the age of 16 with Dunkelsbuhler & Company, Lon-

don diamond brokers. In 1902 he moved to Kimberley, South Africa, where he served as a Dunkelsbuhler's representative. In 1917, with considerable backing from the financier J.P. Morgan, he formed the Anglo American Corporation of South Africa Ltd, to exploit the east Witwatersrand goldfield. Two years later he formed Consolidated Diamond Mines of South West Africa Ltd (reformed as the Namdeb Diamond Corporation in 1994). This diamond-prospecting corporation was so successful that he gained control of De Beers Consolidated Mines, which once dominated the world diamond market, and in 1930 he established The Diamond Corporation Ltd.

In 1929, Oppenheimer formed the Rhodesian Anglo American Corporation to exploit the rich copper deposits in Northern Rhodesia. His last project was the pioneering

of new goldfields in the Orange Free State, South Africa.

Oppenheimer served as mayor of Kimberley from 1912 to 1915 and was a member of the Union of South Africa Parliament from 1924 to 1938.

Fixing

Oppenheimer used his positions as mayor and member of parliament to expand and consolidate his business empire. He was involved in a number of controversies; including price fixing, antitrust behaviour, and an allegation of failing to release industrial diamonds for the United States war effort during World War II.

Mr Hichilema, in a new time and new way, is following in the footsteps of Rhodes and Oppenheimer by using his political position as President of the Republic of Zambia to expand and consolidate his business

empire. But we all know that using political office to advance personal or associates' business interests amounts to grand corruption.

Following this path of businessman/politician, Mr Hichilema may turn out to be the most corrupt President of our country.

It is not a secret that Mr Hichilema's businesses, like those of Rhodes and Oppenheimer, are doing business with the government he controls and directs. This is a very primitive, crude form of insider dealings.

Mr Hichilema is without shame or restraint directing government business to businesses he is associated with or is in one way or another gaining a benefit from.

Today, civil servants are in a very serious and painful debt trap that is benefiting their political leaders, who are connected to Bayport and other companies that are mercilessly exploiting them. And because of this, attempts at debt swaps to bail out civil servants have been frustrated or reversed.

Today, civil servants are forced into medical insurance schemes with Madison, whose books they are acquiring.

There is no doubt that the key leadership of this government is also associated with companies getting government tenders to supply fertilisers.

They are really following in the footsteps of Rhodes and Oppenheimer, who ruled and did business with the governments they controlled and directed. But whereas Rhodes and the Oppenheims got away with it, Mr Hichilema and his league will find it very difficult to do so, no matter what schemes of concealment of business interests they deploy.

Times have changed. The Zambian people will certainly demand the highest levels of transparency and accountability of Mr Hichilema's business dealings.

Socialist Party President
Fred M'membe: Emancipate yourself from mental slavery



Embarrassing colonial agreements still active

THE HYPOCRISY of our colonial masters – not former colonial masters because they are still our colonial masters – is frightening, embarrassing.

At the end of his speech, during a question-and-answer session, a French journalist asked Joaquim Chissano, then president of Mozambique and chairman of the African Union, what his position was on the Mugabe dictatorship and how dictators like Mugabe are a major threat to African integration. And here is President Joaquim Chissano's response:

"One of the greatest threats to African integration is foreign control," he said.

"I took my round of presidency of the OAU in July 2003 (just after that of Thabo Mbeki). In the middle of one night I received an urgent call from the President of the Republic of Benin telling me he was in an emergency situation.

"I immediately thought it was a military coup, because Benin had experienced many military coups. He replied: 'No, it's worse than a military coup.

"The President of France has just sent a special envoy to warn me that if we don't immediately pay our 10 percent to France, we will have serious consequences.

"The 10 percent is one of three agreements that all French-speaking countries signed with France as conditions for France to grant us independence in 1960. The three agreements were that:

"(1) Each of us will adopt the CFA as our common currency and will be 100 percent controlled by France,

"(2) Each of us will pay France 10 percent of our export earnings in return for France guaranteeing our sovereignty and security, and,

"(3) Each of us will keep our national reserves in France, and if we draw from them without France's consent, it will be considered a loan that we will repay to France with interest.

"Now, due to a serious financial crisis that Benin is currently facing, my cabinet and I have decided to suspend all payments to foreign governments until we return to normal. The special envoy refuses to accept our explanation. So could you please help us mobilise African Union member states to support us in this fight with France? Please?"

Chissano said he couldn't believe his ears. He was shocked. He then replied to the President of Benin: "My Comrade Brother President, please remain very firm.

"I will take care of this matter very quickly. I'm not sure the President of France (Jacques Chirac) will listen to me, so I'm going to call former President Nelson Mandela, who they revere, to intervene, then I'll get back to you."

Chissano added that when he called and told the story to Nelson Mandela, the latter was even more shocked than he (Chissano). He was flabbergasted.

"He immediately called President Jacques Chirac and told him it was worse than apartheid!

"In short, France eventually waived Benin's payment for that year, but said that if Benin refused to pay for the following year and beyond, it would be responsible, as it is a binding treaty that he has signed."

So goes France-Africa! These accords are incredible. But why don't we teach them at school and university, why are they not popularised? I am sure that among us there are people who will not be able to believe that such one-of-a-kind agreements exist and are still in force.

This is still going on. And our colonial masters, their intellectuals and their media see nothing wrong with it. They talk about it. This is not taught in our schools. It is not part of our political discourse. But they are busy and endlessly talking to us about Russia and China!

As Bob Marley sang in *Redemption Song*:

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery

*None but ourselves can free our minds
Have no fear for atomic energy
'Cause none of them can stop the time
How long shall they kill our prophets
While we stand aside and look?
Some say it's just a part of it
We've got to fulfill the book*

Leadership in service

IN A passage in 1 Corinthians 4:1-4, Paul offers a definitive statement of what it means to be a leader: "Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries," he says. (1 Cor. 4:1).

"Us" refers to the apostolic leaders through whom the Corinthians had come to faith and to whom the various factions in the church claimed allegiance (1 Cor. 4:6).

Paul uses two words in this verse to elaborate what he means. The first, *hypēretēs* ("servants"), denotes an attendant, a servant who waits on or assists someone. In this sense, leaders attend personally to the needs of the people they lead. Leaders are not exalted, but humbled, by accepting leadership. The job requires patience, personal engagement, and individual attention to the needs of followers.

The second is *oikonomos* ("stewards"), which describes a servant or slave who manages the affairs of a household or estate. The chief distinction in this position is trust. The steward is trusted to manage the affairs of the household for the benefit of the owner.

Likewise, the leader is trusted to manage the group for the benefit of all its members, rather than the leader's personal benefit.

Leaders are responsible to accomplish – or better yet, exceed – the work their teams are assigned to do. But it is not legitimate to sacrifice the needs of the group in order to obtain the leader's personal rewards. Instead, leaders are called to accomplish the group's goals by meeting its needs.

New values are needed

THE SAD news we continue to hear about the increasing murder of our women and children, and the recent gender-based-violence report in our country, urgently needs attention.

To deal with the complex social, political, and economic challenges we are facing today, new values are needed. But these values won't come on their own, they have to be nurtured. We urgently must start building a new awareness. We require a lot of conversations about the values we want – to build awareness and more principles – than ever before.

Where are these principles and values going to come from? They will come from adding together the best of our religious teachings, political teachings, ethical and humane ideas.

Who will bring about these principles, values, ideas? Who will sow them, cultivate them and make them grow? You will – you yourselves, we ourselves – because it is objectively inevitable and there's no alternative to it if we have to harbour any hope of a better life, a more just, more fair and more humane Zambia.

We can't continue on this path, we need to rise to the occasion. It's impossible to build a better Zambia without strong principles, values and new progressive ideas.

Focus on what we have

AN African proverb (Soga People of Uganda) says: "Water that has been begged for does not quench the thirst", interpretation:

Since you do not have control over the help someone is rendering to you, it (the help) may not turn out exactly as you expected. Don't be baffled if the assistance is unsatisfactory.

Let's not cheat ourselves or allow ourselves to be deceived. The much-anticipated IMF loan guarantees us nothing. We have been on this path before. Yes, the language has or is changing slightly, but the fundamentals of these programmes have remained the same.

We need to focus on what we have, collect fair taxes, develop peasant agriculture and agro-processing and link these to the health and education sectors.

Agriculture will be our priority, M'membe says

Zambia needs to invest in research

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M'membe says the SP government will prioritise agriculture as it is one of the three key pillars of its development agenda.

"Our top priority comes from the biggest challenge we face – and what is that?" he said. "We are the fourth hungriest country in the Africa today and fifth in the world, so we will have many challenges doing the things we want to do if we are unable to feed our people. We won't even have the type of human beings we need – healthy ones – and because of this we will pay a lot of attention to agriculture.

"Zambia has an agriculture sector that is not fully informed by research. Take for instance, rice production. I have heard people talking about how nice Mongu rice is, how nice Nakonde rice is, but you can't sell that rice anywhere in the world. It is of an inferior quality – it is substandard rice.

"We have not invested in researching it. The last serious research carried out into rice was in Sefula in Mongu, Western Province, by JICA in the early 80s, since then nothing has happened."

Dr M'membe said Zambia was suffering from a lack of investment in research. "If you go to Thailand – a leading country in rice production – and you go to the University of Bangkok, you will see that there is a faculty dedicated to rice, from bachelor's degrees to PhDs, dealing only with its production," he said. "Our rice can't compete with that. Thailand has invested in it and is reaping huge benefits globally. Wherever you go you will find Thai rice. Bangkok alone has more than 200 varieties.

Support

"Another example of poor investment in research is fish farming. While a lot of money has been wasted in the aquaculture industry, no meaningful research has been carried out to justify or support it. Research on fisheries being conducted at Zambia's universities is inadequate.

"I have been to all institutions of higher learning, and have a doctorate in fish farming. I have travelled from Chiyawa to Kalulushi as a researcher studying fishponds. I have visited all the producers of stock feed for fish, as well as institutions involved with fisheries, and, speak-

ing as a fish farmer, I can say that we are not there.

"I had 11 fishponds but they were a disaster under the guidance given by the Ministry of Agriculture. There is very little we can achieve from fish farming unless we carry out research into it."

Dr M'membe said there was so much the country was not doing right and needed to invest in research on.

"We grow beans in Mbala, Nakonde, Isoka, Mafinga and other parts of Northern and Muchinga provinces, for example. What research has gone into bean production? The quality of our beans is diminishing. We have grown them for a very long time without research and our beans cannot compete with the ones from Brazil.

"Zambia is not producing enough beans to feed our own people, but beans are not just needed for human consumption, they are also needed for livestock. You can produce stock feed from them. In fact, there are many things you can do with beans.

"As well as focusing on agriculture, the Socialist Party in government will also prioritise health and education as they complement each other," he said.

Fair taxation from the mines will help create employment

WE WILL get fair taxes from mines and use that for agriculture to create employment, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

"You cannot give away taxes. You are giving away US\$3 to 4 billion in taxes to go and borrow US\$1.4 billion under very stringent conditions. It doesn't make sense. It's nonsense. It's ridiculous."

Dr M'membe questioned why Eastern Province was enduring poverty levels of up to 70 per cent when it produces cotton, tobacco, maize and groundnuts, which, he said, should be processed in the province instead of being exported.

"We have to think outside the box. If we continue pushing the same policies, we are going nowhere. We have to target where our people are most deployed and where the greatest workforce of our people is; 54.8 per cent are deployed in agriculture and that is where we must target our resources if we are to create more employment and improve the living conditions our people," he said.

"So for us our main target will be on agriculture. Whatever taxes we are going to get from the mines, and we will ensure fair taxes, we will not allow transnational companies to get away with tax havens. You cannot give away taxes. We need to come up with policies that will enable us get fair taxes and pump that into agriculture."

Dr M'membe said Eastern Province was the fourth poorest

province in Zambia despite its agricultural potential, which, he said, simply needed value addition.

"Why should Eastern Province endure poverty? It grows cotton which, within months, is exported by transnational companies to China, and our people are becoming more and more poor. We need to create textile industries in Eastern Province. We have to create factories to make shirts, dresses and caps. Cotton has seed, and oil can be produced from that seed and later stock feed. And employment can be high," he said.

"It is the same with tobacco. There is no attempt to produce cigars. Cuba generates US\$5 million per annum from cigars when it doesn't even have minerals. A country without minerals has a gross domestic product of US\$107 billion per annum. With our minerals we barely hit \$24 billion."

Climate

Dr M'membe said that Southern Province could do better by growing its cattle population through cultivation of hay so as to reduce the cost of beef production.

He added that Zambia's water resources could help the country address climate change effects of drought by constructing canals to irrigate most parts of the country, especially Southern Province.

Dr M'membe said the ruling party only listened to transnational companies, such as Anglo America, and their foundations.

He said UPND was pursuing the same neocapitalist policies started by UNIP and adopted by MMD and later PF, taking Zambia to the high poverty levels being experienced today, averaging 76.6 per cent in rural areas.

Dr M'membe warned of increased urbanisation rates of up to 2.8 per cent per annum.

"We are about 15 million now or thereabouts and in the next 15 years we will be 30 million plus. Where are the jobs going to come from? What are the issues of water, sanitation, electricity, food, health, and education going to be? We are not catering for these. We are not even factoring that the population of this country is going to double in 15 years. In some areas it is even going to happen faster because of the high population density and the high fertility rates in those neighbourhoods," he said.

Dr M'membe said that despite these indicators, the UPND government was not talking of an economic growth rate of over six or 10 per cent but was instead projecting growth at four to five per cent.

"That cannot give us the economic growth that we want. It is an illusion," he said.

Dr M'membe said if a country's 54.8 per cent of the workforce was producing only 7.5 per cent of GDP, even if new mines were opened, employment wouldn't increase because of new technological advancements.

He added these advancements had also affected employment in the road construction sector.

AFRICOM, minerals meeting revealed

Brenthurst Foundation boss played major role in Hichilema's decision

Socialist staff reporter

THE BRENTHURST Foundation is a key promoter of the plan to open a United States Department of Defence AFRICOM office in Lusaka, according to Africa Intelligence (AI), a website specialising in political and economic developments in Africa.

AI says Greg Mills, head of the Johannesburg-based think-tank established by the Oppenheimer family in 2004, has shown himself to be “increasingly influential” with President Hakainde Hichilema, having brokered talks on both the controversial AFRICOM office project and a multi-million dollar investment programme in Zambia by Canada’s First Quantum Minerals.

The AFRICOM plan was announced on April 25, with the decision by First Quantum Minerals (FQM) to invest US\$1.35bn in Zambia confirmed two weeks later. US\$1.25bn of the investment is said to be for an extension to Kansanshi copper mines.

AI reports that the two highly sensitive projects were discussed at a series of meetings hosted by FQM CEO Tristan Pascal at the Royal Zambezi Lodge, a five-star property owned by FQM, between March 27 and 29 this year.

Other subjects included tax conditions on investments made by FQM, which also owns Royal Zambian Airlines.

AI says that Hichilema was accompanied by his private secretary Bradford Machila, his special public policy assistant Chipokota Mwanawasa, Zambia Security Intelligence chief Friday Nyambe, and training director Brigadier General Jethrow Chipili.

Foreigners invited by Brenthurst to attend the meetings included South African defence company Paramount Group executive chairman Ivor Ichikowitz, DRC President Felix Tshisekedi’s special envoy Serge Tshibangu, Former Kenyan journalist John Githongo, Lieutenant General Jonah Mwangi of the Kenya Defence Forces, and retired South African general Vusi Masondo.

Washington is reported to have been represented by Tom Stibral, defence attaché at the embassy in

Lusaka, and Kate Almquist Knopf, former head of the US Defence Department’s Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

AI says the event shows the influence Brenthurst’s Greg Mills has over Hichilema, having become a regular visitor to Community House, the President’s private residence in eastern Lusaka. In January Hichilima flew to Johannesburg to attend the launch of Mills’s new book, *Expensive Property*.

Mills, spokesman for the Oppenheimer mining dynasty that set up the Brenthurst Foundation in 2005, has been controversially gaining influence on the continent. The Oppenheimer family is seen as a divisive influence because of its longstanding links with the apartheid regime.

The Brenthurst Foundation has advised, promoted, and contributed funds to Hichilema’s UPND party, and has also extended its influence elsewhere. It advises, trains, contributes funds to, and campaigns on behalf of a number of opposition parties in the South African sub-region.

AI reports a spokesperson for the Brenthurst Foundation denying that the AFRICOM and FQM issues were discussed at the Royal Zambezi Lodge meetings.

Rethink

“Neither issue was discussed at the security dialogue hosted at RZL in March,” the spokesperson said. “The reports indicating such are simply mischievous or fake news.”

Linda Tsungirirai Masarira, a former member of the executive management committee of Zimbabwe’s People’s Democratic Party and current spokesperson of the country’s Movement for Democratic Change, condemned the setting up of an AFRICOM office in Lusaka.

“Africa Intelligence confirms the strategic military hub being set up in Zambia,” she said. “As usual, the Oppenheimer family is in the matrix. There is no secret under the sun. African leaders should stop mortgaging the future of Africa to capitalists.”

Socialist Party President Fred M’membe has asked Hichilima to “rethink and cancel” the agreement for an AFRICOM office in Lusaka, and criticised his close personal

relationship with members of the Brenthurst Foundation.

Writing to the President in June, Dr M’membe said, “It is a serious mistake to go ahead with the setting up of the planned office. ‘Security cooperation’ is a United States imperialist agenda and AFRICOM is a tool for its execution.”

He wrote, “Since its creation, AFRICOM has slowly increased its creep throughout the continent, establishing agreements with countries like Niger, Ghana, Mali, Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal and a host of others to use airfields and bases to refuel aircraft, deploy troops and conduct surveillance operations.

“The relative peace our country has enjoyed is to a large extent because we chose to be non-aligned in a world that was dangerously divided.

“As the geopolitical landscape moves towards a multipolar world, it becomes even more important that Zambia acts with great caution in how it navigates this landscape,” he wrote. “The step you have taken on AFRICOM is therefore retrogressive and has the potential to diplomatically isolate Zambia in the region as well as endanger the security of our people in the medium and long term.”

President Hichilema recently conferred The Order of The Eagle of Zambia 1st Division on former Liberian president Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, former Nigerian president General Olusegun Obasanjo, and former Sierra Leone president Ernest Bai Koroma, for “distinguishing themselves in their own countries”, but Dr M’membe accused him of abusing the awards for personal purposes.

He said the honours were not Zambian state awards but the President’s personal ones to his Brenthurst Foundation associates. “It is wrong for the President to take national matters as personal business and to act against State House housekeeping rules and government procedures.

“We urge the President to be as committed to Zambia as he is to the interests of the Brenthurst Foundation. He has the right to honour his associates, but he should not do it using State House or any other government institutions.”



Left: President Hakainde Hichilema and head of the Brenthurst Foundation, Greg Mills (fourth row from the front, centre), at the Royal Zambezi Lodge.

Ruto wins presidency

WILLIAM Ruto was been declared winner of Kenya’s presidential election, amid last-minute chaos as four senior election officials denounced the week-long count and disowned the result.

Official results showed that Ruto, the current deputy president, won 50.5 percent of the vote, beating longtime opposition leader Raila Odinga and narrowly avoiding a run-off.

But chaos erupted minutes before the results were announced, with four out of seven electoral commissioners saying they disowned the outcome, which they termed “opaque”.

“We are not able to take ownership of the results that will be announced,” said the deputy chair of the electoral commission, Juliana Cherera.

The sudden declaration prompted fears that vote-rigging allegations could lead to a legal challenge or even deadly violence like the country witnessed after 2007 and 2017 presidential polls. Cherera tried to allay concerns by advising those involved to take their complaints to court.

The 55-year-old president-elect later issued a conciliatory message, vowing to work with “all leaders”. “There is no room for vengeance,” Ruto said. “I am acutely aware that our country is at a stage where we need all hands on deck.”

As news of the results filtered through to Odinga’s stronghold of Kisumu, there were some out-

‘We have repeatedly warned that the Brenthurst Foundation and their honorary whites in black skins are determined to create a lobby group of African leaders who will pave the way for further impoverishing Africa by creating a low mining tax regime that would allow finance capital to take over the continent

Fred M’membe

breaks of violence. In one area, protesters congregated on a roundabout, throwing stones, setting tyres on fire and throwing up roadblocks with broken rocks.

“It was not free and fair. We were cheated,” Collins Oduyo, 26, an Odinga supporter said.

Some international analysts suggested that the commissioner’s move might be politically motivated. “The four commissioners criticising the vote count as opaque were appointed by [the outgoing president Uhuru] Kenyatta in 2018 and their intervention smacks of political interference from the Raila Odinga camp,” said Benjamin Hunter, an Africa analyst with Maplecroft, a UK-based consultancy.

Kenyatta had backed Odinga after falling out with Ruto. Odinga and Kenyatta come from two of Kenya’s wealthiest and influential families.

Kenyatta’s endorsement was expected to draw in support for Odinga from the Kikuyu community, which held a critical number of votes in the election. But Odinga’s community, the Luo, have been at political odds with the Kikuyu for decades, and a reconciliation between the two after a long rivalry was ultimately not enough to bridge the divide.

In the Kikuyu heartlands, Ruto swept the vote with his appeal to Kenyans on economic terms and not only traditional ethnic ones. “Ruto’s populist tenor convinced Kikuyu voters angry at the flatlining economy and Kenyatta’s alliance with Odinga to side with him,” Hunter said.

Despite the chaos surrounding the announcement, celebrations briefly broke out in parts of the country, including Kayole, a residential neighbourhood in Nairobi where Ruto and Odinga both have some support.

Ruto’s supporters were eager to see the self-proclaimed “hustler” rise to the country’s highest office from his humble beginnings selling chickens by the roadside.

“He started from the very bottom and has kept rising up, so it makes us hopeful that he will empower Kenyans at the bottom, because he knows what it’s like to face problems,” said Miriam Wangeci

M’membe congratulates president

SOCIALIST Party President has extended congratulations to the president-elect of Kenya Dr William Samoei Ruto for defeating the other candidate, “who was supported by the Oppenheimers and their agents in the Brenthurst Foundation”.

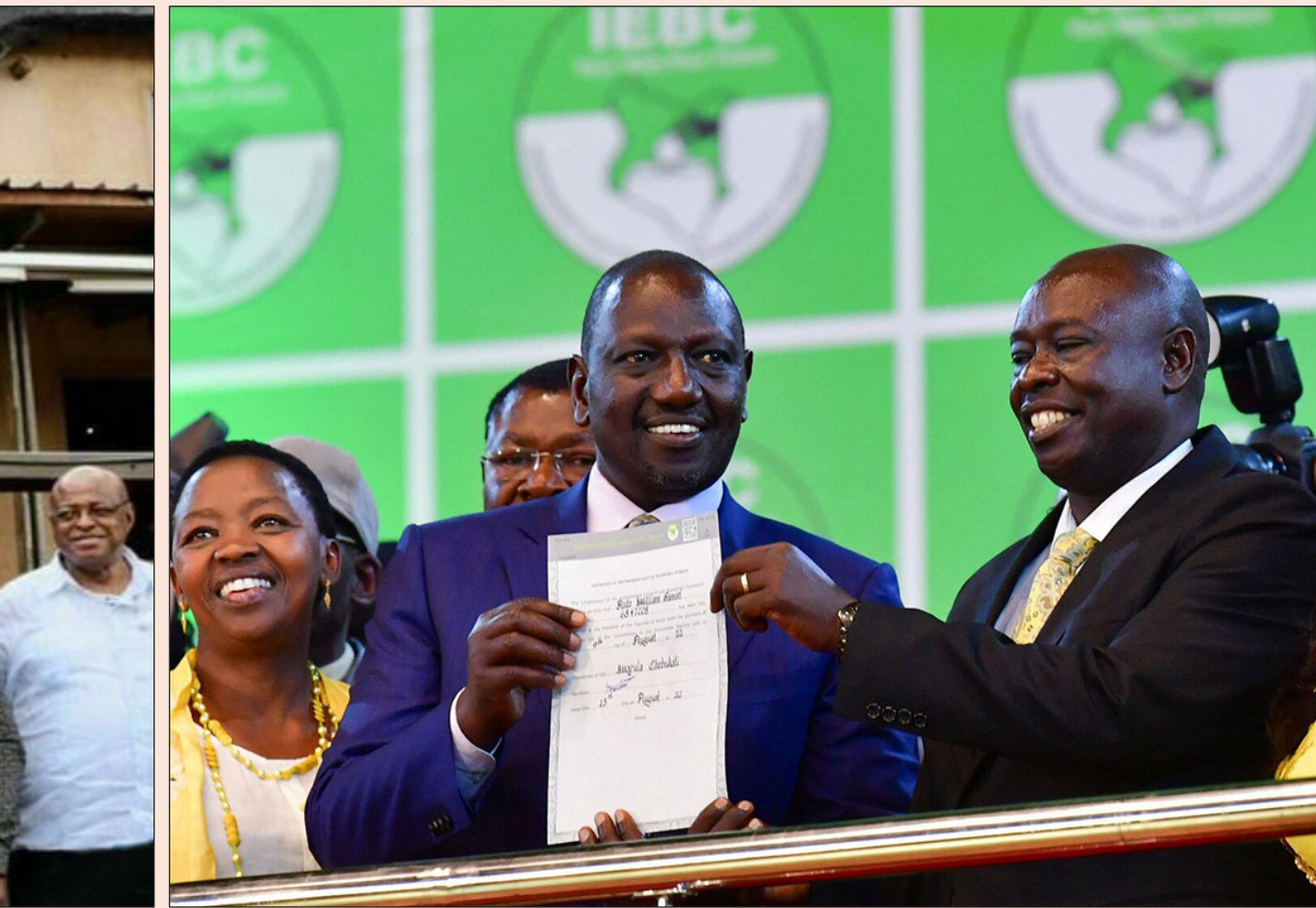
“We have repeatedly warned that the Brenthurst Foundation and their honorary whites in black skins are determined to create a lobby group of African leaders who will pave the way for

further impoverishing Africa by creating a low mining tax regime that would allow finance capital to take over the continent,” Dr M’membe said.

“Having captured the President of Zambia, the Oppenheimers, through the Brenthurst Foundation, are now aggressively pushing for the installation of puppet leaders elsewhere on the continent, such as in Zimbabwe, Uganda, Tanzania and most recently in Kenya.

“This is not to endorse the incumbent leadership in these countries, but to highlight a more central point: that any politician who works with these imperial forces consents to the betrayal of Africa and the pillaging and plundering of its natural resources and wealth.

“The outcome of the Kenyan election shows the African electorate’s growing disdain for presidents who are puppets of transnational corporations, West-



edge. Right: Former Vice-President William Samoei Ruto after being declared winner of Kenya's presidential election following a week-long count

Presidential vote amidst chaos

Karuga, 36, an informal worker in Nairobi. Shadrach Ouma, 33, a doctor and Odinga supporter from Embakasi North, said before the announcement that he would be ready to accept any outcome if won fairly. "The country belongs to all of us, so we'll just continue to coexist peacefully with our neighbours and focus on building the country."

The election was largely peaceful, but analysts said the election officials' move to disown the results may throw the country into an old pattern. Kenya's last three elections have been contested, with a 2017 poll rerun, and a dispute in 2007 leading to deadly post-election violence.

Hunter said: "The sentiment that Raila has been cheated yet again will intensify anger in his Nyanza stronghold and spark protests in the coming days."

The last-minute divide among the electoral officials was unexpected. Trust in the electoral commission had received a significant boost in this election after it made all voter forms publicly available, opening them up to independent counts by the media and the public.

On the back of the events, Odinga may contest the results in court, in what is likely the opposition figure's last bid for the presidency.

If the electoral commission's announcement holds, Ruto will take over the reins of the country at an economically turbulent time. Kenya's inequality has been laid bare by a cost of living crisis that has been fuelled by the COVID pandemic and Russia's war in Ukraine. Rising prices of basic commodities have left many Kenyan households struggling and placed the country's staple maize porridge ugali out of reach for many of the country's poor.

"The incoming president is in an unenviable position," said XN Iraki, a Kenyan economist. Pointing

to some of Ruto's campaign promises, such as a pledge to set up a fund for small businesses, he said, "It is not clear where that money will come from."

Kenya is saddled with public debt of more than 8.5tn shillings (71billion US dollars) and is due to spend more on debt repayments than on recurring expenditure this year. "People have been waiting for the results so that they can get back to work. Kenyans have come to realise that whichever way it goes, they are still on their own," Iraki said.

The UK Guardian

From humble beginnings to the top job

WILLIAM Ruto spent his childhood on a plot of family land down an unpaved, narrow road in a quiet village in the Rift Valley, where he tended cows and helped till the field for maize and cabbage.

But these days, the vice-president of Kenya for close to a decade, wakes up in a giant mansion in a leafy suburb in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, where he holds meetings before flying, as he did on a recent morning, on a helicopter parked close to a covered pool.

His campaign was a repeated appeal to Kenya's "hustlers" – the youthful strivers who find themselves underemployed or unemployed and are itching to better themselves.

Ruto was born in Sambut village, a lush backwater about 12 miles northwest of Eldoret town in Uasin Gishu County. He raised sheep and cows, hunted rabbits with friends and attended

school barefoot. His parents, strict Protestants, who were leaders in the local African Inland Church, shaped his faith, pushing him to regularly participate in church activities and sing in the choir. From early on, Ruto showed his ambition; classmates, neighbours and friends said in interviews. He also stood up for them against bullies from other villages, they said.

"The group that he was in always won the classroom debate," said Esther Cherobon, who was his deskmate for four years. When a teacher threatened to cane the students for not knowing the answer to a maths problem, "William almost always saved us," she said.

Growing up, Ruto pleaded with his parents to give him a small patch of their land to plant maize, his friends said. He sold chickens to make money long after his friends stopped doing so, after finishing high school. During his presiden-

tial run, he tapped into this back story, presenting himself as one of the "hustler" Kenyans born into poverty.

In the late 1980s, he left to study botany and zoology at the University of Nairobi. Friends said they began noticing his focus on politics.

In 1997, he challenged Reuben Chesire for the parliamentary seat of the Eldoret North constituency. Chesire had been a lawmaker, a powerful leader in the ruling party and a political stalwart of then-president Daniel arap Moi. But Ruto took a gamble and rallied his friends to crisscross the constituency on his behalf – and won.

Many of his former classmates hope his win will bring change.

"He sold chickens and lived like us," said his close childhood friend and classmate, Clement Kipkoech Kosgei, "Maybe he will bring change now."

New York Times

President-elect, but with a 'puppets' warning

ern governments, the Brenthurst Foundation and their African collaborators.

"We call on all Africans elsewhere on the continent to emulate Kenyans by rejecting presidential candidates associated with the Oppenheims and the Brenthurst Foundation.

"We urge President Ruto to not fall prey to state capture, be it from the Brenthurst Foundation or other private interests on the state.

"We in Zambia are already paying a high price for voting, last year, for a president who has turned out to be a puppet of the Brenthurst Foundation. They humiliatingly summon him at will to launch their books in foreign countries or to meet him clandestinely and dictate to him certain policy issues.

"Our President has even refused to move to State House to date, as the agents of these same imperial forces would rather

meet him at his private residence anytime they want, away from the eyes of state security officers who can track their visits and the contents of their deliberations.

"More importantly, the puppet President has allowed the puppet masters to influence policy in key sectors of the economy, including by way of giving tax breaks to Western mining firms – to the further impoverishment of our homeland.

"Finally, we call on the new

President of Kenya to take a front seat in the efforts aimed at reviving the spirit of Pan-Africanism created by Africa's Founding Fathers, such as Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta, Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, Senegal's Leopold Senghor, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, Uganda's Milton Obote and South Africa's Oliver Tambo."

Socialist Monthly

'Repent the plunder we allowed West to carry out'

DRC PRESIDENT Félix Tshisekedi has taken the helm of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) during the 42nd Ordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the organization, which was held in Kinshasa on August 17 and 18.

He succeeds Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi.

The outgoing SADC president called upon member countries to be independent of external influence, especially the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"The plunder that we have allowed the West to conduct in the DRC is a sin we must repent on, resolve, and refuse to see repeated anywhere else in our region," said Malawi president Chakwera.

The Kinshasa Summit hosted a dozen SADC Heads of State and reviewed progress in regional integration in line with SADC aspirations, "which envision an industrialised, peaceful, inclusive, competitive, middle to a high-income region where all citizens enjoy sustainable economic well-being".

DRC President Tshisekedi said, "I will be active in implementing programmes to develop infrastructure and services in the region that are directly linked to our main strategies to stimulate economic integration and eradicate poverty in the SADC region."

The Congolese Head of State is also the current president of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

The question of the Rwandan presence on Congolese soil was also raised, knowing that it is Angola (in the name of the CIRGL and the African Union), also a member of SADC, which is leading part of the negotiation between Kinshasa and Kigali.

Mali accuses France of violating airspace

MALI has accused France of violating its airspace and delivering weapons to armed groups, the latest in a barrage of accusations that have strained the relationship between the West African country and the former colonial power.

In a letter to the head of the United Nations Security Council, Mali's foreign affairs minister Abdoulaye Diop said the country's airspace has been breached more than 50 times this year, mostly by French forces using drones, military helicopters and fighter jets.

"These flagrant violations of Mali's airspace were used by France to collect information for terrorist groups operating in the Sahel and to drop arms and ammunition to them," the letter said, according to the news agency Reuters.

"France has obviously never supported, directly or indirectly,



DRC President Félix Tshisekedi

these terrorist groups, which remain its designated enemies across the planet," said the French Embassy in Mali on Twitter.

It said that 53 French soldiers had died during its nine-year mission in Mali and that France had killed hundreds of members of armed groups in order to improve security for Malians.

Bamako has repeatedly accused Paris of attempting to destabilise the country, just as Russian mercenaries hired by the military government expand their reach in the country.

France recently completed the withdrawal of its troops from Mali, ending a nine-year operation in the country at the centre of the Sahel region's spiralling security crisis.

Zimbabwe inflation up to 257 percent

INFLATION in Zimbabwe jumped from 191 percent in June to 257 percent in July, a fast depreciating currency and prolonged water shortages have backed most Harare residents into a corner.

"There is no water coming out of our taps, so our life now is just to pump the borehole daily and carry buckets of water home", resident Christwish Carlos said.

If the roundtrips are tiring, Carlos said his family was lucky as the property they rented had a well and his family could haul up buckets of water to earn extra-money.

Living conditions continue to worsen with the increasing inflation. Many Zimbabweans fear the country is heading back to dark times when it faced world-record inflation of five billion percent in 2008.

"The plight of the ordinary person is such that it is difficult to survive when prices are increasing on a daily basis," economist Prosper Chitambar said.

To prevent a return of the 2008 economic disaster, President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government introduced gold coins as legal tender last month.

The country's central bank, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, said the 22-carat coins would help tame runaway inflation and help stabilise the nation's currency.

The heat's on capitalism as Europe faces drought

Ruling elite prioritises profits over climate crisis measures

Samuel Tissot

A RECORD-breaking drought is devastating Europe, from Britain to the Balkans. More than 60 percent of the European Union and Great Britain faces arid conditions, according to the European Drought Observatory, in what one EU Commission scientist called Europe's worst in 500 years.

Major rivers and lakes are drying up, farmers are facing unprecedented crop failures, and energy supplies are collapsing amid unprecedented heat and lack of rainfall.

The summer of 2022, which broke records for heat, wildfires and now drought in Europe, has made clear the urgent necessity of dealing with global climate change. It has now reached such a vast extent that, without prompt and large-scale action, it will threaten basic functions of society critical to human life, such as the ability to provide water, food, electricity, and safe housing.

This summer's extreme drought was caused by record-low precipitation in Europe this year and successive heatwaves, including the July heatwave that shattered temperature records. Extreme heat and drought also led to record wildfires, with 615,341 hectares burned this year across Europe – the highest-ever figure for mid-August. The drought is disrupting key food and energy supplies, already undermined by the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine, driving prices for essential goods even higher amid the ongoing inflation crisis.

On the Rhine River, barges are carrying goods at 25 percent capacity due to low water levels. Water levels are now at 40 centimetres but are forecast to fall to around 30cm, which may completely halt transport on the river. Such stoppages in 2018 cost the German economy an estimated €5 billion.

Recently, France forced its nuclear power plants, which produce 70 percent of its electricity, to operate at reduced capacity. Releasing high-temperature coolant water into rivers that are at record low levels is an ecological hazard. Amid the ongoing energy crisis, however, the French energy agency now has ordered the plants to return to full capacity, whatever the resulting damage to the environment, including plant and animal life. Of France's 96 mainland departments, 86 are on drought alert. The Loire River, France's second-largest, can be crossed on foot along much of its length.

The water level on the Danube River, Europe's longest, is currently 43 centimetres, the lowest since records began. In Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania, dredging efforts are underway to keep the river navigable for barges, which are crucial for Balkan food and energy supplies. In southern Germany, the river's water temperature exceeded 25°C and is expected to reach 27°C by the end of the month, the same temperature as the Caribbean Sea. Across Europe, fish are threatened by record high water temperatures



Above and below: farmers face massive crop failures with grain production down 30 to 40 percent in Italy and 20 percent in France

and low oxygen content. The entire fish stock of the Conopljankso reservoir in Serbia died after it completely dried up.

The surface of the Oder River, running between Poland and Germany, is now all but covered in dead fish. While Polish officials have contested reports of heavy industrial contamination of the river, it is clear that as the river's water volume has plummeted to record lows, concentrations of industrial pollutants have skyrocketed.

European farmers are facing massive crop failures, with production of key grains down 30 to 40 percent in Italy and nearly 20 percent in France. Spain's olive oil crop, which counts for nearly half of world exports, is expected to be one-quarter of the average produced over the last five years.

Irrigation

In northern Italy's Po Valley, 60 percent of this year's crop has been lost as farmers have been unable to use local rivers for crop irrigation. This has already caused at least €6.2 billion in damage. The region, which produces 30 to 40 percent of Italy's food supply, has seen virtually no rain this year. Near the Po estuary, water levels are so low that salt water from the Adriatic Sea flowed 30 kilometres

upstream, killing crops near the river's banks that had so far survived the drought.

Drinking water supplies are critically low in every city along the Po Valley, including Milan and Turin. Water levels in lakes in the region are also at historical lows, including the popular tourist destination of Lake Garda in northern Italy, which has almost completely dried up.

Even Europe's northernmost and wettest regions are suffering. Low water levels in Norway's reservoirs are reducing its ability to produce hydroelectric power. This has led to warnings that it may have to cut energy exports, further exacerbating the energy crisis caused by NATO threats to refuse to pay for Russian gas, and Russian threats to cut off supplies. Eight UK regions face drought conditions, including the capital, London.

These events point to the urgent necessity of an internationally coordinated campaign to halt and address the consequences of global warming. Trillions of euros must be invested in high technology, key infrastructure, irrigation technology, clean energy generation, food security programmes, and other initiatives to ensure that the globe remains habitable for humanity. Carrying this out requires a direct assault on the capitalist system, and

the wealth and privileges of its corrupt financial aristocracy. Trillions of euros were found overnight amid the stock market crash that followed the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet this wealth went not to eliminate the virus, which has since then claimed over 1.6 million lives in Europe alone, or to fund critical infrastructure investments, but to bail out a tiny elite of wealthy investors who answer to no one.

As with the pandemic, the measures needed to combat global warming are well-known to scientists and government officials alike, but the international institutions of the capitalist nation-state system have failed to organise a coordinated response. Instead, they are plunging deeper into war.

Accords

EU governments are pledging hundreds of billions of euros in military spending increases, preparing to escalate the war NATO is waging on Russia in Ukraine.

The current drought is exposing the much-vaunted 2015 Paris Accords, which seek to limit global warming to 2°C from pre-industrial levels by the end of the century. Extreme weather caused by just 1.2°C of global warming is already catastrophic. Looking at the devasta-

tion in Europe today, one must ask: even if capitalist governments implemented the Paris Accords to the letter, how many of Europe's rivers would run dry, and how much of its farmland would go barren?

The disaster of global warming will continue until a movement is built to stop it in the European and international working class, in opposition to the entire ruling elite. One need only look at the German Greens, supposedly the leading "ecological" party of Europe's political establishment: they are leading the campaign for EU rearmament, while approving a return to the use of highly polluting coal for power generation amid the wartime energy crisis.

Youth and workers seeking to fight global warming must draw the necessary conclusions from the ruling elite's refusal to take action and its suicidal drive towards a new world war. Overcoming these threats to civilisation require ending the anarchic profit system and its replacement with a scientifically planned, socialist global economy. This requires building a mass anti-war and socialist movement in the working class to take the control of world economy out of the hands of the financial aristocracy and subordinate it to social need, not private profit.

wsws.org

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 Chinese perspectives, the *Dongsheng Collective* – researchers from various countries – offers a China digest. This is an edited selection. <https://dongshengnews.org/en>

G20 pledge to Africa

CHANCELLOR Wang Yi has announced that China will support African Union (AU) entry into G20 and will cancel interest-free loan debts of 17 countries on the continent. Wang thanked African support for the One China policy and reaffirmed military, economic, food, and anti-pandemic aid.

South China Morning Post

Lithium partnership

ARGENTINA'S state-owned oil company YPF has signed a deal with China's Tianqi Lithium for lithium exploration and processing. The partnership may include technology transfers to Argentina. China's Gotion High Tech will also build two lithium processing plants with Argentina's state-owned JEMSE.

Télam Digital

Russia trades in yuan

RUSSIA has become the third largest user of yuan behind the UK and Hong Kong, with 4 percent of global payments in July (1.42 percent in June). Sino-Russian trade made in dollars has fallen from 90 percent in 2015 to below 50 percent in 2020. China and Russia realised 24 percent of their bilateral trade in rubles and yuan last year.

Nikkei Asia

Students returning

CHINA has welcomed the return of foreign students engaged in long-term academic study, a major step toward post-pandemic reopening. In 2018, a total of 492,185 students from 196 territories, including South Korea, Thailand, and Pakistan studied in China. More than 140,000 were from South and Southeast Asia.

South China Morning Post

Heatwave takes toll

THE strongest heatwave since China began weather observations in 1961 has impacted power generation and autumn harvests. China has allocated US\$29.5 million for disaster relief funds to help with drought, although experts predict the overall influence on the economy to be limited.

Global Times

Birth rate campaign

CHINA has introduced measures to reverse the country's low birth rate, including encouraging flexible work arrangements and preferential housing policies for families. The new guideline also mandates that single mothers can access maternity benefits. China's fertility rate (1.3) is already one of the lowest in the world (Indonesia 2.3; US 1.6).

South China Morning Post

Web fiction leader

CHINA is the world's largest producer and consumer of web fiction, a US\$4.4 billion industry with around 500 million domestic readers, figures reveal. Wangwen (web literature) has 20 million writers and more than 26 million published titles, reaching almost half of China's online population, and expanding to TV shows, audio dramas, animations, and videogames.

SupChina



We need to have an adult conversation about China

‘A new kind of madness is seeping into global political discourse, a poisonous fog that suffocates reason’

Vijay Prashad

AS THE US legislative leader Nancy Pelosi swept into Taipei, people around the world held their breath. Her visit was regarded as an act of provocation.

In December 1978, the US government – following a United Nations General Assembly decision in 1971 – recognised the People’s Republic of China, setting aside its previous treaty obligations to Taiwan. Despite this, US President Jimmy Carter signed the Taiwan Relations Act (1979), which allowed US officials to maintain intimate contact with Taiwan, including through the sale of weapons. This decision is noteworthy as Taiwan was under martial law from 1949 to 1987, requiring a regular weapons supplier.

Pelosi’s journey to Taipei was part of the US’s ongoing provocation of China. This campaign includes former President Barack Obama’s “pivot to Asia”, former President Donald Trump’s “trade war”, the creation of security partnerships, the Quad and AUKUS, and the gradual transformation of NATO into an instrument against China.

This agenda continues with President Joe Biden’s assessment that China must be weakened since it is the “only competitor potentially capable of combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to mount a sustained challenge” to the US-dominated world system.

China did not use its military power to prevent Pelosi and other US congressional leaders from travelling to Taipei. But, when they left, the Chinese government announced it would halt eight key areas of cooperation with the US, including cancelling military exchanges and suspending civil cooperation on a range of issues, such as climate change. That is what Pelosi’s trip accomplished: more confrontation, less cooperation.

Indeed, anyone who stands for greater cooperation with China is vilified in the Western media as well as in Western-allied me-



dia from the Global South as an “agent” of China or a promoter of “disinformation”. I responded to some of these allegations in South Africa’s Sunday Times on August 7, 2022. The remainder of this newsletter reproduces that article.

A new kind of madness is seeping into global political discourse, a poisonous fog that suffocates reason. This fog, which has long marinated in old, ugly ideas of white supremacy and Western superiority, is clouding our ideas of humanity. The general malady that ensues is a deep suspicion and hatred of China, not just of its current leadership or even the Chinese political system, but hatred of the entire country and of Chinese civilisation – hatred of just about anything to do with China.

Humiliation

This madness has made it impossible to have an adult conversation about China. Words and phrases such as “authoritarian” and “genocide” are thrown around with no care to ascertain facts.

China is a country of 1.4 billion people, an ancient civilisation that suffered, as much of the Global South did, a century of humiliation, in this case from the British-inflicted Opium Wars (which began in 1839) until the 1949 Chinese Revolution, when leader Mao Zedong deliberately announced that the Chinese people had stood up. Since then, Chinese society has been deeply transformed by utilising its social wealth to address the age-old problems of hunger, illiteracy, despondency, and patriarchy.

As with all social experiments, there have been great problems, but these are to be expected from any collective human action. Rather than seeing China for both its successes and contradictions, this madness of our times seeks to reduce China to an Orientalist caricature – an authoritarian state with a genocidal agenda that seeks global domination.



Top: US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi after her arrival in Taiwan in August overlaid with a map of China’s planned exercise areas and a PLA armored vehicle and fighter jet. Above: US President Joe Biden participates in a virtual meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the White House

This madness has a definite point of origin in the United States, whose ruling elites are greatly threatened by the advances of the Chinese people – particularly in robotics, telecommunications, high-speed rail, and computer technology. These advances pose an existential threat to the advantages long enjoyed by Western corporations, who have benefited from centuries of colonialism and the straitjacket of intellectual property laws. Fear of its own fragility and the integration of Europe into Eurasian economic developments have led the West to launch an information war against China.

This ideological tidal wave is overwhelming our ability to have serious, balanced conversations about China’s role in the world. Western countries with a long history of brutal colonialism in Africa, for instance, now regularly decry what they call Chinese colonialism in Africa without any acknowledgment of their own past or the entrenched French and US military presence across the continent.

Accusations of “genocide” are always directed at the darker

peoples of the world – whether in Darfur or in Xinjiang – but never at the US, whose illegal war on Iraq alone resulted in the deaths of over a million people. The International Criminal Court, steeped in Eurocentrism, indicts one African leader after another for crimes against humanity but has never indicted a Western leader for their endless wars of aggression.

Dissent

The fog of this New Cold War is enveloping us today. Recently, in the Daily Maverick and the Mail & Guardian, I was accused of promoting “Chinese and Russian propaganda” and of having close links to the Chinese party-state. What is the basis of these claims?

Firstly, elements in Western intelligence attempt to brand any dissent against the Western assault on China as disinformation and propaganda. For instance, my December 2021 report from Uganda debunked the false claim that a Chinese loan to the country sought to take over its only international airport as part of a malicious “debt

trap project” – a narrative that has also been repeatedly debunked by leading US scholars.

Through conversations with Ugandan government officials and public statements by Minister of Finance Matia Kasaija, I found, however, that the deal was poorly understood by the state but that there was no question of the seizure of Entebbe International Airport. Despite the fact that Bloomberg’s entire story on this loan was built on a lie, they were not tarred with the slur of “carrying water for Washington”. That is the power of the information war.

Secondly, there is a claim about my alleged links to the Chinese Communist Party based on the simple fact that I engage with Chinese intellectuals and have an unpaid post at Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University, a prominent think-tank based in Beijing. Yet, many of the South African publications that have made these outrageous claims are principally funded by George Soros’s Open Society Foundations.

Soros took the name of his foundation from Karl Popper’s

book, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), in which Popper developed the principle of “unlimited tolerance”. Popper argued for maximum dialogue and that opinions against one’s own should be countered “by rational argument”. Where are the rational arguments here, in a smear campaign that says dialogue with Chinese intellectuals is somehow off-limits but conversation with US government officials is perfectly acceptable? What level of civilisational apartheid is being produced here, where liberals in South Africa are promoting a “clash of civilisations” rather than a “dialogue between civilisations”?

Paranoid

Countries in the Global South can learn a great deal from China’s experiments with socialism. Its eradication of extreme poverty during the pandemic – an accomplishment celebrated by the United Nations – can teach us how to tackle similar obstinate facts in our own countries (which is why Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research produced a detailed study about the techniques that China employed to achieve this feat).

No country in the world is perfect, and none is above criticism. But to develop a paranoid attitude towards one country and to attempt to isolate it is socially dangerous. Walls need to be knocked down, not built up.

The US is provoking a conflict due to its own anxieties about China’s economic advances: we should not be drawn in as useful idiots. We need to have an adult conversation about China, not one imposed upon us by powerful interests that are not our own.

● My article in *The Sunday Times* does not address all the issues that swirl around the US-China conflict. However, it is an invitation to a dialogue. If you have any thoughts on these issues, please email me: contact@thetri-continental.org

Energy supplies fuel the fire of discontent with the world order

85% of the population rejects sanctions, most do not want a global NATO

Vijay Prashad

THE FRAGILITY of Europe's energy supply has once again been on display in recent months. Gas shipments through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline, which runs from Russia to Germany, were reduced to 40 percent of capacity in June, a cut that Moscow said was due to delays in the servicing of a turbine by the German firm Siemens.

Shortly thereafter, on July 11, the pipeline was taken offline for ten days for annual routine maintenance. Despite receiving assurances from Moscow that the supply would resume as scheduled, European leaders expressed fears that the shutdown would continue indefinitely in retaliation for sanctions imposed on Russia following the invasion of Ukraine.

On July 21, the flow of Russian gas into Europe resumed. Klaus Müller, the head of Germany's energy regulator, said that gas flows through Nord Stream 1 were below pre-maintenance levels during the first few hours of resumption, though they have now returned to 40 percent capacity.

European anxieties related to energy supply are linked to fears among the region's governments of further instability in the Eurozone. On the same day that Nord Stream 1 resumed operations, Italy's Mario Draghi resigned as prime minister, the latest in a dramatic series of resignations by heads of government in Bulgaria, Estonia, and the United Kingdom. Resistance from Europe to a peace agreement with Russia comes alongside recognition that trade with Russia is inevitable.

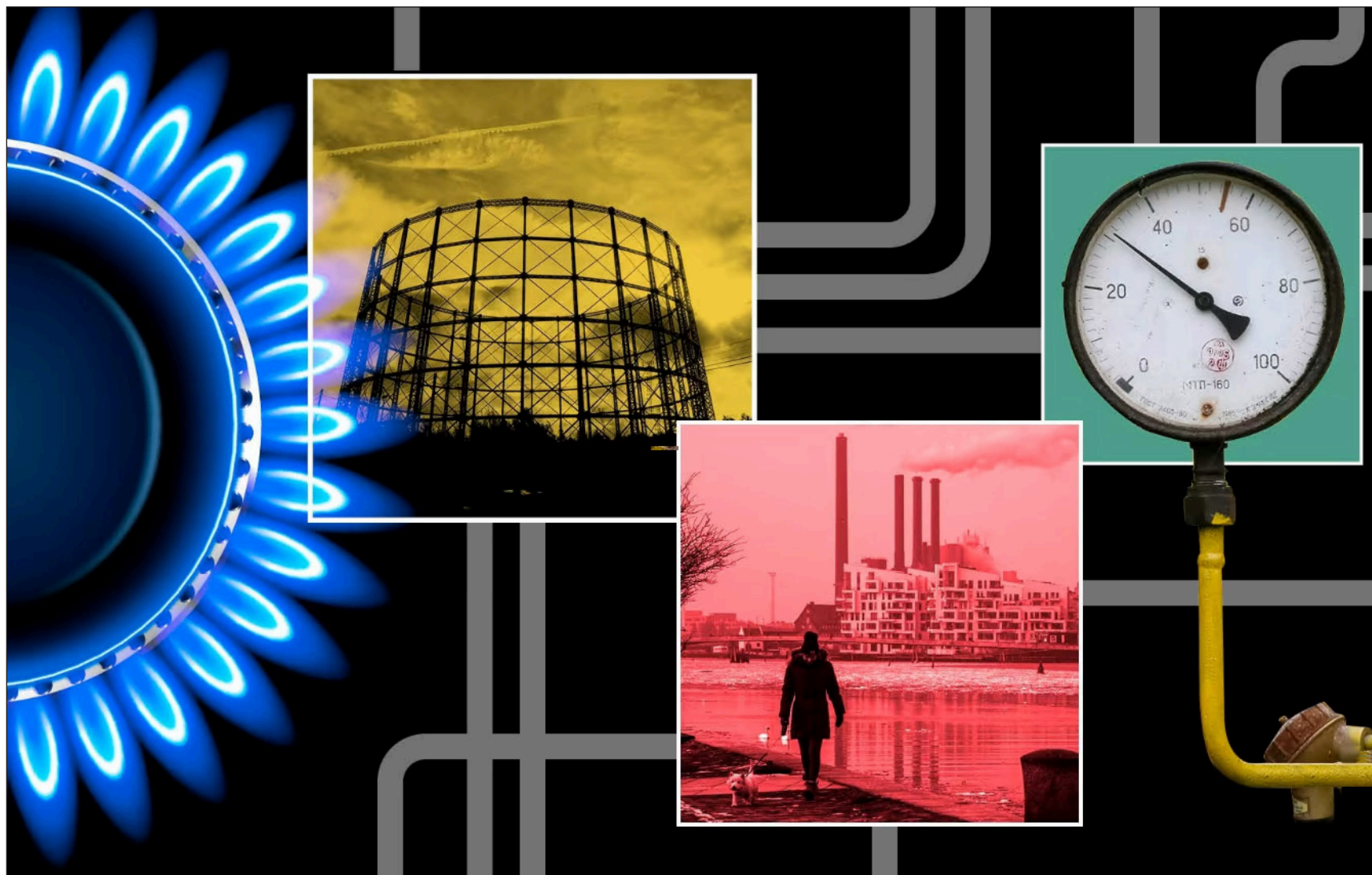
At No Cold War, an international platform seeking to bring sanity to international relations, we have been closely observing the shifting tenor of the war in Ukraine and the US-driven pressure campaign against China. We have now published four briefings from this platform in our newsletters.

Clarity

The latest, reproduced below – The World Does Not Want a Global NATO – shows the emerging clarity in the Global South regarding the US-European attempt to drive a belligerent agenda around the world. This new clarity relates not only to the militarisation of the planet, but also to the deepening conflicts in trade and development, as evidenced by the G7's new initiative, the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Development, which clearly targets China's Belt and Road Initiative.

The World Does Not Want a Global NATO

In June, member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) gathered in Madrid, Spain, for their annual summit. At the meeting, NATO adopted a new Strategic Concept, which had last been updated in 2010. In it, NATO named Russia as its "most significant and direct threat" and singled



out China as a "challenge [to] our interests". In the words of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, this guiding document represents a "fundamental shift" for the military alliance, its "biggest overhaul . . . since the Cold War".

Although NATO purports to be a "defensive" alliance, this claim is contradicted by its destructive legacy – such as in Serbia (1999), Afghanistan (2001), and Libya (2011) – and its ever-expanding global footprint. At the summit, NATO made it clear that it intends to continue its global expansion to confront Russia and China.

Seemingly oblivious to the immense human suffering produced by the war in Ukraine, NATO declared that its "enlargement has been a historic success . . . and contributed to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area", and extended official membership invitations to Finland and Sweden.

However, NATO's sights extend far beyond the "Euro-Atlantic" to the Global South. Seeking to gain a foothold in Asia, NATO welcomed Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand as summit participants for the first time and stated "the Indo-Pacific is important for NATO". On top of this, echoing the Monroe Doctrine (1823) of 200 years ago, the Strategic Concept named "Africa and the Middle East" as "NATO's southern neighbourhood", and Stoltenberg made an ominous reference to "Russia and China's increasing influence in [the Alliance's] southern neighbourhood" as presenting a "challenge".

Although NATO's member states may believe that they possess global authority, the overwhelming majority of the world does not. The international response to the war in Ukraine indicates that a stark divide exists between the United

States and its closest allies on the one hand, and the Global South on the other.

Governments representing 6.7 billion people – 85 percent of the world's population – have refused to follow sanctions imposed by the US and its allies against Russia, while countries representing only 15 percent of the world's population have followed these measures.

Isolate

According to Reuters, the only non-Western governments to have enacted sanctions on Russia are Japan, South Korea, the Bahamas, and Taiwan – all of which host US military bases or personnel.

There is even less support for the push to close airspace to Russian planes spearheaded by the US and European Union. Governments representing only 12 percent of the world's population have ad-

opted this policy, while 88 percent have not.

US-led efforts to politically isolate Russia on the international stage have been unsuccessful. In March, the UN General Assembly voted on a nonbinding resolution to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine: 141 countries voted in favour, five countries voted against, 35 countries abstained, and 12 countries were absent.

However, this tally does not tell the full story. The countries that either voted against the resolution, abstained, or were absent represent 59 percent of the world's population.

Following this, the Biden administration's call for Russia to be excluded from the G20 summit in Indonesia was ignored.

Meanwhile, despite intense backing from NATO, efforts to win support for Ukraine in the Global South have been a complete failure.

On June 20, after several requests, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addressed the African Union; only two heads of state of the continental organisation's 55 members attended the meeting. Shortly thereafter, Zelensky's request to address the Latin American trade bloc, Mercosur, was rejected.

It is clear that NATO's claim to be "a bulwark of the rules-based international order" is not a view shared by most of the world. Support for the military alliance's policies is almost entirely confined to its member countries and a handful of allies that together constitute a small minority of the world's population.

Most of the world's population rejects NATO's policies and global aspirations and does not wish to divide the international community into outdated Cold War blocs.

Tricontinental

Oil profits soar while families fall deeper into debt

AS WORKING class families the world over struggle to afford basic necessities amid historic inflation, driven by the pandemic and the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, the world's largest multinational oil corporations are

The six major multinational oil giants – ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, BP, TotalEnergies and Eni – recently reported combined profits of more than US\$64 billion in the second quarter alone. The orgy of profiteering is not limited to the six major oil companies. The smaller US companies Valero, Phillips 66 and Hess posted a huge combined quarterly profit of US\$8.62 billion.

In total, these nine companies reported in excess of US\$72 billion in profits over three months. The oil companies, by and large, have refused to increase production, driving gas prices in the United States

earlier this summer to an average US\$5 a gallon and siphoning billions from working class families into their coffers. While the price of a gallon of gas has dipped somewhat in the last month to a nationwide average of US\$4.19 a gallon, this is still over a dollar more than the US\$3.17 recorded at this same time last year.

Every day during this period, the oil companies made US\$800 million in profit, or about US\$33.3 million an hour.

An analysis by the Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC), an environmental lobbying group that tracks the profits of the 15 largest oil and gas companies in the United States, found that compared with the same period in 2021, oil company profits grew "a staggering 242 percent".

The largest private oil company in the United States, ExxonMobil, reported a second-quarter profit of nearly US\$17.9

billion, which represents a year-to-year increase of 226 percent, according to the NRDC. Overall, ExxonMobil has reported more than US\$23.3 billion in profits this year alone. Chevron reported a second-quarter profit of US\$11.62 billion, a 277 percent year increase from a year ago. The United Steelworkers union played a key role in the company's massive profit increase through its isolation and betrayal of UK-based Shell reported a second-quarter profit of US\$17.85 billion, a 107 percent increase from last year, bringing this year's total profits to date to over \$20 billion.

The profit figures exceeded Wall Street expectations and left investors and oil billionaires salivating at the prospect of stock buybacks and increased dividend payments. Instead of using their ill-gotten profits to hire more workers, increase

wages or invest in new technologies to improve safety and combat the impact of climate change, all of the oil companies announced a new round of stock buybacks.

While the portfolios of major oil company shareholders are booming, families are falling deeper into debt, unable to keep up with record cost-of-living increases.

The US-NATO war against Russia underscores the necessity for the working class to take possession not only of fuel, but also of food, medicine and all the other essentials of modern life to use for the betterment of all of humanity, not the enrichment of privileged idle few.

This means a conscious and united fight by the working class to put an end to the profit system and reorganise economic life on socialist foundations.

wsws.org



Left: French President Emmanuel Macron greets Guinea-Bissau's President Umaro Sissoco Embalo. Right: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov with his Ethiopian counterpart Demeke Mekonnen

Battle for African hearts and minds over the Ukraine war

Chris Muronzi

Europe preaches and takes the moral high ground, Russia accepts leaders' decisions

SOON after landing in Yaoundé, the capital of Cameroon, French President Emmanuel Macron made sure his views on the war in Ukraine were known and that his presence on the continent was felt.

While Europe and the West have characterised Russia's military offensive in Ukraine as a war, African leaders are being far more cautious in their description of the conflict and remain neutral on the subject.

That impartiality is problematic for Macron, who also visited Benin and Guinea-Bissau during his recent visit.

"I have seen too much hypocrisy, particularly on the African continent," Macron announced as he began his three-nation tour.

"And – I'm saying this very calmly – with some not calling it a war when it is one and saying they don't know who started it because they have diplomatic pressures."

Macron was not the only high-profile visitor to Africa that week.

In East Africa, Uganda laid out the red carpet for Russia's foreign minister Sergey Lavrov, who was on a four-nation tour to win the continent's support over to Moscow's war on Ukraine.

Lavrov seemed determined to outwit Macron in a battle for the hearts and minds of African leaders.

Where Macron was preachy and took the high moral ground on the position of African leaders and the war in Ukraine, Lavrov embraced his hosts and counterparts and did not question their ethical compass.

"We appreciate the considered African position as to the situation in and around Ukraine," Lavrov wrote in a newspaper column published in Egypt, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda and Ethiopia, the four countries he toured during his visit.

"Although unprecedented by its scale, the pressure from beyond has not brought our friends to join the anti-Russian sanctions. Such an independent path deserves deep respect," he added.

Lavrov's strategy worked won-

ders. When he finished his meeting with Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the African leader praised Russia, describing Moscow as a "partner" in the struggle against colonialism going back a century.

"If Russia makes mistakes, then we tell them," Museveni said, referring to his own participation in student demonstrations against the Soviet Union's crushing of the Prague Spring in 1968. "We don't believe in being enemies of somebody's enemy," he added.

Museveni has in the past enjoyed cordial relations with the West, and Uganda is set to assume the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement, a global body formed during the Cold War era by states seeking to avoid the geopolitical polarisation at that time.

Museveni is not the only African leader the Russians appear to have won over. Even countries Lavrov did not include in his recent visit are rooting for Moscow.

Comrade

Zimbabwe, which has frosty diplomatic relations with the West, is in Russia's corner on the issue of Ukraine. This is most apparent in state media coverage of the Ukraine conflict.

The Herald, a state-run daily, takes its cue from Moscow's description of the war by describing Russia's attack on Ukraine as a "special military operation".

Zimbabwe's ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (Zanu PF), enjoys historic relations with Russia dating back to the 1960s when the party was fighting for independence from Britain. To this day, Zanu PF officials address each other as "comrade", a term state media in the country reserves for top government and Zanu PF officials.

South Africa also seems to be on the Kremlin's side. Like Zimbabwe's Zanu PF, the ruling African National Congress (ANC), has a

long-established relationship with Russia that dates back to the country's struggle against apartheid.

Russia provided military support and training for a number of nationalist forces on the continent during the period of decolonisation.

African support for Russia was illustrated in March at the UN General Assembly, when 17 out of Africa's 54 nations abstained from voting on the war. The African contingent amounted to half of all abstentions recorded in the vote.

As a consequence of the Ukraine war, Africa has found itself bearing the brunt of food shortages and increased food prices as global-supply chains remain disrupted.

The West has blamed the crisis on Russia, accusing Moscow of deliberately "exporting hunger". That is a characterisation that Lavrov is fighting to change, blaming the disruption to food supplies on the sanctioning of Russia and the "absolutely inadequate reaction of the West".

The threat of Russian colonialism is also being played up by Macron in a continent that for decades struggled under the yoke of European colonisation.

According to Macron, Russia's aggression in Ukraine is similar in character to conflicts of the "20th, even the 19th century".

"It's a territorial war, the likes of

which we thought had disappeared from European soil," Macron said. "Russia is one of the last imperial colonial powers." For the old guard of nationalist African leaders who experienced segregation and the evils of colonial rule, such claims may hold sway.

Western diplomats also warn that it is not just the blatant invasion of Ukraine that should worry African leaders. They point to the role of Russia's Wagner Group – a private military contractor operating on the continent that they see as an increasing cause for concern. The West believes that the Wagner Group, which stands accused of human rights abuses, is controlled by the Kremlin.

Despite this, Russia is still influential in Africa and that is why Macron and other Western leaders are spooked.

Ronald Chipaike, a lecturer in peace and governance at the Bindura University in Zimbabwe, said Lavrov's visit was designed "to cement relations that have historically been premised on an anti-imperialism axis since the days of the Cold War."

Stephen Chan, a professor of world politics at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, said the visits by Macron and Lavrov demonstrated the increased need to woo Africa

at a time of growing global tension and a potential "new Cold War".

"These (countries) are opening diplomatic overtures at the start of what looks likely to be a new Cold War," Chan said via email. The West now realises that African support will come in handy at some stage, he said.

"France, Russia, the US and China are all courting African countries, both for diplomatic support in organs like the UN, but also as economic and political allies and partners. But there is a limit to this first stage," Chan said.

Chan believes the recent diplomatic developments are part of efforts to set the stage for the "second and third stages" of a "rivalry from which Africa can benefit if it plays its cards astutely and does not rush towards the first courtier with what seems like a 'good deal'".

The race to win over Africa is becoming more heated by the day. Even the United States, which for years appeared uninterested in sub-Saharan Africa, has joined the diplomatic fray.

Vision

Antony Blinken, the US secretary of state, has now visited South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. During his three-country trip he appealed to "governments, communities and peoples" across the continent to embrace Washington's vision of democracy, openness and economic partnership.

The tour was seen as an attempt by the US to limit Russia and China's influence on the continent, but Blinken insisted that Washington does not see Africa as the "latest playing field in a competition between great powers".

The US is not "trying to outdo anyone else. This is not our demand or insistence on democracy, it's what people in Africa want, it's clear in poll after poll, they want openness, they want it on an individual basis, as communities, and

to choose their own path [as nations]," Blinken said in Pretoria.

China, on the other hand, does not care much for human rights and democracy in Africa. Beijing has opted to work with Africa's strongman leaders and offers assistance without criticism or calls for reforms. This approach has augured well with some governments, such as Zimbabwe.

Lavrov did not pledge financial assistance during his visit, while Washington promised a total of US\$1.3bn to ameliorate the effects of hunger on the continent. France also promised to help with its French-led Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission initiative to help African agriculture. A Russia-Africa summit is scheduled for October in Ethiopia and it remains to be seen what it will bring in terms of aid.

"What we can draw from all this is that the Cold War never really ended. It has just been presenting itself in a different way over the years," Bindura University's Chipaike said. "There are just more players now than there were during the bipolar political order of the Cold War," he added.

Piers Pigou, the International Crisis Group's senior consultant for Southern Africa, said there is increased interest in the continent from "a growing number of actors vying for market share of the African economy", including the European Union, a post-Brexit United Kingdom, and "France trying to resuscitate its Francophone relations". This competition presents opportunities for Africa if handled skilfully, Pigou said.

Africa should avoid being pushed into partisan political alignments, especially when several countries are pursuing a non-aligned position with "various degrees of sophistication with respect to its messaging and public reasoning".

Kenya has articulated that non-aligned position very well, Pigou said, while South Africa has been more muted. "There is increased realisation from international powers of the need to pay more attention to Africa. And this has accelerated an already growing competition for engagement that we have seen," he said.

Al Jazeera



Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni: praised Russia



THIS IS HOW WE WILL MOBILISE FOR OUR FUTURE

OUR nation's future, the solutions to its problems, cannot continue to depend on the selfish interests of a few people with money, nor on the cold calculations of profits that a few businessmen draw up.

The country cannot continue begging on its knees for miracles from a few golden calves, like the Biblical one destroyed by the prophet's fury. Golden calves cannot perform miracles of any kind. Our country cannot continue begging for IMF deals; these deals

have never worked for us. The problems of our country can be solved only if we dedicate ourselves to fight for it with the same energy, honesty and patriotism our freedom fighters had when they founded it.

The trickle-down economic policies coming out of the mouths of our opponents will simply preserve the status quo and will not solve these problems. In this present-day world, social problems are not solved by spontaneous generation.

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It will mobilise all inactive capital and submit this mammoth task to experts and men and women of absolute competence – people who are totally removed from all political machines – for study, direction, planning and realisation.

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