

# IMF... there is no future in the past

**\$1.3b deal will end in tears, it is just a matter of time**

**Fred M'membe**  
Socialist Party President

THOSE in power are making a lot of noise about the US\$1.3 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. They can sing hymns of self-praise for securing the bailout and attempt to drive out any reasonable voice that warns about the adverse consequences of the deal.

But it is just a matter of time before Zambians realise that there is no future in the past.

We have been on this route before and it has not worked for us. It is not the first time Zambia has gone to the IMF. UNIP under president Kenneth Kaunda went to the IMF in the 1980s, although KK was quick to abandon the Bretton Woods institution after they failed to answer his famous question, "Are you able to design a programme that will not require me to kill my own people?"

The MMD under Frederick Chiluba went to the IMF in the 1990s. The MMD under Levy Mwanawasa went to the IMF in the early 2000s. Where have all these previous IMF deals left Zambia? In a terrible place. If anything, they

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Socialist Party President Fred M'membe, centre, with first vice-president and general secretary Cosmas Musheke Musumali, left, and national council management committee member and party spokesperson Frank Bwalya

## AFRICOM office will kill democracy

WHEN the strongest army in the world sets up in your territory, you can no longer maintain your independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

Speaking at a press conference at the party secretariat, Dr M'membe said the setting up of an AFRICOM office in Lusaka was facilitated by "sell-outs and puppets" as leaders.

He charged that President Hakainde Hichilema was allowing what six previous republican presidents had rejected.

The move, he said, called for all well-meaning Zambians to rise up and create a gigantic movement, which no imperialist force could destroy. The US had come to take away the country's honour and sovereignty.

"The US military have made it clear that their presence is to protect American

interests, but you may wish to know that American interests are not our interests. The interest of imperialists can never be our interests. Where were they when we were fighting for our independence?" he asked.

Dr M'membe said allowing the US military to set up an office or installations in the country was a danger to democracy. This was because the Americans would never allow a political party that opposed its agenda to rule the country.

He cited Patrice Lumumba of Zaire, Samora Machel of Mozambique and Abdel Gamal Nasser of Egypt as some of the leaders the imperialists had disliked and toppled.

"We can say it is not a military base they are setting up, but look at what is happening to Ghana today.

"The Americans would not allow a political party that opposed their stay to come

into government. This kills democracy," Dr M'membe said.

He said the presence of the US military in any country destabilised it and that there had not been peace in any country it had entered.

"This is what our government is bringing to us, to threaten our peace. A country that is a colony can never develop. They have destroyed Libya, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, we know they are supporting separation forces in Ethiopia," he said.

Dr M'membe called upon citizens to defend the independence and sovereignty of the country. "This calls for cooperation, solidarity, humility. The issues we are talking about are not small ones. These are issues that give us an identity.

"We make a clarion call to all citizens and democrats to work side by side with us and defend our dignity and existence," he said.



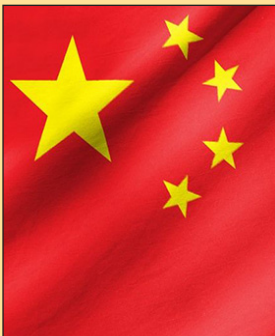
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# Wheels of political power are killing ECZ

## Musumali: interference is an act of revenge

Socialist staff reporter

THE ELECTORAL Commission of Zambia (ECZ) was working within the “political wheels of power” when it ruled that Bowman Lusambo and Joseph Malanji could not contest elections in Kabushi and Kwacha, Socialist Party first vice-president and general secretary Cosmas Musheke Musumali has said.

Speaking on HOT FM Zambia’s *Hot Seat* programme following a ruling by the Constitutional Court that overturned the decisions, Dr Musumali accused the government of political interference in the electoral process.

“ECZ rushed to make a decision and it’s a tricky situation that we find ourselves in. What is the ECZ going to do now? The ConCourt is saying, the situation as it stands, there was no fairness in it. So what is going to be the response of the ECZ?” Dr Musumali asked.

“What is killing the ECZ is the political interference and we suspect, in these hurriedly made decisions, a tragic decision that was made . . . they were working under political interference.”

### Flimsy

Dr Musumali said the ECZ decision was obviously rushed and made on flimsy grounds, citing the “grade 12 certificate” argument against Malanji as a case in point.

“The issue (for Malanji’s case) was not the grade 12 certificate, but that is the one that was brought up. And it was brought up in a way that it even caught his lawyers by surprise. If that was the issue, Malanji would have been given time to bring the certificate and show it to the court.”

He accused the UPND government of taking revenge against the ECZ for the way it had been treated in the past.

“The UPND suffered a lot due to some of the decisions made by the ECZ, but you don’t take revenge. You don’t come to power with anger. That anger, because you don’t like the people at the ECZ or as an institution, there was a need to start a dialogue, to start getting the people at the ECZ to work a certain way. Political interference makes professionalism impossible, and that is what we are seeing in the ECZ.

“We shouldn’t throw away the ECZ, because we need it, but what we need is to improve the professionalism. What is killing the ECZ is political interference.”

Dr Musumali said the decisions over Lusambo and Malanji would have been different if the Commission was professional.

“We have always as the Socialist Party raised issues against some of the decisions of the ECZ. The ECZ is an important institution in our democratic process and we want it to function in a professional way. In the past, we have made our reservations known. What was going wrong with the ECZ. But the ECZ has been an institution that we have had a dialogue with, we have supported some of its decisions,” he said.

Dr Musumali said the Socialist Party supported efforts to modernise the ECZ, although he noted that it had been at “half capacity” recently.

“When you talk about the digitisation of voting and electoral voting, we are behind it. The idea of getting people in prisons to go and vote, we supported that. The thinking that even Zambians in the diaspora can actually vote in 2026, we are for that, we are behind it. So there are some new innovations of the ECZ that we support.”

But said due to chief electoral officer Patrick Nshindano leaving and chairperson Esau Chulu’s contract not being renewed, the ECZ was now functioning at half capacity.



## Matero women’s league soap students graduate

TWENTY Socialist Party Women’s League coordinators from Matero Constituency (pictured) have graduated from a recent soap-making programme.

The project, run in conjunction with Brazil’s Landless Workers’ Movement (MST), aims to empower women with skills for their livelihoods, and the graduates are now ready to go on and help other women in various wards of the constituency.

The soap-making project is part of a programme aiming at training women across all ten provinces to make a range of products from natural herbs as part of an income-generating programme.

Women’s league internal communication coordinator Mable Tubaaka said the Socialist Party was grateful to MST for its help with the programme.

“The party will continue to support women with similar income generating activities as a way of helping to eradicate the poverty that has always been a hindrance to them taking up key leadership positions, and forcing them to shun politics because of financial challenges,” she said.



## Abductions a sign of crisis over violence to women

THERE is relief that Pamela Chisumpa, who was abducted in April this year, has finally been rescued together with 13 others, Socialist Party President Fred M’membe said.

But he added that the relief was accompanied by very sad feelings about and reflections on the pain and humiliation they had endured.

“These violent acts have a long-lasting impact. For the families and those abducted, captivity always causes trauma as they often witness or experience humiliation, threats and, in some cases, violence,” he said.

“With growing inequality, unemployment and general economic difficulties, we should brace ourselves for more and more criminal activities of this nature.

“Pamela and the other young ladies need a lot of help to stabilise

themselves psychologically, socially and otherwise.”

Socialist Party central committee and women’s league member Barbra Maramwidze said the abduction and trafficking of the 13 was a symptom of a deepening crisis involving violence against women in Zambia.

“The trafficking of women must be condemned and prevented. It is a serious violation of women’s rights and indicative of a deepening crisis and growing crimes against women in this country.

“There is an urgent need for collective leadership at all levels of society to begin to address these social ills against our women.

“We believe the country can and should draw vital lessons from this case and begin to exercise more vigilance about what is happening around us,” she said.

## From ‘fix it’ to mock it, how UPND deals with its cost-of-living critics

THE under-performing and no-direction UPND party has changed its slogan from “Bally will fix it” to “fimba upoke”, Socialist Party national council management committee member and spokesperson Frank Bwalya says.

“In Bemba land, this slogan is meant to mock anyone who is dissatisfied with something,” he said.

“In short, what this failed party and government is saying is that whoever is complaining about the cost of living and other grievances, “ba fimbe bapoke”.

“But why use such a slogan when so many things have gone wrong in the country since they took over power?”

● Mobile money booths were destroyed on the pretext of cleaning the city and promises of relocation. That has not happened.

● Fertiliser was going to be reduced to K250 from K700. Is that the status today?

● Middlemen and women were to be removed from the procurement of fuel in order to reduce the pump price from the then K17 per litre to as low as K5. This has not been delivered.

● Mealie price was to be reduced from the then K90 per 25Kg bag to K50 or below. How much is mealie meal today?

● Electricity was to be affordable even for the poor and vulnerable. But the connection fee has sky-

rocketed since the UPND assumed power.

● They promised not to give government business to relatives and friends. This has been swept under the carpet hence what we are seeing today at Zesco, Lusaka Water, the Road Development Agency, State House, and many government and quasi-government institutions.

● They pledged to stop single-sourcing and awarding contracts to ruling party cadres. But how was Mr Jangulo awarded the contract to supply fertiliser for the 2022 to 2023 farming season? And why was he paid in full before he supplied it?

● There was to be an end to tribal appointments, but what we see today is the opposite of that when it comes to major government positions.

“Therefore, our biggest question is: could these be the reasons the UPND has adopted the “fimba upoke” slogan?

“We all know that the UPND has failed to live up to the promises it made prior to the August 12, 2021, general election, but mocking Zambians by telling them “fimba upoke” when they express unhappiness with its leadership is notorious arrogance.

“Let the UPND face the people with humility and apologise for failing to fulfil the promises they made,” Bwalya said.

## SP ON THE MOVE

### Frank talking from Bwalya

FRANK Bwalya has been appointed Socialist Party spokesperson.

He will perform the new role in addition to being chairperson of the mobilisation sub-committee of the party’s national council management committee.

The party wishes him well in the new appointment.

### Tubaaka graduates

THE Socialist Party has congratulated youth league member Mable Tubaaka on her graduation.

Tubaaka said, “It takes selfless individuals to go an extra mile to sponsor young people who don’t have the means to achieve their goals and dreams.

“A million thanks to you comrade Fred M’membe for helping me fulfil my dream of becoming a nurse. I will never thank you enough as this has greatly changed my life for the better.

“You are not only a father to your biological children, but you have been a great dad to many of us who are fatherless. Long live comrade Dr M’membe.”

### Congratulations . . .

THE Socialist Party has congratulated the following comrades on their new appointments in North Western Province:

Danny Mikosa, chairman; Geoffrey Chikote, vice-secretary; Steven Likuwa, youth chairperson; Danny Mulungisha, vice-information and publicity secretary.

The party has also congratulated Kelvin Chikwata on his appointment as Southern Province chairperson, and former ECL Copperbelt solidarity mobilisation secretary Lawrence Kalibuku as Ndola district youth chairperson.



Mable Tubaaka



# Foreign policy is being shaped by right-wing Brenthurst Foundation

## We must no longer be Oppenheimers’ puppets

Socialist staff reporter

TOO MANY important things in our country today are being dictated by the thinking of Anglo’s Brenthurst Foundation and its head Gregg Mills, Socialist Party President Fred M’membe says.

“They are shaping our foreign policy. The Brenthurst Foundation is not purely a business or economic foundation, it is a political organisation advancing a right-wing capitalist agenda,” he said.

“And this comes out very clearly on the Ukraine conflict. The writings of Mills and the activities of Brenthurst Foundation are very revealing and are there on the internet for all to see.”

Dr M’membe said it was “a great embarrassment” to have our foreign policy influenced and shaped by Mills and the Brenthurst Foundation.

“Surely, we should not be ruled by Anglo and the Oppenheimers in the 21st century. They did that in the 19th and 20th centuries, but they shouldn’t be allowed to continue it in the 21st century.

“Hakainde Hichilema, his party and government must see that to understand the international situation they need to have a correct view of history, of the overall picture, and of where our country is today.

“Having a correct view of history means they should not only observe the international situation as it stands currently, but also look back to the past to summarise history’s laws and, in looking forward to the future, identify the trends of history,” Dr M’membe said.

### Complex

“Having a correct view of the overall picture means they should not only pay attention to phenomena and the finer details, but also have an understanding of the essential nature and overarching situation. They need to identify the principal contradictions, so that, amid a complex and volatile international situation, they don’t lose their way or become bogged down in the details at the expense of the essentials.

“In terms of having a correct outlook on Zambia’s position, they should not only conduct a cool-headed analysis of international issues but also examine Zambia’s position in relation to these issues, in order to identify Zambia’s status and role in the evolving international landscape and formulate sound foreign policy.

“History has shown that the world has always developed as a result of contradictions intertwining and interacting with each other. They need to analyse in depth the laws that govern the international environment when the world is in a period of transition, correctly understand the basic features of the global environment at this historical juncture, and fully plan and carry out diplomatic work accordingly.

“We can’t continue to be governed by the Oppenheimers in the 21st

century. We can’t be their puppets forever. Things must change,” he said.

Dr M’membe has in the past criticised President Hichilema for his close relationship with the Brenthurst Foundation, especially when he conferred The Order of The Eagle of Zambia’s 1st Division on former Liberian president Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, former Nigerian president General Olusegun Obasanjo, and former Sierra Leone president Ernest Bai Koroma.

“The President said the former heads of state were honoured for their contribution to the growth of democracy. He said the three leaders had distinguished themselves in their own countries, on the African continent and beyond, for their unrelenting efforts to establish and promote democracy and good governance, as a precursor to improving the livelihoods of their people and other Africans. This is not true because it was not a correct and true reflection of those former presidents in their own countries. Their people look at them differently.”

Dr M’membe said the honours were not Zambian state awards but the President’s personal ones to his Brenthurst Foundation associates.

“The President abused his position to reward his associates for his personal benefit. And this is not the first time he is abusing this authority. Previously he conferred medals on UPND cadres. Now he has done it for his three foreign backers from the Brenthurst Foundation. It is not done like that anywhere.

“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.”



## Where there are wheels there’s a way

THE Socialist Party is really going places in the Copperbelt . . . on two wheels!

For Mpungwe, Masaiti and Lufwanyama districts have been issued with motorcycles (above) to boost their mobilisation programmes.

Thanking the party, Lufwanyama district chairperson Frank Chali, who spoke on behalf of the three districts, commended it and President Fred M’membe for “empowering the party machinery at grassroots level”, a development he said would go a long way towards transforming the area from capitalism to socialism.

Copperbelt provincial treasurer Brian Chirambo cautioned party officials to look after the motorcycles and make sure they are used for their intended purpose.

Speaking during the handover at the party secretariat, Copperbelt provincial secretary Henry Chilombo congratulated the districts on their new transportation.

Chilombo described Dr M’membe as, “the only credible and visionary leader who believes in equity as a way of delivering services to all Zambians”.

## If you violate people’s rights you run the risk of being ‘evaluated’ in 2026

IT DOESN’T matter how many roads you build or how strong the Kwacha is, when you violate people’s rights you run the risk of being removed, the Socialist Party’s Frank Bwalya told radio listeners.

Speaking on Millennium Radio’s *The Interview* programme, the member of SP’s national council management committee – and now party spokesperson – said political violence in Kabushi was an example of such a violation.

Bwalya said the kind of cadrism and violence seen in Kabushi the night before and following a visit by the vice-president “as if to create the impression that she brought money or told cadres to say ‘no you are too soft’,” led the Zambian people to be unhappy.

“Mulechitako so ifyo balechita abanenu kunuma . . . the Zambian people are not happy,” he said.

“The dollar may come to K1 to a US dollar, but when you are violating people’s rights, when you are corrupt, when you are engaging in the selective prosecution of people perceived to be corrupt, Zambians will remove you,” he said. “And UPND should not cheat themselves, let them tell the President.”

Bwalya said Zambians could not be intimidated because they knew President Hakainde Hichilema to be their employee.

“They will not intimidate anybody. Zambians know this is their country. They know President Hichilema is there temporarily because they

gave him his appointment letter after he applied for the job,” he said.

“Balemusha, balepela bambi inchito. Bapelako ba Rupiah Banda, nashala mu line, bapelako ba Sata, still in the line, bapelako ba Lungu still in the line. Zambians know he is their employee.”

He said the appointment letter Zambians gave the Head of State was “not in perpetuity”.

“In 2026, the Zambian people are going to do the final evaluation. I am calling it the final evaluation because even as we are speaking they are evaluating the President’s performance,” Bwalya said.

“They will give him the final evaluation and they will speak. No one in the UPND should cheat himself or herself that things are right. Things are not well. It is their responsibility – the people at their secretariat, state institutions, the OP and so on – it is their responsibility to alert the President that things are not well.”

● THE detention of Patriots for Economic Progress party president Sean Tembo was an “illegal attempt to muzzle citizens from expressing themselves”, Frank Bwalya has said.

Bwalya told Millennium Radio’s listeners that President Hakainde Hichilema had a duty to defend the Constitution by upholding and protecting freedom of expression.

“I am tempted to think that Hichilema does not believe in what he read in his inaugural speech,” Bwalya told listeners.

“Zeroing in on the case of our friend Sean

Tembo, the detention was an illegality, and the police should be ashamed. It was an abuse of power, and when the police abuse power, the back ends at the President’s desk. It is the President who is responsible,” he said.

Bwalya said the U-turn on the decision to charge Tembo with hate speech instead of defamation of the President was “damage control, a way to save face”.

“I think there has been some panic because no sane development partner, no sane judge, would say to the President that what happened in the case of Sean Tembo was good; that the President should be commended and continue to allow the police to abuse the law like that, I don’t think so.”

He suggested the U-turn could send one of two messages to the Zambian people.

“The first message could be that the conscience of President Hakainde Hichilema is not yet totally depleted. There is still at the back of his mind the realisation kalya ka mwenso – and I am not using the term umwensho in a negative way, like the fear of the Lord. Emo kali kalya ka buntu panono, nakashalamo. He still has that conscience,” he said.

But Bwalya said the other message could be one of disappointment.

“The other message of course is the disappointment that they didn’t go the right way by simply apologising and saying to our brother Sean Tembo; go home, tukakwita but nishi nomwina aishiba ati tabakanjite,” he said.

## Budget is response to the IMF conditions

SOCIALIST Party Copperbelt mobilisation youth coordinator Warren Mulenga says the 2023 budget is a painful response to the IMF conditions.

“Making pronouncements is one thing; acting on them is pretty much another,” he said.

“For far too long now, Zambians have been fed with the same story since the UPND came to power a year ago.

“It has been the same humdrum and tedious story of ‘Bally will fix it’. It is obvious that the 2023 national budget will start by generating a bit of false hope, but the truth is that the broad masses of our people will be flung into utter destitution when the IMF austerity measures begin to bite.

“Millions of poor households are today choking with pangs of hunger, including a large number of middle-class families who have bitterly begun to experience the inhumanity of hunger in a potentially rich and fertile country. Nearly half the population has been consigned to the most extreme forms of subsistence.

Mulenga said the 2023 budget, coming in the wake of IMF-inspired austerity measures, heralded disaster for many struggling households.

“While the elite are well insulated against the vagaries of the IMF conditions, the great majority of the poor masses will have to put up with the grinding conditionalities of the IMF. The 2023 budget has been conceived and designed to respond to the demands of the IMF rather than to the needs of the poor.

### Health

“The UPND has clearly demonstrated that it is a party more concerned about foreign multinational corporations than ordinary Zambians as evidenced by the 2022 budget, where the government made changes with regard to taxation, with the mineral royalty tax replaced by a corporate tax even though the government knew how most of the mining investors behave when it comes to declarations of profits.

“In his budget speech last year, the Minister of Finance categorically stated that the proposed tax measure would translate into a revenue loss of K 3.2 billion, money which otherwise could have been used in key sectors, such as agriculture, education and health.

“The 2001 Abuja Declaration which pledged, ‘15 percent of the national budget towards the health sector’ has to date remained a myth. African Union member states made a commitment towards achieving that goal because a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. Our people deserve better healthcare services, and no politics can change that fact. We are reasonable enough to know that our 2023 budget cannot commit 15 percent towards the health sector, but at least anything above 10 percent should be earmarked if we truly care about our people.”

My take is that we should not expect much from the 2023 budget. It will be a response to the IMF conditions and very painful for ordinary Zambians.



# Solution to our economic woes does not lie with IMF

Prepare for austerity, sacrifice, tears, pain

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have simply exposed our incapacity as a people to govern ourselves.

After winning independence on the ground that we can govern ourselves, does it really make sense for us to subcontract the running of our economy to the IMF, to return to the West and ask them to help us govern ourselves? As Simon Kapwepwe would say, Zambia twasebana!

The greatest beneficiaries of IMF bailout programmes in Zambia are usually the same forces: western companies, South African finance capital and the local businessmen connected to those in power. These forces are usually the ones who buy our state-owned enterprises at cheaper rates on the pretext that they are making losses. It will be no different this time. The poor will be hit hard. The workers will be hit hard. There will be retrenchments. It will end in tears.

Companies that even Chiluba refused to privatise under any circumstances, such as ZAMTEL and ZESCO, are this time likely to be sold to their business associates or western firms. For years, those in power today told us when they were in opposition that they are very good at business; that the reason why state enterprises make losses is because of political interference from the ruling party and the politicians in power. Now that they are in power themselves, what will be their excuse for selling state enterprises since all they need to do is stop interfering in the operations of ZESCO or ZAMTEL and appoint competent people who can run such companies professionally and like private entities?

## Footnote

We repeat . . . the lasting solution to Zambia's economic difficulties does not lie with the IMF. It lies in the collection of fair and adequate revenue from the mining sector for support to secondary industries, such as manufacturing. It lies in the development of the arts, a hugely important industry that those in power today have reduced to a footnote in a ministry. It lies in increased state support for agriculture and enhanced food security, but those in power today are quicker to listen to the IMF and remove subsidies on farming inputs even when the US and other western countries subsidise their own agriculture industry. It lies in increased state investment to social sectors such as education and health.

And by education, we do not mean free education up to Grade 12. That is a racist colonial policy that was formulated on the premise that Africans only needing basic or elementary education, not higher education. Only honorary whites in black skins can continue implementing such stupid policies. By investment in education, we mean free education up to university level because no country in the world has ever developed using primary or secondary school graduates.

We mean adequate funding to public universities to enable them function without disruptions, to afford our researchers the necessary funds they require to conduct research in social sciences and to support their scientific discoveries and technological advances.



We have some of the most brilliant scientists in this country at UNZA, CBU and other public universities whose talents are going to waste because of lack of state support towards their research activities. This must shame us all because we have let these people down.

And when we say increased investment in health, we don't mean the employment of security guards and general workers and their designation as "health workers" in order to hoodwink the masses of our people that more than 11,000 "health workers" have been recruited. We mean the training and recruitment of actual health workers, such as doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, dentists and other professionals who finish school with their diplomas and degrees anxious to work and full of hope, only to find themselves at a dead end, with no one listening to their cry for availability to serve their motherland. Many of them consequently leave Zambia to ply their trade elsewhere, at a great loss to us since we are a country that is acutely lacking health workers.

Where will the money for investment in all these sectors come from,

some of you may ask. From fair collection of taxes from the mining sector. Those in power today cannot collect fair revenue from the mining companies because they have given them tax breaks. No wonder the mining companies were saying they could not wait for them to get into power in the run-up to last year's elections. Mining firms knew they would be paying little tax. Zambia's situation will be even worse now with the passing of Statutory Instrument No.50 of 2022 that offers rebates, refunds and remissions to the mines.

## Cynical

With all the noise that went on over the two by-elections, many people understandably missed this SI which will mean that the poor Zambian masses will, henceforth, be subsidising private mines while being told these are "investments" for their benefits. The cynical cruelty of it all beats the mind.

The SI in question (and we invite readers to read it) simply means that we have in State House a generous president who is providing for his supporters such as FQM, which will save millions on its an-

nounced investment. The implication is damning. If FQM says it is investing US\$1.3 billion dollars in Zambia, and half of it is in imports of "capital goods" (mining equipment) it will not pay tax – it will be refunded should it pay as part of the import transactions.

With the capital/labour ratio in mining heavily tilted to capital (all mining investments these days are heavy duty and high tech mining dependent and not labour based), the remaining "investment" will be used on a tiny Zambian workforce in lower and perhaps middle level jobs. Meanwhile, the profits of the shareholders will be boosted because input costs will be lowered because of these tax "incentives", which are in fact transferred on to the ordinary Zambians as losses from mining operations. In effect, they are government subsidies to finance capital and losses to the Zambians via reduced taxes.

The IMF deal is facilitating all this madness, yet these people and their supporters in the Brenthurst Foundation, who are involved in designing a low mining tax policy, want us to cheer them on. Aikona man!

Those in power today cannot

collect fair revenue from the mines because they have vested interests in this crucial sector, as they do in the beef industry. All these things will come to light one day and Zambians will know the kind of greedy leaders they are dealing with and supporting blindly. It is important to accept that the mining sector is now heavily reliant on technology and will never again create thousands of jobs as it did previously.

The best we can do is to collect a fair share of taxes from our depleting natural wealth or leave the metals underground since they won't rot. But will those in power listen? No, they only listen to their white friends in the EU, or those from the Brenthurst Foundation.

Poor and ordinary Zambians have no voice in this government. To these masses of our people, we have only one request: the next time we say "Zivotele", please pay attention.

Anyway, let them celebrate their dreadful IMF deal, whose conditions must be so ghastly that they are too afraid or embarrassed to even publish them. At least those in power today won't blame anyone for the political fallout that is surely coming as a result of implementing the deal. Nipano tuli.

ANOTHER patriot has joined us in grieving over the IMF deal our President has proudly and happily entered into, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe writes.

This griever is Mbita Chitala, who together with Dr Akashambatwa Mbikusita-Lewanika, initiated our country's return to a multiparty political dispensation under the Movement for Multiparty Democracy in 1990. And Dr Chitala was Deputy Minister of Finance under the Chiluba government. He is a specialist (researcher) in public finance. And here is his grief:

"The challenge Zambia faces is to pay US\$8.4 billion to our creditors, which we do not have. The US\$1.3 billion extended credit facility or overdraft for 38 months and its painful austere conditionality is aimed to help us have the due debt cancelled, deferred or paid. How? Our leaders must tell us.

"The austerity measures our government has agreed to unleash will be really painful. It has agreed to move our economy from the 6 percent deficit to 3.2 percent surplus within three years. This will be done by cutting expenditure and raising taxes. Tax-to-GDP ratio will rise to 3.4 percent, corporate taxes will reduce from 4.5 to 4.2 percent. There will be no VAT exemptions on such basic needs as medicines, food etc. The wage bill will marginally rise from 8.1 to 8.6 percent even as the average ought to be 9 percent. Taxes on labour will go up. Subsidies on electricity will end by December to reflect cost of provision. Fuel subsidies will end as from this month (September). FISP will be cut, as well as any subsidies to our farmers. The government will enact a PPP Act to introduce user fees for public services. The Social Cash Transfer will marginally increase from K90 to K110 per month.

"On signing to these conditions, Zambia will receive the first US\$185 million to help in our balance of payment challenges. That is to service some of our debts. At the same time, the World Bank has announced it will give us some loans and budget support grants. This is a summary of the economy we should all prepare to endure. Austerity and sacrifice. Tears and pain. Cry my beloved country indeed."

# Drastic measures to hit poor, women and youth

ON SEPTEMBER 6, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) unveiled a series of conditions attached to the US\$1.3 billion loan programme for Zambia under an Extended Credit Facility (ECF). The 38-month bailout was announced on August 31 following talks between Zambia and its official creditors to restructure its external debts, which had soared to US\$17.3 billion by the end of 2021.

But the IMF is imposing brutal austerity measures on the people of Zambia, at least 60 percent of whom are already living in poverty.

Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said: "Zambia continues to face profound challenges reflected in high poverty levels and low growth. The ECF-supported programme aims to restore macroeconomic stability and foster higher, more resilient, and more inclusive growth."

So how exactly does the IMF intend to achieve these goals? Through a "large, front-loaded, and sustained fiscal consolidation" that will reform "regressive and wasteful subsidies" and reduce "excessive and poorly targeted public investment", it says.

"These are typical, vintage IMF conditions of austerity, which effectively means slowing down government expenditure in quite a drastic way, the brunt of which falls on the poor, on women, and the youth," said Grieve Chelwa, the director of research at the Institute on Race, Power and Political Economy at The New School in New York, USA.

The blow caused by the IMF's conditions will be swift. The complete removal of fuel subsidies was set to take place by the end of September. Implicit subsidies, including reduced excise on petrol and diesel and zero-rating them for Value Added Tax (VAT), which the government had introduced in 2021 to cushion against soaring inflation and the impact of the pandemic, will also be eliminated. Import duties will be reintroduced. Subsidy removal will lead to a rise in electricity tariffs, which will have a demonstrably greater impact on poor households. According to data from the World Bank, only 44.5 percent of Zambia's population had access to electricity in 2020. The figure for rural areas was 14 percent.

## Subsidies

The IMF has also taken aim at Zambia's agricultural subsidies, especially the 20-year-old Farmer Input Support Programme, and intends to reduce the cost of subsidies to around 1 percent of GDP by 2025. The new programme will be implemented in the 2023-24 agricultural cycle. According to Dr Chelwa, a million Zambians – or approximately 5 percent of the population – rely on the subsidy programme for maize. A majority of these people, who are responsible for growing the bulk of the country's maize, are small-scale farmers.

To increase revenues, the IMF has directed the Zambian government to expand its VAT base. This includes a rollback

on VAT exemptions on unprocessed foodstuffs, limiting them to "specific items that figure prominently in the food baskets of the poor".

Between July and September, more than 1.35 million Zambians were estimated to be experiencing severe food insecurity driven by high food prices and climate shocks. Out of the 91 districts analysed, over 15 percent were facing crisis levels of food insecurity. An additional 34 districts are projected to fall under these conditions between October 2022 and 2023.

"You would think that the IMF would tell Zambia that it was time to tax the mining sector appropriately, but that is conspicuously absent from the document, and this is by design,"

Dr Chelwa said. Mining corporations have been given major concessions in recent years, and these have been balanced by drastic cuts to social spending. Meanwhile, by 2019, Zambia's debt rose to 85 percent of its GDP. Conditions worsened dramatically with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and debt rose to 118 percent of the GDP.

In November 2020, even though it was able to secure a debt relief agreement with China, Zambia became the first African country to default on its external debt payments, after it was denied a request for a six-month extension on the payment of US\$42.5 million in interest on Eurobonds due in October.

People's Dispatch



Socialist Party President  
Fred M'membe: Don't  
give up. Don't despair



## Che Guevara warned of the dangers of neocolonialism

WHAT IS happening in Africa today was well foreseen way back in 1964. In an interview with Josie Fanon, widow of the Algerian revolutionary figure Frantz Fanon, author of *The Wretched of the Earth*, Che Guevara warned us of the dangers of imperialism.

Josie Fanon: Would you indicate in broad outline the position of the Cuban government in relation to Africa as a whole?

Che Guevara: Africa represents one of the most important, if not the most important, fields of battle against all the forms of exploitation existing in the world, against imperialism, colonialism, and neocolonialism.

There are big possibilities for success in Africa, but there are also many dangers. The positive aspects include the youth of the African peoples as modern states, the hate which colonialism has left in the minds of the people, the very clean consciousness which the peoples possess of the profound differences existing between an African man and the coloniser, and the conviction that there can never be sincere friendship between them, except after the definitive departure of the coloniser.

There are also other positive aspects: the present possibilities of a much more rapid development than even a few years ago due to the aid which some of the capitalist countries can likewise provide under certain conditions (but on this point we must be vigilant).

What we consider to be the principal danger for Africa is the possibility of division among the African peoples, which appears to be continually rising. On the one side there are the lackeys of imperialism, on the other, the people seeking to free themselves along the roads suited to them.

We have concrete reason for fearing this danger. There is a phenomenon of unequal exchanges between the industrialised countries and the economically dependent countries. This relation of inequality is shown in the most brutal way in connection colonialism. But the completely independent countries also risk finding themselves locked up in the prison of the capitalist market because the big industrialised countries impose this through their high technical development. The big, developed countries begin, after independence, to exercise a kind of "suction" on the liberated countries and after a few years the conditions are again ripe for political domination.

We believe that in Africa the bourgeoisie still has a word to say today. This is quite different from Latin America, where the national bourgeoisie no longer has any choice but to submit completely to the orders to imperialism. In many independent African countries, the bourgeoisie has, in the beginning, the possibility of development and of playing a "relatively" progressive role. It can, for a time, mobilise the people of the forces of the left under the slogan of the struggle against imperialism, but inevitably the moment comes when this bourgeoisie and the government representing it end up in an impasse.

It is not possible for the bourgeoisie, by its very nature, to follow the road into which the people seek to push it. The only course remaining open to it is collaboration with imperialism and oppression of the people. In brief, it can be said that there are at present big possibilities in Africa because of the effervescence existing in this region of the world, but that there are also real dangers, which we have to keep in mind. There are important economic problems that must be remembered.

Unequal relations in international exchanges lead to an impasse where it becomes very easy to concede to imperialism and to oppress the people who, for a short period, they appear to serve.

## If we struggle, we will win

TODAY I have been reflecting and meditating deeply on our enslavement, colonisation, exploitation, humiliation and degradation as Africans. I have been thinking about our heroes – those selfless, genuinely good people who were willing to risk their own lives to save us.

Many guilty consciences have been created by our enslavement – the slave trade. Europeans know that they carried on the slave trade, and we Africans are aware that the slave trade would have been impossible if certain Africans did not cooperate with slave ships.

To ease their guilty consciences, Europeans try to throw the major responsibility for the slave trade on to us Africans. One major author on the slave trade (appropriately titled *Sins of Our Fathers*) explained how many white people urged him to state that the trade was the responsibility of African chiefs, and that Europeans merely turned up to buy captives, as though without European demand there would have been captives sitting on the beach by the millions.

These issues can be correctly approached only after understanding that Europe became the centre of a worldwide system, and that it was European capitalism that set slavery and the Atlantic slave trade in motion.

And today our under-development is not blamed on our continued modern enslavement, neocolonialisation, exploitation, humiliation and degradation, but on our corrupt and inept leaders, as if they are not the ones who sponsor these corrupt and inept puppets so that they can easily continue, albeit in a new way, to enslave, neocolonise, exploit, humiliate and degrade us. Yes, we Africans are aware that without the cooperation of African puppets, lackeys of imperialism, our continued enslavement, neocolonialisation, exploitation and degradation would be impossible.

When will they take or accept responsibility for their sins? They will never. We have to struggle to restore our freedom, progress and human dignity. There is no doubt that if we struggle we will win.

## It's nothing to boast about

IN JEREMIAH 9:23 we are told, "Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches.'" People who brag may think it makes them look good, but it often backfires. Braggarts may continue to brag because they fundamentally misjudge how other people perceive them.

Most people realise that they experience emotions other than pure joy when they are on the receiving end of other people's bragging. But when we ourselves engage in bragging – either on social media or in person – we tend to overestimate people's positive reactions, and we underestimate their negative reactions.

To avoid annoying their audience, boastful people should resist the urge to brag and try to put themselves in the other person's shoes.

On its face, bragging may seem like a straightforward way to make a favourable impression. But is boasting really such a great strategy? People who are genuinely humble – who tend to spend less time focused on themselves and more time thinking of others – are on the right track in this regard. And then there's that timeworn advice: just be yourself – unless "yourself" really is a boastful egotist. People value honesty and candour, so there is some hope that if you are a normal person, people will value you for being true to who you are.

When people disapprove of bragging it isn't because they feel envious of revealed status differences – the pain arising from that is independent. The real reason people disapprove of bragging is because they have the impression that you are not driven by the need to share, but rather by a desire to elevate yourself. In other words, people have a basic resistance to self-directed claims to grandeur. But before their opprobrium applies, questions of culpability must first be resolved – was the brag intended, or was it merely an accidental side effect of something more socially acceptable? And here we get to the core of why so many people cloak their brags in a mask of plausible deniability: it shields them from disapproval.

## No system is permanent

LEST WE forget, nothing is permanent in life. There was once a one-party state, which was so powerful we never thought it would end. But it ended, and the people's will triumphed. No government is permanent, no system is permanent.

What we are seeing today, the injustice we continue to see will not last forever.

We would like to caution that without building sufficient consensus on where we want to go as a country, we will have problems. It gets dark sometimes but the morning comes. Don't give up. Don't despair!

# People must be protected from UPND thuggery

## Mwale condemns political violence

SOCIALIST Party central committee member Faston Mwale and comrades on the Copperbelt say they deplore the violent attacks on party members in Luangwa.

"The Socialist Party on the Copperbelt learns with deep pain, anger and anguish of the vicious attacks unleashed by UPND cadres on its main command centre in Luangwa ahead of recent polls," he said.

"Our comrades in Luangwa came under a heavy night raid that injured many people and damaged vehicles. The pictures depicting the extent of the attack are heartrending. Be that as it may, our revolutionary soul that resists all forms of injustice through senseless and unprovoked attacks remains buoyant and will ever remain so," he said.

Mwale said it had become a common ritual that each time there was a by-election, the Socialist Party was singled out as the principal subject of attacks by the UPND.

"This is a dilemma the Socialist Party has to grapple with," he said. "This is the predicament peace-loving Zambians must contend with. Political elements that reason with violence must be denied political space. We must not be naive enough to think that these horrific attacks are spontaneous events of frenzied cadres intoxicated with hate. No, these are conscious actions based on a carefully thought-out strategy.

"The UPND touts itself as having dealt with cadre violence, yet



Damage to a Socialist Party vehicle in Luangwa

what we witness on the ground is diametrically opposed to the situation it professes to the public. In all violent attacks on the opposition, none of the UPND leaders – including HH himself – have come out to decisively deplore political violence. Their conspicuous silence on cadre-perpetrated violence is unsurprising. Violence profits them. Their rapacious greed and appetite for power is what is quickly diminishing the political relevance of the ruling party.

"Secondly, it is not in doubt that the UPND is seriously gripped with fear in the face of mounting rejection of its leadership from the masses and is responding to its decline in the most brutal of ways. How is it that a party that boasts of having marshalled 2.8 million votes in the last general election is today the most desperate one?"

Mwale said the UPND had destroyed and tarnished the image of the Electoral Commission of Zambia "with impunity".

"Look at the way it is readying

to dare the judiciary. Look at the way it is abusing public resources to gratify its leaders' partisan egos in campaigns. Look at the savage malice, the furious hatred and the most atrocious slander our opposition political leaders are being subjected to at the behest of the ruling party. Our opposition leadership is repeatedly being humiliated in the most atrocious of ways.

"We urge the police to be proactive and bring the perpetrators of political violence to justice. In the same spirit, we also urge UPND leaders to rethink their position and ensure that Zambians, irrespective of their political station, are protected from thuggery.

"Political violence, if left unchecked can grow and escalate until it engulfs everyone. It is the duty of all, including the UPND, to foster the creation of a harmonious social environment in which all citizens find it amenable to participate in the political processes of our country without fear of attack."



## Lessons about teachers and education

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M'membe has paid tribute to education and the vital role teachers play in society.

"World Teachers' Day – also known as International Teachers' Day – is an international day held annually on October 5," he said.

"Established in 1994, it commemorates the signing of the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, which is a standard-setting instrument that addresses the status and situations of teachers around the world.

"This recommendation outlines standards relating to education personnel policy, recruitment, and initial training as well as the continuing education of teachers, their employment, and working conditions.

"World Teachers' Day aims to focus on 'appreciating, assessing and improving the educators

of the world' and to provide an opportunity to consider issues related to teachers and teaching," he said.

Dr M'membe has also separately highlighted the need for investment in education.

"Our lasting solution to our problems does not lie with the IMF but, among other things, in increased state investment in social sectors, such as education.

"And by education, we do not mean free education up to Grade 12. That is a racist colonial policy that was formulated on the premise that Africans only need basic or elementary education, not higher education," he said.

"By investment in education, we mean free education up to university level, because no country in the world has ever developed using primary or secondary school graduates."



# China helped liberate

**Kyeretwie Opoku**, Convener of the Socialist Movement of Ghana, and **Fred M'membe**, Socialist Party Zambia President, were interviewed in Beijing by **Li Jingjing** for the *Talk It Out* programme on China Global Television Network (CGTN) about their views on Africa's relationship with China

LI JINGJING opened the interview by saying the term "Sino-imperialism" had been coined by western media and politicians to express concern over China's relationship with a number of African countries, especially where the country had investments. She asked if the phrase was propaganda or had any basis in fact.

**Fred M'membe:** What do they mean by imperialist power? China has never colonised an African country. And our dealings with China started long before the China they know today. We were dealing with China when it was a poor country, very poor. But China was still willing to share whatever it had, sometimes giving us more than it had, or could give its own people. For instance, in South Africa, in Zambia, China participated in our liberation struggle. The Chinese people – the Communist Party of China – helped us liberate ourselves from those who are trying to call them imperialists today, who dominated us, who colonised and humiliated us for centuries. China helped us to defend our independence and develop economically.

Zambia was a blockaded country. All the neighbours were either still under colonial domination by the Portuguese, or under the domination of apartheid and white racist regimes in Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. We had no access to the ports. Our only access was to Dar es Salaam, which had no good road, no rail. The Chinese Communist Party, the people of China, managed to help to build us a rail, which was a very, very difficult project at that time, because China did not have the resources, either financial, technical and human capital. But it undertook such a big project in which 70 Chinese lives were lost. China did not have corporations mining minerals in Africa, trading in Africa, doing all sorts of business in Africa when China was helping us. It is only now that China is participating in a lot of economic activities in Africa. But not only on terms that are different from others, (but) sometimes more favourable terms to Africa than Western companies. So where is imperial domination of China? Where is China's imperial interest in Africa?

In Zambia, in the third world, it's them (the West) who dominated us for centuries, who colonised us and enslaved us, exploited us. Yes, we have minerals, strategic minerals, minerals needed for 21st century technologies. For instance, Congo DRC today has 70 percent of the world's deposits of cobalt that is needed for electric cars and so on. We have huge copper reserves between us, or among us. They want



As the headquarters of the African Union, the AU Conference Centre (left) cost US\$200 million and was totally funded by China. It is the largest aid project by China in Africa since t

that, but they don't want China to access the resources. Our global resources, wherever they may lie, should be utilised fairly for the development of all humanity, and China should have access to those resources on terms that benefit all of us. China should not be cut away. So where is China's imperialism?

China itself also must admit that it was also humiliated, like Africa. China was colonised in so many ways. Yes, it suffered from feudal humiliation, but it also suffered from semi-colonial humiliation. The Japanese were there, the British were there, the French were there in China, as imperial powers, China was humiliated. China was humiliated, Africa was humiliated. Even Chinese labour, Chinese labour was taken, exploited all over the world, taken to the Americas as well, the same way Africans were shipped to the Americas.

## Challenges

We have a long history with China. We have a present with China and we will have a future with China. They (the West) have tried to sway the African masses to hate China, but it's failing. It's failing because they can see for themselves. If you see a big hospital in Africa today, who has built it? The Chinese. If you see a big soccer stadium, who has built it? The Chinese. If you see a rail line, who has built it? The Chinese. If you see a good road, a good bridge, who has built it? It's the Chinese. We have very little to see today that is coming from the West. China is cooperating with us in a manner that they are not cooperating with us.

Are there problems in China? Yes, there are problems. China is building society in a world dominated by capitalism today, and is facing those challenges. And the challenges will be many. But we have to understand the problems or the difficulties, the challenges of our friends from the actions of our enemies, those who colonised us, those who humiliated us. China has been our friend. China is our friend today. China will always be our friend in the future. And the policies of the Chinese government are very clear, they are not hidden. Mutual respect, respect for the sovereignty of other countries, respect for the territory and territorial integrity of other countries, no

interference in the internal affairs of other countries. China has never sponsored a coup in any African country. Can the western countries say the same?

**Kyeretwie Opoku:** It's difficult to add to that, but the point is, we know what imperialism is. It's not for them (the West) to try and bandy these words around. OK? There's a long history of imperialism in Africa, and it was not through the Chinese. We're talking about 600 years within which our people have been subjected to slavery, the slave trade and transportation to Africa, the same experience China shared. We're talking about the period that followed the slave trade of colonialism, in which they sat around the table in Berlin and divided a continent like real estate. We live in countries where their borders are drawn through people's houses because they didn't have the diligence to do a survey and avoid that. The people literally have a bedroom in Ghana and a bathroom in Togo because of the casual way in which French and British forces divided our country. That was not China. The countries that exist in Africa today – the borders that exist – were created by Europeans. Before the Berlin conference, there were no African states. That was creation of Europe, and those states were not created for our benefit, but to limit the conflict among Europeans about who gets to exploit which parts of the continent. That was imperialism.

**FM:** We have the right to choose our own friends. They (the West) became associated with us, not through voluntary association. They imposed themselves on us. They gave us countries we didn't have. We had one country, one continent. They divided our continent into countries, which, as Comrade Opoku is saying, are theirs. They were not our countries, but with humility we have accepted it. But still more, they are not satisfied with our humility, with our acceptance of them.

We don't hate them, we can live together in a new time, in a new way, in a new world, with dignity, with respect for each other, with cooperation and solidarity. The problem they have is that they have never had relations with our countries based on solidarity. They always had imperial relationships. They cannot believe that human beings can associate with each other based on soli-

darity. They cannot believe we can have a relationship with the Chinese that is based on solidarity, on human unity, on common struggles, unified struggles. They think every relationship with a person who is more well off than us Africans is always dominating us. They think we can never have a relationship of equality with anybody else.

And also, there's a racist attitude in this. Do they think we Africans are fools who everybody should dominate, the way the dominated us for over 500, 600 years, that the Chinese should only come to dominate us? They don't see their domination of us as domination, as something wrong, but they see our association with the Chinese as domination, imperial domination. Let them remove this racist attitude, this racist arrogance, and start to see us as human beings deserving their respect, deserving their compassion. We have dignity. We have human dignity that deserves respect.

**KO:** They don't have any other frame of reference for relationships with Africa. It must be master-servant. It is imperialistic in its nature. Therefore, what they see happening is China supplanting their imperialism, their empire. They cannot conceive of an equal relationship. That's not imperialism. Imperialism does not care just because the two parties have different economic strengths. Imperialism is a relationship of exploitation, and to have imperialism, China would have to be a country in which your big private capital dominates the state, where the state essentially works as a PR firm and enforcer for private capital in China, and that is manifestly not the situation. The Chinese state represents the people and asserts the authority of the people over all sectors of the economy, including private capital. China has a lot going for it.

**LJ:** One of the major claims against China by the West is that "China is coercing African countries to follow China's rules on the international stage" through this huge economic investment, through the massive building in Africa. "They invest so much money in the Third World because they want those countries to follow them". So the G7 countries recently came out with this "Build Back Better World" project, which allegedly will offer billions of US dollars to help our developing friends, developing countries, to

build their infrastructure. The leader of the European Union said, "we want to show the developing world that they have an alternative choice, other than China's investments". How do you see this help coming from the West?

**KO:** We have seen what Europe has to offer. Europe colonised us. We saw the level of development that was achieved, which was really a level of under development. People talk as if Africa has no history. Up to the point where the first Europeans arrived and began to interact with us, Africa enjoyed the same level of development as the rest of the world. That's the reality. It was at the point where we began to have structural relations with Europe that our development retarded, that we started going backward and Europe accelerated at the rate it did. Their cities, like Brussels, really everything they have is the product of the wealth of the Congo. That's the simple fact. So we know what alternative they have to offer. We've seen it. If anything, it is the new alternatives created by Chinese imagination, Chinese struggle, which are attractive to us. We need to be able to find a way to be able to develop that does not involve the exploitation of other people, and China has shown an example. It may not be the only example, but it's a clear example of what you've achieved over the last 40 years, particularly in terms of the eradica-

tion of extreme poverty, in terms of your GDP levels, in terms of life expectancy. Those are real, concrete things that anybody can see. And the strategy used to achieve them is of interest to us, it is not simply about what infrastructure spending China can do in Africa. That's not all that's of interest to us. Of course we're interested in investment, we have societies we want to develop. There is a pan-African project. But it's also a lesson: how did China do this? How did China organise and mobilise its business? Those are lessons we can learn, and we want to learn. There is nothing Europe can teach us about development. Who are we going to colonise? Whose resources are we going to steal to make our lives better? It's not an option for us.

**FM:** They (the West) are saying this is a reaction, or counter to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. It's not a totally new scheme. They had promised to take three percent of their GDP every year and push it to the development of our countries. How many of them have taken three percent of their GDP? I don't know any that has even gone beyond 0.5 percent. Today, they are promising US\$600 billion over a period of six years for infrastructure and investment in Africa to counter Chinese initiatives.

**KO:** It's not about us. It's about China.

**FM:** They are not coming to assist



如果你看到一  
If you see a good road, a





# e us and is our friend



一条好路 一座好桥 都是中国人建的  
good bridge, who has built it? It's the Chinese.

the TAZARA railway; Kyeretwie Opoku (above) with Fred M'membe and Li Jingjing; the US\$140 million Zimbabwe parliament building (right) at Mount Hampden outside Harare, built by China as a gift to the country



us, they are coming to deal with China, to counter China, but we know things that are not done from a noble position, from a selfless position, are usually worthless. Likewise, noble things that are not based on correct ideas, on fair ideas, are equally worthless. This scheme will not go anywhere. We would like the money to come and help Africa. They are saying the money is going to come from private and public initiatives.

**KO:** It's been a year now . . . they are in a recession.

**FM:** This is a desperate move. And the whole thing is about keeping China out of Africa. They think if they promise this money – US\$600 billion over five or six years, US\$100 billion shared by 53, 54 countries – how much are they going to invest in each country in terms of infrastructure over this period? It sounds a big amount of money, but when you look at it, analyse it, it's very little . . . and it won't come. If it comes we will be very happy. We are benefiting from Chinese assistance because their competition with China is helping us. So again, it's not as they are following. They are trying to counter China's initiatives in Africa. What is irritating them? What is troubling them with China helping us? If they were truly our friend, they should be happy that we are getting some assistance that enables us to come out of poverty. But they don't want the truth, they don't

want China to help us. They would like China to take money to them, to the World Bank, to the IMF and then they give us on conditions dictated by them, only conditions and terms that are beneficial to them. They don't want these initiatives. But this is an exercise in futility. This is unstoppable. They are not dealing with children.

**KO:** I don't think they realise that.

**FM:** They don't, because of their racism and arrogance.

**KO:** They look down on the Third World and they take their current favourable position for granted. They take it as their right; that by their very nature they are better than us and should be in a position to give us "aid" out of the money that they struck from us to begin with. It's a cultural shortcoming.

**LJ:** If you develop like China, with a tech industry that is getting better, they (the West) will say because you stole from us, you stole the technology from us. And if your economy like Shanghai or Hong Kong is great, it is because we liberated you, because those cities used to be occupied by us, so everything good about you now is because of us, we brought you the civilisation of the first world.

**FM:** But they don't say, we have developed because of your labour, the slave labour that built capitalism. They don't say it. They don't say they developed because of our

mineral resources that they stole. They stole human beings, they stole minerals. They continue to steal and they don't say they are developing because they are stealing. And how many of our intellectuals have they taken? How many are working in their key sectors, from these poor countries? From India, even from China, from Africa? People they have never trained. We trained doctors, they took them, they even take nurses. Our hospitals have no nurses because out nurses are taken by them. They give them green cards, they give them visas, they go. They are not helping us train doctors, nurses, they are not helping us train engineers, they just come and take.

**KO:** There is enough, in terms of resources, in terms of the human capacity to create wealth. We are at a point in time where we can meet the world's basic needs fairly across all continents, and we can steadily, and actually quite rapidly, improve the living conditions for everybody on this planet. They are resisting this, and they're busy focusing on how to keep the spot at the top. (They say) so China is growing, China is a threat. What do we do to cut China down to size? Can we seize Taiwan? Can we use Taiwan to disrupt them? Can we destabilise Russia? You know, you engage in that kind of geopolitics and you suddenly expect the third world to forget the history and follow you into ruin. It will not happen.

**FM:** And nothing remains the same. Things change. The unipolar world that we had is changing quickly to multilateralism. Those who dominated the world economy are no longer dominating it. China becoming the leading economy in the world is unstoppable. We should see something that, you know, they should also start rejoicing in and share in the prosperity of China. The whole world can share in and benefit from the prosperity of China.

India is also coming up. Today, India is more or less the third biggest economy in the world. The GDP of India has surpassed that of the UK, who colonised India for many centuries. Today, India has got a bigger economy than the UK. Are they going to be able to stop that? No. How many countries are they going to fight? And when you fight people, when you want to break down people, you want to humiliate people, they'll strengthen themselves to sur-

vive. We are seeing BRICS. Today, more and more countries want to join BRICS.

**LJ:** You mentioned African countries want to learn the Chinese model and you are both socialist leaders and activists in your country, I see socialism, communism is demonised in the West generally, like a red scare. Is communism demonised in your countries as well?

**KO:** It is to the extent that our educational system and a lot of our cultural pillars, like the church and so on, are aligned to imperialism, the real imperialism from the West, and therefore there is a constant indoctrination through our schools, through our media to the point that most people instinctively feel that communism is some evil conspiracy. But you also find that for most people in Africa, the values that people hold dear are collective values; the values of community, of working together, of sharing, of solidarity. They just don't express them ideologically in terms of socialism or communism. But those terms are qualified to the point that people don't actually ask what they mean. People think they know what they mean, but they don't, so you find this across the continent; people admire China, people are curious, people want to know how China did this. Because we remember, even if a lot of young Chinese people don't, what China was like 60 years ago, what China was like 100 years ago. Those are things that were pretty obvious in our time. I wasn't born then, obviously, but the history of the Chinese Revolution and the conditions in this part of the world were pretty well known to my generation. And the transformation that has taken place may be something that Chinese young people can take for granted now; the wealth, power, the security. But we have seen the transition take place in a period where we have stagnated or even fallen behind. China has been moving up, so when you say to people that China is a socialist or communist country, it makes them sit up: maybe this communism thing is not so bad. It helps create a conversation.

**FM:** In a truly peaceful world, development, and even democracy, will have many different way of expression. Countries will not develop

all the same way. They are free to choose their own way of development. They are free to choose their own way of expressing democracy. If their path, the path they (the West) have travelled on to be where they are, is the path on which all nations on the planet should travel, then there will no nation that will develop. What was there for them is not there for us. As Comrade Opoku said, we don't have countries to exploit, to colonise, to plunder. But they are used to demonising everything that is not theirs, everything that they don't like, including individuals. When they talk about our leaders you would think they are talking about devils with horns. Those they like, they will talk about in glowing terms.

## Terrorist

Today they can talk about Mandela in very glorious terms. But Mandela was at one time a terrorist in their eyes. They get Mandela and they single him out, the other one is talked about with no respect. But it won't work. They can throw all sorts of propaganda. At the end of the day, what matters is the material conditions of people, the living conditions matter. How can you come and tell them Chinese people are bad today, the system that has lifted them out of poverty over a historically shortest period possible?

**LJ:** This narrative that democracy and capitalism are the best things in the world will collapse if they see China – as a socialist country – become a number one economy (and) one day defeat them. Then how can they persuade their citizens that they are the beacon of freedom and democracy for the world?

**FM:** Freedom and democracy for a system that has been built on brutal force. They don't tell their people that system has been built on brutal force . . . humiliation and exploitation, slavery. They killed our leaders to get our resources.

**LJ:** Since communism is demonised in your country – Zambia and Ghana – and probably the whole African continent, then why do you want to make this socialist movement in your countries? And how can socialism benefit the people of your countries or Africa in general?

**FM:** What is the alternative to so-

cialism for our people? Is capitalism the answer? After all these centuries of capitalist exploitation, why do we still have poverty? Why are we still the poorest? In my country, the average rural poverty is 76.6 percent, people living in absolute poverty. In some provinces of our country, poverty hits an average of about 80 percent. We have some of the highest infant mortality rates. We have some of the highest maternal mortality rates. If capitalism was the answer, why are we in these conditions, because we have been capitalist throughout. The first coloniser of my country was a capitalist, private business and an individual called John Cecil Rhodes with his British South African Company. We were governed by a capitalist enterprise for 33 years. If capitalism is the answer, why are we still in poverty? Why? Today, China has surpassed the life expectancy of the USA. Cuba has surpassed the life expectancy of the USA. Cuba, a poor, third world country, because of socialistic policies that are aimed at improving the living conditions of people. Even with limited resources, Cuba has managed to increase the lifespan, life expectancy of its people. It has got one of the best educational systems in the world. It has got one of the best health systems in the world.

Even COVID showed us the validity of socialist policies, the countries that have dealt with COVID successfully or better are those with socialist-oriented programmes or policies; China, Vietnam, the state of Kerala in India, which is run by the communist party for most of the time. Even Venezuela, under its conditions of being blockaded, under sanctions, and its resources being stolen, managed to deal with COVID better than countries that are free. The USA and other capitalist countries, to deal with COVID they had to turn to socialist policies; they had to implement socialist policies in their health systems because capitalist policies could not work. For us, if socialism is not the answer, then there is no answer. It is only socialism that will get us out of this.

● This is an edited extract from a transcript of the CGTN interview with Li Jingjing. The whole interview can be watched on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-45ZMARq8VM>



Chinese and African workers building the Tazara railway line in 1967. In undertaking to construct the railway – linking Zambia's copperbelt with the Tanzanian coast 1,100 miles away – Beijing embarked on its first major showcase project in Africa. To cover the Chinese contribution, Beijing extended a US\$400 million, 30-year interest-free credit – the largest ever extended to the Third World by a communist country



# Neoliberalism rears its ugly head with UK Trussonomics

Slavery of the market to make life miserable for life's 'losers' once again

George Monbiot

SOON, the focus will return, and the collapse of many people's economic prospects will dominate once more. As winter approaches, it will become clear that British politics is spectacularly lacking in answers.

Why? Because the doctrine destroying our condition of life is the doctrine Liz Truss has promised to extend to new extremes. She is fanatically devoted to an ideology misleadingly called Thatcherism or Reaganism (as if they invented it), but more accurately described as neoliberalism.

This doctrine insists that politics submits to "the market", which means, when translated, that democracy must submit to the power of money. Any impediment to the accumulation of wealth – such as public ownership, tax, regulation, trade unions and political protest – should be torn down, either quickly and noisily or slowly and stealthily. When consumer choice is unencumbered by political interference, the market is allowed to become a Great Winnower, sifting us into a natural hierarchy of winners and losers.

The doctrine has religious, quasi-Calvinist aspects: in the kingdom of the market we can see who is deserving and who is undeserving through the grace bestowed upon them by the god of money. Any policy or protest that seeks to disrupt the formation of a natural order of rich and poor is an unwarranted stay upon the divine will of the invisible hand.

For 40 years or so, neoliberalism has been unchallengeable. For the UK Conservatives, especially those populating the current cabinet, the dogma cannot be shaken by mere evidence of harm, even when this includes the destitution of millions and the collapse of Earth systems. For Labour, it sets boundaries that cannot be crossed, for fear of punishment by the billionaire press. As our politics has turned further and further towards neoliberalism's glittering certainties, any deviation from the doctrine is akin to blasphemy. But the countries in which the ideology has been most fiercely applied are those that have seen the steepest declines in both their economic and civic prospects.

Neoliberalism promised that it would generate growth. The benefits of this growth would trickle from the rich to the poor, enhancing everyone's conditions of life. But growth, for better or worse, has been slower globally during the neoliberal era than during the years before Thatcher, Reagan and their



many imitators came to power. And it has been overwhelmingly captured by the very rich. Far from ensuring that money trickles down, neoliberalism is the pump that shifts wealth from the poor to the rich.

In the US, for example, during the 1960s and early 1970s, the greatest beneficiaries of economic growth were the poorest 20 percent. But from 1980 onwards, the proceeds of growth were transferred from the poorest people to the ultra-rich. Median income in the US rose at just one-third of the rate of GDP growth, while the income of the richest 1 percent rose at three times the rate.

## Power

By comparison to the pre-neoliberal trend, the bottom 90 percent lost US\$47tn between 1975 and 2018. Between 1990 and 2020, the wealth of US billionaires, adjusted for inflation, increased roughly twelvefold. There's a similar story in the UK. Of the poorest 10 percent of households, almost half now have more debts than assets.

None of this is accidental. Neoliberalism is sold to us as a means of enhancing freedom and choice, but in reality it's about power. It shifts tax and regulation from those who are rich and powerful on to people who are poor and weak.

The taxes the wealthy once paid have been transferred to those with far smaller resources.

Look at Truss's proposal for addressing the energy bills crisis. Instead of taxing the record profits of oil and gas companies, she's using the taxes the rest of us pay to allow them to keep raking in monstrous sums. Even this policy, presented as a means of helping poor people with their bills, will, when combined with the new cuts in national insurance, ensure that the richest households receive twice as much help with their living costs as the poorest households.

The "plan for growth" on which Truss campaigned was pure neoliberal gospel: "cut taxes now, unshackle business from burdensome regulation, implement supply side reform . . . create new, low-tax, low-regulation 'investment zones'". Her key advisers are drawn from covertly funded neoliberal thinktanks. She will go as far as electoral politics allow in transferring wealth from the poor to the rich, attacking trade unions and protesters, opening the floodgates for pollution and greenhouse gases and dismembering the NHS. Already, her government has floated proposals to scrap England's anti-obesity measures and to remove the cap on bankers' bonuses, the purpose of which is to discourage the reckless gambles

that caused the last financial crash.

After 40 years of this experiment, we can state with confidence that the economic success it proclaimed is illusory. Its buy-now-pay-later economics works by inflating asset values and household debt and burning through human relationships, conditions of employment and the living world. Now that there is little more to burn, Margaret Thatcher's fire is reduced to embers, as is much of the world we knew. Yet Truss seeks only to breathe life into the coals. And this is when it gets really dangerous.

## Fascism

As neoliberalism wages war on social security and the public sector, impoverishes millions and destroys conditions of employment, its political consequences could be as disastrous as its economic consequences.

In the 30 years following the second world war, almost everyone in politics recognised that preventing the resurgence of fascism meant ensuring everyone's needs were met, through a strong social safety net and robust public services. But neoliberalism stripped these defences away, while shutting down choice in the name of choice. Thatcher proclaimed "there is no alternative" and La-

bour appears, ever since, to have agreed. Worse still, the dogma has at the same time promoted extreme self-interest and egocentricity. At its heart is a mathematically impossible promise: everyone can be number one.

In the gap between great expectations and low delivery, humiliation and resentment grow. In these conditions, it is easy for demagogues to blame the frustration of people's hopes on scapegoats: women, asylum seekers, Muslims, Jews, black and brown people, disabled people, LGBTQ people, unions, the left, protesters. History shows that when political choice is lacking and people see no prospect of relief, they become highly susceptible to the transfer of blame.

The transfer – attacking refugees and fomenting culture wars – is already well under way. Truss's techniques of distraction open the door to fascism. I no longer find it impossible to see the far right swarming into the policy vacuum left by Conservative indifference and Labour timidity, and taking power in this country.

We need real, inspiring alternatives, positive visions of a better world, rather than competing modifications of the disastrous ideology that got us into this mess. We need hope.

*The UK Guardian*

## 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>

### Huawei chips in aid

HUAWEI has partnered to finance, acquire, and operate domestic semiconductor companies, aiming to circumvent US sanctions. Having invested more than US\$30 billion in chips by 2021, Huawei has been sharing employees to help develop chips with partners, relying on state support. Huawei now prioritises production of telecom (5G) equipment and its nascent automotive business.

*Nikkei*

### Hot items for winter

AHEAD of the European winter, demand for Chinese-made electric heaters explodes, with orders increasing up to 10 fold. Europeans are looking for an alternative to the soaring cost of energy, which rose 38.3 percent in August. In the first seven months of the year, exports of electric blankets (97 percent) and heaters (23 percent) soared year-on-year.

*Global Times*

### Afghan rail link trial

THE new China-Afghanistan rail corridor has begun its three-month trial that will transport 3,500 to 5,000 containers of goods each round. Transport time with the new corridor, which passes through Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, will be cut from two months to two weeks.

*The Diplomat*

### MBA to study Xi ideas

THE MBA curriculum is to incorporate Xi's ideas, including common prosperity and capital regulation. China is seeking business leaders to be trained according to the country's strategic needs amid growing US-China tension. Universities are seeking students from technology or manufacturing sectors, instead of real estate or finance that dominated in previous years.

*Financial Times*

### European FDI grows

BETWEEN January and August, foreign direct investment in China (\$138.4 billion) grew 20.2 percent, with European investment increasing its concentration. Just four countries (Germany, the UK, France and the Netherlands) accounted for 87 percent of European FDI, where there is a concentration of two-thirds of its investment in five sectors, including automobiles and food processing.

*China Briefing*

### Soybean meal plan

CHINA is seeking to reduce soybean meal in animal feed to rely less on imports and control price increases. Relying on more than 85 percent of imports (Brazil, US), soybeans are seen as a weak link in China's food security, Beijing is supporting research into unconventional protein feeds.

*Bloomberg*

### Action on the yuan

TO SLOW yuan devaluation, the People's Bank of China is raising risk reserve rates from 0 percent to 20 percent for foreign exchange futures trading. The measure will increase the cost of buying the currency and discourage short-term speculation.

*Global Times*



Anti neoliberalism protesters march in Cape Town, South Africa



# Carbon-fuelled capitalism with its stolen wealth stalls change

## Right-wing forces deny climate catastrophe as they devour resources

Vijay Prashad

NEXT MONTH, most member states of the United Nations (UN) will gather in the Egyptian resort city of Sharm El Sheikh for the annual UN Climate Change Conference. This will be the 27th conference of the parties to assess the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, commonly referred to as COP 27.

The international environmental treaty was established in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, with the first conference held in Berlin in 1995; the agreements were extended in the Kyoto Protocol of 2005 and supplemented by the Paris Agreement of 2015.

No more needs to be said of the climate catastrophe, which threatens mass species extinction. The move away from carbon-based fuel has been stalled by three main impediments:

- Right-wing forces, which deny the existence of climate change.
- Sections of the energy industry, which have a vested interest in the continuation of carbon-based fuel.
- Western countries' refusal to admit that they remain principally responsible for the problem and to commit to repaying their climate debt by financing the energy transition in developing countries whose wealth they continue to siphon off.

In public debates on the climate catastrophe, there has been barely any reference to the Rio Earth Summit of 1992 and the treaty that noted, "The global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions".

The phrase "common but differentiated responsibilities" is an acknowledgement of the fact that, while the problem of climate change is common to all countries and none are immune to its deleterious impact, the responsibility of countries is not identical. Some countries – which have benefited from colonialism and carbon fuel for centuries – have a greater responsibility for the transition to a decarbonised energy system.

The scholarship on the matter is clear: Western countries have benefited inordinately from both colonialism and carbon fuel to attain their level of development. The data from the Global Carbon Project, which was headed by the US Department of Energy's now defunct Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Centre, shows that the United States has been far and away the largest producer of carbon dioxide emissions since 1750.

By itself, the United States has emitted more CO<sub>2</sub> than the entire European Union, twice as much as China, and eight times more than India. The main carbon emitters were all colonial powers, namely the US, Europe, Canada, and Aus-



Global Campaign to Promote Climate Justice protesters call for action against many large corporations responsible for pollution while undermining climate science, policy and action, and which "greenwash" their activities and bid to influence UN negotiations to protect their interests

tralia, which, despite consisting of roughly one tenth of the global population, have together accounted for more than half of all cumulative global emissions. From the 18th century on, these countries have not only dispensed the bulk of the carbon in the atmosphere, but they continue to exceed their share of the global carbon budget.

Carbon-fuelled capitalism, enriched by the wealth stolen through colonialism, has enabled the countries of Europe and North America to enhance the wellbeing of their populations and attain their relatively advanced level of development. The extreme inequalities between the standard of living of the average European (748 million people) and the average Indian (1.4 billion people) is seven times greater than it was a century ago.

Although the reliance by China, India, and other developing countries on carbon, particularly coal, has risen to a high level, their per capita emissions continue to remain far below those of the United States, whose per capita emissions are close to twice that of China's and eight times more than India's.

### Leapfrog

The lack of acknowledgment of climate imperialism leads to a failure to properly resource the Green Climate Fund, which was created in 2010 at COP 16 with the aim of helping developing countries "leapfrog" carbon-fuelled social development.

At the global level, debates on how to address the climate crisis frequently revolve around various forms of a Green New Deal (GND), such as the European Green Deal, the North American GND, and the Global GND, which are promoted by nation states, international organisations, and dif-

ferent sections of environmental movements.

In order to better understand and strengthen this discussion, the Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research office in Buenos Aires, Argentina, gathered leading eco-socialist scholars to reflect on the different GNDs and the possibilities to realise a genuine transformation to stave off the climate catastrophe. That discussion – with José Seoane (Argentina), Thea Riofrancos (United States), and Sabrina Fernandes (Brazil) – is now available in notebook number 3 (August 2022), *The Socio-environmental Crisis in Times of the Pandemic: Discussing a Green New Deal*.

These three scholars argue that capitalism cannot solve the climate crisis since capitalism is its principal cause. One hundred of the world's largest corporations are responsible for 71 percent of global industrial greenhouse gases (largely carbon dioxide and methane); these corporations, led by the carbon energy industry, are not prepared to accelerate the energy transition, despite the technological capacity to generate 18 times the global electricity demand by wind power alone.

Sustainability, a word that has been emptied of its content in much public discourse, is not profitable for these corporations. A social renewable energy project, for example, would not produce vast profits for the fossil fuel companies. Interest from certain capitalist firms in the GND is substantially motivated by their desire to secure public funds to engineer new private monopolies for the same capitalist class that owns those large corporations that pollute the world.

But, as Riofrancos explains in the notebook, "Green capitalism" purports to mitigate the symptoms of capitalism – global warming,

the mass extinction of species, the destruction of ecosystems – without transforming the model of accumulation and consumption that caused the climate crisis in the first place. It is a "techno-fix" – the fantasy of changing everything without changing anything.

The mainstream discussion of GND emerges, as Seoane points out, from initiatives such as the 1989 Pearce report, *Blueprint for a Green Economy*, which was prepared for the UK government and proposed the use of public funds to produce new technologies for private companies as a solution to the cascading crises in Western economies.

The concept of the "green economy" was not to green the economy, but to use the idea of environmentalism to revitalise capitalism. In 2009, during the world financial crisis, Edward Barbier, a co-author of the Pearce Report, wrote a new report for the UN Environment Programme titled, *Global Green New Deal*, which repackaged the "green economy" ideas as the "green new deal". This new report once more argued for public funds to stabilise turbulence in the capitalist system.

Our notebook emerges from a different genealogy, one that is rooted in the World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth (2010) and the People's World Conference on Climate Change and the Defence of Life (2015), both held in Tiquipaya, Bolivia, and then developed in gatherings, such as the Alternative World Water Forum (2018), the People's Summit (2017), and the People's Nature Forum (2020). At the heart of this approach, which grew out of the popular struggles in Latin America, are the concepts *buen vivir* and *teko porã* ("living well").

Rather than simply saving capi-

talism, which is the concern of the GND argument, the point of our notebook is to think about changing the way we organise society, in other words, to advance our thinking about building a new system. Building these ideas, Fernandes says, must involve the trade unions (many of which are concerned about job losses in the transition from carbon to renewables) and peasant unions (many of which are gripped by the fact that land concentration destroys nature and creates social inequality).

We must change the system, as Fernandes argues, "but the political conditions today are not conducive to this. The right wing is strong in many countries, as is the denial of climate science". Therefore, rapidly, the people's movements must put a decarbonisation agenda on the table. Four goals lie before us:

- Degrowth for Western countries. With less than 5 percent of the world's population, the United States consumes a third of the world's paper, a quarter of the world's oil, nearly a quarter of the world's coal, and a quarter of its aluminium.

### Destructive

The Sierra Club says that US per capita consumption "of energy, metals, minerals, forest products, fish, grains, meat and even fresh water dwarfs that of people living in the developing world". Western countries need to cut back on their overall consumption, scaling back, as Jason Hickel notes, the "unnecessary and destructive ones" (such as the fossil fuel and arms industries, the production of McMansions and private jets, the manner of industrial beef production, and the entire business philosophy of planned obsolescence).

- Socialise the key sector of energy generation. End subsidies to the fossil fuel industry and build a public energy sector that is rooted in a decarbonised energy system.

- Fund the Global Climate Action Agenda. Ensure that Western countries fulfil their historic responsibilities in supporting the Green Climate Fund, which will be used to finance the just transition in the Global South in particular.

- Enhance the public sector. Build more infrastructure for social rather than private consumption, such as more high-speed rail and electric buses, to decrease the use of private cars.

Countries of the Global South will have to build their own economies, including by exploiting their resources. The issue here is not entirely whether to exploit these resources, but whether they can be extracted for social and national development and not merely for the accumulation of capital. *Buen vivir* – living well – means to transcend hunger and poverty, illiteracy and ill-health, which will be developed by the public sector.

No climate policy can be universal. Those who devour the world's resources must reduce their consumption. Two billion people have no access to clean water, while half the world's population does not have access to adequate healthcare. Their social development must be guaranteed, but this development must be built on a sustainable, socialist foundation.

- *Notebook number 3 (August 2022), The Socio-environmental Crisis in Times of the Pandemic: Discussing a Green New Deal can be accessed here: <https://thetribcontinental.org/notebook-3-green-new-deal>*

Tricontinental



# ‘Your pain our gain’ says US in war aims

## Bid to weaken Russia, China, contain Eurasia

Vijay Prashad

GRAVE news comes to us from the United Nations (UN). The latest Human Development Report (2021-22) records that for the first time in 32 years, the Human Development Index has registered a second consecutive year of decline.

The previous five years of gains in areas such as health and education have been negated by this reversal. “Billions of people face the greatest cost-of-living crisis in a generation,” the report says. “Billions already grapple with food insecurity, owing largely to inequalities in wealth and power that determine entitlements to food. A global food crisis will hit them hardest.”

While the UN report points to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine as the immediate sources of this distress, an earlier report on human security notes that “more than six in seven people worldwide perceived feeling moderately or very insecure just before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic”.

Certainly, the pandemic and recent inflationary pressures due to the conflict in Eurasia have made life harder, but this distress precedes both events. The deeper problem is the world capitalist system, lurching from crisis to crisis, which has made life very difficult for more than six billion people.

### Distress

At Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, we have been working on understanding the nature of these cascading crises and their underlying causes since our inception nearly five years ago. Over this period, we have witnessed the rise not of global cooperation to deal with hunger, unemployment, social distress, climate catastrophe, etc., but of a mentality and structures that promote war as their solution.

The leader here has been, without a doubt, the United States. Against China, for instance, the US has conducted a trade war and tried to use arguments for national security to damage advances in sophisticated Chinese technology.

While most countries – egged on by rising social unrest amongst the masses – have been eager for international cooperation to address their countries’ most pressing concerns, the US has pursued a dangerous strategy of political threats and military confrontation

to press its economic advantages, since it cannot maintain them by commercial means.

To more deeply understand the pressing issues that define our times, Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research partnered with the venerable socialist magazine *Monthly Review* and the peace platform *No Cold War* to study new developments in US military strategy and its arsenal. This investigation has borne fruit in our first publication in a new series called *Studies on Contemporary Dilemmas*. This study, *The United States Is Waging a New Cold War: A Socialist Perspective*, features essays by John Bellamy Foster (the editor of *Monthly Review*), John Ross (a member of *No Cold War*), and Deborah Venezia (a researcher at Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research). The opening section of my introduction to the study makes up the rest of this article.

At the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland on May 23 this year, former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger made some remarks about Ukraine that struck a nerve. Rather than be caught up “in the mood of the moment”, Kissinger said, the West – led by the United States – needs to enable a peace agreement that satisfies the Russians. “Pursuing the war beyond [this] point”, Kissinger said, “would not be about the freedom of Ukraine, but a new war against Russia itself”.

Most of the commentary from the Western foreign policy establishment rolled their eyes and dismissed Kissinger’s comments. Kissinger, no peacenik, nonetheless indicated the great danger of escalation towards not only the establishment of a new iron curtain around Asia but perhaps open – and lethal – warfare between the West and Russia as well as China.

This sort of unthinkable outcome was too much, even for Kissinger, whose boss, former President Richard Nixon, spoke frequently of the “madman theory” of international relations; Nixon told his then chief of staff Bob Haldeman that he had his “hand on the nuclear button” to terrify Ho Chi Minh into capitulation.

During the lead-up to the illegal US invasion of Iraq in 2003, I spoke to a senior member of the US State Department who told me that the prevailing theory in Washington amounts to a simple slogan: short-term pain for long-term gain. He explained that the general view is that the nation’s elites are willing to tolerate short-term pain for other countries, and perhaps for working people in the United



Ludwig Meidner (Germany), *Apocalyptic Landscape*, 1913

States, who could experience economic difficulties due to the disruptions and carnage created by war. However, if all goes well, this price will result in long-term gain, as the United States would be able to maintain what it has sought to maintain since the end of the Second World War, which is primacy.

If all goes well is the premise that sent shivers down my back as he spoke, but what rattled me just as much was the callousness about who must face the pain and who would enjoy the gain. It was quite cynically said in Washington that it was worth the price that Iraqis and working-class US soldiers be negatively impacted (and die), so long as large oil and financial companies could enjoy the fruits of a conquered Iraq.

### Escalation

The attitude of short-term pain, long-term gain is the defining hallucination of the elites in the United States, who are unwilling to tolerate the project of building human dignity and the longevity of nature.

Short-term pain, long-term gain defines the dangerous escalation by the United States and its Western allies against Russia and China. What is striking about the posture of the United States is that

it seeks to prevent a historical process that seems inevitable, which is the process of Eurasian integration.

After the collapse of the US housing market and the major credit crisis in the Western banking sector, the Chinese government, alongside other Global South countries, pivoted to build platforms that were not dependent upon the markets of North America and Europe. These platforms included the creation of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) in 2009 and the announcement of One Belt, One Road (later the Belt and Road Initiative or BRI) in 2013.

Russia’s energy supply and its massive metal and mineral holdings, as well as China’s industrial and technological capacity, drew many countries into association with the BRI despite their political orientation, with Russia’s export of energy undergirding this association. These countries included Poland, Italy, Bulgaria, and Portugal, while Germany is now China’s largest trading partner in goods.

The historical fact of Eurasian integration threatened the primacy of the United States and of the Atlantic elites. It is this threat that drives the dangerous attempt by the United States to use any

means to “weaken” both Russia and China. Old habits continue to dominate in Washington, which has long sought nuclear primacy to negate the theory of détente. The United States has developed a nuclear capacity and posture that would allow it to destroy the planet to maintain its hegemony. The strategies to weaken Russia and China include an attempt to isolate these countries through the escalation of the US-imposed hybrid war (such as sanctions and the information war) and a desire to dismember these countries and then dominate them in perpetuity.

### Campaign

*The United States Is Waging a New Cold War* is a chilling document, one that we hope will be read by concerned people around the world and help mobilise an urgent global peace campaign.

Peace is essential, not the least in Ukraine. In the September/October issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Fiona Hill (former deputy assistant to President Donald Trump), and Professor Angela Stent wrote that in April, “Russian and Ukrainian negotiators appeared to have tentatively agreed to the outlines of a negotiated interim settlement” where Russia would withdraw to

the previous borders held before February 23 and Ukraine would promise not to seek NATO membership. However, in a move revealing of the West’s agenda, the UK prime minister at the time, Boris Johnson, arrived in Kyiv and urged Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to break off negotiations. Even if Ukraine was willing to sign a security agreement with Russia, Johnson said, the West would not back it. So, Zelensky ceased negotiations, and the war raged on.

The Hill-Stent article reveals the West’s dangerous gambit, prolonging a conflict that has increased Ukrainian and Russian suffering, and spread instability across the globe, to perpetuate its New Cold War against both China and Russia.

The UN Human Development Report points out that “the bridges that connect different groups are among our most important assets”.

We could not agree more. More bridges need to be built than bombed.

● *The United States Is Waging a New Cold War* can be accessed here: <https://thetricontinental.org/the-united-states-is-waging-a-new-cold-war-a-socialist-perspective>

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Boštjan Jurečič Vega (Slovenia), *Amerikana*, 2011



# Lula will face Bolsonaro in Brazil presidential election runoff

Former left president just short of the 50 percent vote needed to win

BRAZIL'S acrimonious presidential race will go to a second round after former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva failed to secure the overall majority he needed to avoid a runoff with the far-right incumbent, Jair Bolsonaro.

With more than 99.5 percent of votes counted, the left veteran had secured 48.3 percent of the vote, not enough to avoid the October 30 show down with his rightwing rival. Bolsonaro, who significantly out-performed pollsters' predictions and will be buoyed by the result, received 43.3 percent.

Addressing the media at a hotel in central São Paulo, Lula, who was president from 2003 until 2010, struck a defiant tone, declaring: "The struggle continues until our final victory."

"We are going to win these elections – this for us is simply extra time," vowed Lula, who was barred from the 2018 election in which Bolsonaro was elected, on corruption charges that were later overturned.

Speaking on the eve of the election, Lula said he was hopeful of a first-round win but would redouble his efforts to reclaim power if a second round was needed.

"I feel great hope that this election will be decided tomorrow, but if it isn't we'll have to behave like a football team when a match goes to extra time. We'll rest for 15 minutes and then we'll get back out on to the pitch to score the goals we didn't score in normal time," he told reporters.

## Progressive

Gleisi Hoffmann, the president of Lula's Workers' Party, told reporters the campaign was neither "sad nor downcast" at the result and pointed to Lula's more than 56m votes. "Congratulations, president Lula, for your victory," she declared.

But the election result was a major blow to progressive Brazilians who had been rooting for an emphatic victory over Bolsonaro, a former army captain who has repeatedly attacked the country's democratic institutions and vandalised Brazil's international reputation.

Bolsonaro is also accused of wreaking havoc on the environment and catastrophically mishandling a Covid epidemic that killed nearly 700,000 Brazilians, by undermining vaccination and containment efforts and peddling quack cures.

Speaking on election night, Bolsonaro promised to devote more time to convincing the poorest sectors of society they will be better off under a far-right government than a leftist one.

The far-right leader said: "I understand there were a lot of votes (cast) because of the condition of the Brazilian people, who feel price increases, especially basic products. I understand that a lot of people desire change but some changes can be for the worst."



Top: Presidential candidate Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva votes at a polling station in Sao Bernardo do Campo, on the outskirts of Sao Paulo  
Above: People stand in line to cast votes outside a polling station in Rio de Janeiro on October 2

"We tried to show this other side in the campaign but it seems like it didn't register with the most important layers of society."

He once again said Brazil must avoid following neighbouring nations, such as Chile and Colombia, who recently elected leftist leaders but he pointedly refused to answer questions about possible voter fraud, after spending months casting aspersions on the security of the electronic voting machines.

Bolsonaro has hinted he will not leave office if defeated, raising concerns of a Trump-like insurrection among his supporters if Lula wins.

Prominent Bolsonaristas were elected to Brazil's congress and as state governors, including Bolsonaro's former health minister, Eduardo Pazuello, who became a congressman for Rio, and his former environment minister Ricardo Salles.

Pazuello was Bolsonaro's health minister during the height of the pandemic that led to more than 685,000 deaths in Brazil. A former military general, he promoted quack cures such as hydroxychloroquine.

Salles, meanwhile, was the environment minister who presided over a sharp rise in Amazonian deforestation. A federal police investigation accused the far-right ideologue of making it difficult for environmental crimes to be investigated. A separate inquiry said he was linked to illegal logging exports. He denied all the charges.

## Evangelical

Rio's Bolsonaro-supporting governor, Cláudio Castro, was re-elected, while one of Bolsonaro's most controversial former ministers, the evangelical preacher Damasceno Alves, claimed a place in the

senate. Tarcísio de Freitas, Bolsonaro's candidate for the governorship of São Paulo, also performed better than pollsters predicted and will face Lula ally Fernando Haddad in a second round.

"The far-right will be thrilled," said the political scientist Christian Lynch. Thiago Amparo, an academic and columnist for the *Folha de São Paulo* newspaper, said the right's stronger-than-forecast showing showed Bolsonaro and Bolsonarismo were "alive and kicking".

"There was a feeling among the left that Lula had a chance to win in the first round ... the results show that it was wishful thinking to imagine the election would serve as a way to punish Bolsonaro for his disastrous policies during the pandemic. I feel exhausted," Amparo added. "But the results show we do not have the time to rest now. It is time to go out on

to the streets ... otherwise we are going to have a very dark future again."

"I think Bolsonaro has the momentum," said Thomas Traumann, a Rio de Janeiro-based political observer, although he believed Lula was still the favourite. "It's a very disappointing night for the left."

There was determination from Lula and his allies as the rightwing successes and the need for a second round became clear.

"I think this is a chance that the Brazilian people are giving me," said Lula before heading to a celebration with his supporters on São Paulo's Paulista Avenue. "The campaign begins tomorrow."

In Rio de Janeiro's city centre, a massive crowd of people, mostly clad in red, drank beer and danced samba as they awaited the final tally to appear on a screen overlooking the square.

But the jubilant mood dampened when results showed Lula still nearly 2 percent shy of the majority he needed to avoid a runoff duel with Bolsonaro.

"I'm disappointed," said Kharine Gil, a 23-year-old university student. "Because we saw that Bolsonaro is stronger than we thought he was."

Elaine Azevedo, a 34-year-old security systems worker, looked defeated as she stared up at the towering screen showing the results.

"I feel despair, pure despair," said Azevedo, who was clad in red from head to toe and sported a hat with Lula's name on it. "We all thought Lula would win easily."

But at a neighbourhood bar about a block away, Eudacio Queiroz Alves, a 65-year-old retired driver, was celebrating.

"We expected this," he said. "The people are with Bolsonaro. I'm confident that he will win."

UK Guardian

## You don't have the right to give up, Fidel Castro said

HE IS one of Latin America's most influential and enduring politicians – a silver-tongued statesman Barack Obama once hailed as "the most popular president on Earth".

But had it not been for a chiding from Fidel Castro nearly four decades ago, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva might well have abandoned what would prove one of the most storied political careers the region has ever known.

"He gave him a bollocking," Lula's biographer and friend, Fernando Morais, said of the moment the Cuban revolutionary took the Brazilian unionist to task for considering throwing in the towel after failing in his bid to become São Paulo's governor in 1982.

"Listen, Lula ... you don't have the right to abandon politics. You don't have the right to do this to the working class," Castro told the Brazilian during a trip to Havana, according to Morais's bestselling biography. "Get back into politics!"

Lula's chronicler believes it was a pivotal moment in the life of his 76-year-old subject, who took his Cuban host's advice to heart.

Four years later, in 1989, the former shoe-shine boy and factory worker, launched his first, ultimately unsuccessful bid to become Brazil's first working-class president. He lost two more presidential elections, in 1994 and 1998, before finally achieving his goal in 2002 – a historic triumph that sparked a nationwide outpouring of emotion and of hope.

"I cried so much," Morais remembered of the moment he saw Lula address crowds on São Paulo's main avenue, Paulista, after his victory. "They were tears of joy and of fulfilment," said the writer. "It moved me profoundly."

UK Guardian





## WE ARE WHAT WE ARE . . .

THERE has been endless talk of us fighting our own political battles instead of fighting for others – fighting for “bad” people like Mr Bowman, Mr Lusambo and Mr Malanji.

But fighting for others is, for us, fighting for ourselves. Those who are unable or unwilling to fight for others will never be able to truly fight for themselves.

These are not mere words of self-consolation. Only those of us who feel it truly and permanently in the depths of our souls can comprehend this. These are values we hold dearly.

What sense does life have without these values? What then is it to live? Those who understand this and generously sacrifice themselves for the sake of goodness and justice, know what I am talking about. God is the supreme idea of goodness and justice.

For us, the quality of life lies in adherence to principles, in knowledge, in culture. Values are what constitute true quality of life, supreme quality of life, even above food, shelter and clothing.

Ignorance is the root of many ills. Knowledge must be the fundamental

ally of all people who aspire, despite all their tragedies and problems, to become truly emancipated, to build a better – more just, fair and humane – society.

And we must be prepared to learn from those who have broken their chains.

Those who have chained us for centuries cannot teach us anything – they can only teach us the standards of pirates, slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, servitude, and so on and so forth. We are what we are and that's the way it's going to be.

*Fred M'membe, Socialist Party President*

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