

UPND is relying on violence to stay in power

And the buck stops with President Hakainde Hichilema

Fred M'membe
Socialist Party President

PLEASE don't believe or trust whatever the UPND leadership says about them being against political violence. They support, encourage, and sponsor the violence of their cadres and supporters. They certainly don't like the violence of their political opponents and are truly against it. But they have no problems with the violence of those who belong to them, who support them and campaign for their party. Recently, UPND cadres were mobilised and transported to a Catholic Church in Chililabombwe, where PF leaders were worshipping – among them Mr Chishimba Kambwili, Mr Bowman Lusambo and Mr Richard Musukwa – to attack them. This disgusting conduct was strongly condemned by the parish priest. There isn't even a hypocritical condemnation of this barbarism from the key UPND leadership. Why? We were followed by UPND cadres in Serenje to our meeting in an area where we were supposed to be campaigning as per the ECZ timetable and were attacked. There was no condemnation of this from key UPND leaders. Instead, they put a lot of pressure on the police to arrest and charge people who were attacked and had to defend themselves. Not a single UPND cadre was arrested by the police for the Serenje attack on Socialist Party supporters, cadres and leaders. We were assaulted by known UPND cadres in full view of the police and yet no arrests have been made. As if this were not enough, UPND cadres attacked our comrades at the main campaign camp at night and looted their campaign materials and foodstuffs. This

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Socialist Party President Fred M'membe flanked by party General Secretary and First Vice-President Cosmas Musheke Musumali (left) and Second Vice-President and General Treasurer Chris Ngenda Mwikisa

Times are hard but don't lose hope!

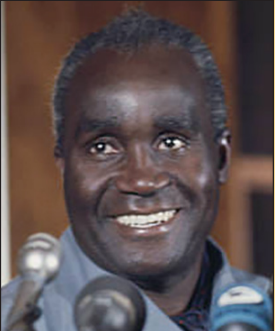
THESE ARE very hard times! The cost of living is skyrocketing, jobs are being lost and becoming fewer and fewer, the few remaining jobs are being degraded and increasingly insecure, writes Socialist Party President Fred M'membe. But in the midst of all these difficulties, challenges and sufferings, let's not forget that the workers have given us whatever we have, made us what we are, and will make us what we hope to be; and we thank them for all, and above all for giving us eyes to see, hearts to feel and voices to speak for the workers. Labour Day, May 1, is a good day to rest the hands and give the brain a chance – to think about what has been, and is, and is yet to be. The way has been long and weary and full of pain, and many have fallen by the wayside, but the unconquerable army of labour is still on the march and as it rests on its arms today and casts a look ahead, it beholds upon the horizon the first glowing rays of the social sunrise. The Socialist Party and the Trade Union Movement must be one today in celebration of Labour Day and pledge each other their mutual fidelity and support in every battle, economic and political, until the field is won and the workers are strong and in control. Forget not the past on Labour Day! Comrades, this is the day for workers

to think of the class struggle and the ballot – the day for labour to clasp the hand of labour and girdle the globe with the international revolutionary solidarity of the working class. We are all one – all workers of all lands and climes. We know not colour, tribe, nor creed, nor sex, in the labour movement. We know only that our hearts throb with the same proletarian stroke, that we are keeping step with our class in the march to the goal and that the solidarity of labour will vanquish exploitation and humiliation in the world. It gets dark sometimes, but the morning comes. Don't lose hope. Don't give up!



Remembering Chris Hani

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KK set difficult task for leaders

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90 seconds to midnight

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‘Unite or perish’ M’membe tells unions on Labour Day

Fragmentation, financial constraints are a threat

AS THE world celebrated International Labour Day, Socialist Party President Fred M’membe encouraged trade unions to unite.

Speaking on Diamond TV’s Costa programme, Dr M’membe said there were many unions in different fraternities but that the growing number was weakening their effectiveness as many were financially constrained.

“There is a need to unite our small, fragmented trade unions,” he said. “Even if they maintain their individual identities, they have to cooperate. If they don’t, they will remain fragmented and it will take a long time for them to win back their strength. The civil service needs revolutionary change,” he said.

“The civil service we have today cannot deliver meaningfully under the conditions we are in and the challenges facing our people. It has become an unprofessional civil service. It is a civil service of cadres. And that didn’t start with the UPND. It has been degenerating for a long time.”

Difficult

Dr M’membe denied claims that the “government of angels” was cleaning up the civil service. “They are not doing that,” he said.

He urged Zambia to learn from other countries regarding how the civil service works.

“China has the most difficult entry into the civil service. It is almost like ZIALE here. It’s not easy in China to enter the civil service. It’s highly professional. When you get there you don’t want to leave,” he said.

“Despite having a population of 1.4 billion human beings, they have a civil service of about eight million. Teachers are not civil servants there. Doctors and nurses are not civil servants there. There is a lot we can learn from other countries, and also on our own. We have to learn our own lessons.”

Regarding the Presidential order for the XV’s to be sold, Dr M’membe accused the Head of State of playing “cheap politics”.

“Even he himself; is he driving an old flit? There is even the addition of a helicopter that is not being talked about,” he said.

“There isn’t much that is being

saved (from the sale of the VXs) compared with what is being bought. Let us not allow ourselves to be deceived. This is deception. It is very cheap politics. He is just trying to bring down his ministers and make them look as if they are bad people.”

Dr M’membe stressed the need for unity.

“Our leaders, the founders of this country, were not wrong to be part of the nonaligned movement, to initiate it and consolidate it. They were nonaligned in a world that was divided into two, and they dealt with both. The world will not be any better if we put ourselves into groups here and there. We are on one planet,” he said.

“We are traveling on this one vessel – all of us – called Planet. If this vessel hits an iceberg, all of us perish the way they perished on the Titanic. It didn’t matter which cabin you were in, when that ship sank everybody perished.

“If we don’t create a world that is peaceful, that is fair, that is just, that is more humane, no matter how many groups you form on this planet, they will not guarantee us the peace that we are seeking. We will all perish,” he said.

● **AND Dr M’membe says there is a need to build a world in which there is respect for diversity of civilisations and in which countries – big and small, rich and poor – uphold the principles of equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness among civilisations, and let cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, and inclusiveness transcend any sense of superiority.**
“This can only be realised in a world where there’s recognition and respect for the importance of inheritance, innovation of civilisations and where the inheritance and innovation of civilisations is highly valued,” he said.

● **We need to fully harness the relevance of our histories and cultures to the present times, and push for the creative transformation and innovative development of our fine traditional cultures.**

● **We need to strengthen our advocacy for the common values of humanity; peace, development, equity, justice, democracy and freedom are the common aspirations of all peoples.”**

JUST over 30 years ago, on April 10, 1993, in South Africa, Africa and the progressive world lost one of its best sons, one of its best leaders, to the gun of an assassin in Johannesburg: Thembisile “Chris” Hani, writes Socialist Party P resident Fred M’membe.

Chris was born on June 28, 1942, in Sabalele, the Cofimvaba region of the former Transkei.

He attended Catholic school and had desired to become a priest, but his father moved him to Matanzima Secondary School in Cala, Transkei, as a disapproval of his desire for the priesthood.

Chris was an outstanding leader of the South African Communist Party and chief of staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC).

Today, so much can be said or will be said about Chris to extol his virtuous life of struggle and revolutionary leadership.

Although there’s a lot I can say about Commandante Chris, about the man who ideologically, politically, and otherwise brought me up, today I will try to remember him by his own words, by letting him speak, speak up, speak out:

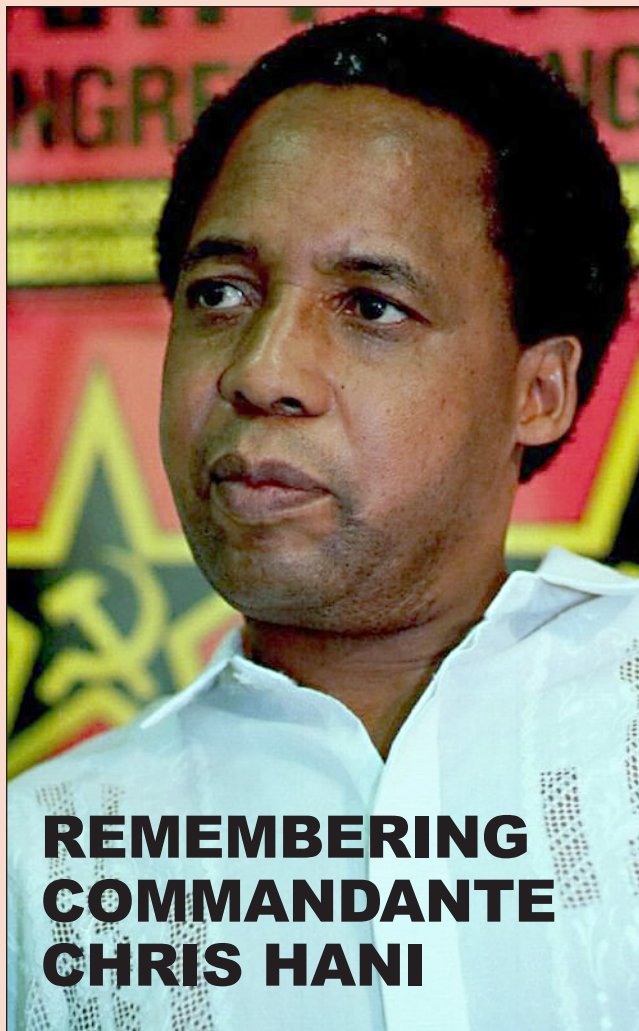
● “In 1959 I went over to university at Fort Hare where I became openly involved in the struggle, as Fort Hare was a liberal campus. It was here that I got exposed to Marxist ideas and the scope and nature of the racist capitalist system. My conversion to Marxism also deepened my non-racial perspective.”

● “My early Catholicism led to my fascination with Latin studies and English literature. The studies in these two courses were gobbled up by me and I became an ardent lover of English, Latin and Greek literature, both modern and classical. My studies of literature further strengthened my hatred of all forms of oppression, persecution, and obscurantism. The action of tyrants as portrayed in various literary works also made me hate tyranny and institutionalised oppression.”

● “What we need in South Africa is for egos to be suppressed in favour of peace. We need to create a new breed of South Africans who love their country and love everybody, irrespective of their colour.”

● “We need to create the pathways to give hope to our youth that they can have the opportunity through education and hard work to escape the trap of poverty.”

● “What I fear is that the liberators emerge as elitists who drive around in Mercedes Benzes and use the resources of this country to live in palaces and to gather riches.”



● “Socialism is not about big concepts and heavy theory. Socialism is about decent shelter for those who are homeless. It is about water for those who have no safe drinking water. It is about healthcare, it is about a life of dignity for the old. It is about overcoming the huge divide between urban and rural areas. It is about a decent education for all our people. Socialism is about rolling back the tyranny of the market. As long as the economy is dominated by an unelected, privileged few, the case for socialism will exist.”

● “My basic objective is struggle in South Africa. You know I could have left you as others did to go and study, I had a degree from Rhodes University, but I felt that I was not going to go and study. It was my revolutionary duty to be part of the armed struggle of the revolution in South Africa.”

● “The imperialists have been very fast to learn that it is not the colour of the man that is important, but the sort of social system that a given people adopts after independence.”

● “If you want peace then you must struggle for social justice.”

● “I’ve never wanted to spare myself because I feel there are people who are no longer around and died for this struggle. What

right do I have to hold back, to rest, to preserve my health, to have time with my family, when there are other people who are no longer alive – when they sacrificed what is precious: namely life itself?”

These are the words of the Chris I knew, our exemplary revolutionary leader. He was a man of ideas and actions – an ardent believer in Karl Marx’s eleventh thesis on German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, “Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.”

As such, as we express our gratitude to Commandante Chris, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter the words, but to live by them. It is rather for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from this honoured Commandante we take increased devotion to that cause for which he gave the last full measure of devotion, that we highly resolve that this Commandante shall not have died in vain.

Chris lives; he lives in us. And as Minot J. Savage aptly put it, “The brave never die, though they sleep in dust, their courage nerves a thousand living men.”

We won’t be intimidated by setbacks, spokesman Bwalya says

TEMPORARY setbacks, such as our losses in the three local government by-elections that have just ended, will not dampen our revolutionary spirit as we endeavour to grow our party in strength and popularity, Socialist Party national spokesperson Frank Bwalya says.

“This is because we understand only too well the illegalities that characterised not only the ward by-elections in Chililabombwe, Lupososhi and Serenje, but also other elections since UPND formed a government in 2021, he said.

“Zambians know that UPND again sponsored violence, the intimidation of political competitors and voters, and engaged in many other electoral malpractices, such as vote buying. The UPND behave as if they are above the law and even disregard basic arrangements to facilitate peaceful campaigns such as the Electoral Commission of Zambia’s (ECZ) agreed timetable.

“Our leader Dr Fred M’membe and party members were attacked in Serenje and were then locked up by the police, leaving the UPND cadres who perpetrated the violence to walk free. The UPND also attacked our members in Chililabombwe and the police also locked them up, only releasing them after the campaign period ended.

“It is against this background that our party celebrates the strides we are making in popularising the socialist agenda. The main cause of our celebration is not the votes our party received in the by-elections but rather the people’s interest in the socialist programme.

“Our party under the revolutionary leadership of Dr M’membe will not relent. We will continue to engage people peacefully and with respect so that even more Zambians are able to appreciate the difference our party will make when it is given an opportunity to govern.

“We know that with people’s growing dissatisfaction with the government as a result of unfulfilled promises and mediocre leadership, UPND will become even more violent and law breaking. We also know they will continue to use by-elections as platforms to project a false impression of their popularity.

“With the police and ECZ behaving as if they are the ruling party’s lap dogs, free and fair elections will continue to elude us, but our party will not be discouraged, despite a seemingly hopeless situation.

“Our members will not be intimidated. They are determined to continue to push, and all of us are ready to pay the price of opposing a corrupt and violent regime.”

‘These are my real comments on the NAPSA partial withdrawals’

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M’membe says he has not so far commented on the NAPSA partial withdrawals, even though Fake News comments attributed to him have been circulating on social media sites.

“Since it seems I am expected to say something, let me do so, he said.

“An immediate impact on the government is that NAPSA is an anchor investor in government bonds. Therefore, releasing a projected 20 percent partial payment of K11 billion will deprive NAPSA of the liquidity required to participate in government securities. Consequently, the government will be starved of the much-needed operational funding required to function.

“Note that in the April 27, 2023 bond auction of K2.6 billion, the government only raised K636 million, which was a massive under subscription. This can be partially attributed to NAPSA’s absence or its minimal participation in government bonds. Also,

the uncertainty regarding debt restructuring has most likely resulted in non-resident bond players pulling out their investments upon maturity. This will certainly negatively impact the exchange rate further.

“Added to this, inflation is now hitting double digits despite assurances by the Minister of Finance that it was unlikely to do so. Alas, the Statistician General announced on April 27 that the April inflation rate had reached 10.2 percent.”

Dr M’membe said all this pointed to a lack of comprehensive economic recovery policy/strategy by Mr Hakainde Hichilema’s UPND government.

“Instead of coming up with a master plan for the country’s economic recovery, it seems to be in “fire fighting mode”.

“Principally, it is focusing on day-to-day operational matters instead of formulating a strategic economic recovery master plan on how it will incentivise domestic value addition, bring Mopani and KCM on board,

and come up with a clear policy on agriculture, among other things.

“As long as the government remains operationally focused and not strategic, our economy is headed for doom.

“The lack of consistent policies includes NAPSA partial withdrawals. On the one hand, the Bank of Zambia raises the statutory reserve ratio in the market to stifle liquidity in the hope that the Kwacha depreciation can be tamed, as explained by the Minister of Finance; but at the same time there is a need to pump K11 billion back into the same market through partial NAPSA withdrawals, increasing liquidity in the market.

“So which is it to be? Decrease liquidity to tame Kwacha depreciation or increase liquidity to gain political mileage and appease the masses? What exactly is the policy direction?

“Effectively, the fiscal side is cancelling out or neu-

tralisating the monetary policy measure. The right hand does not seem to know what the left hand is doing.

“Providing liquidity in an already starved market is a good measure to stir economic growth. Admittedly, inflation may be negatively affected, but we can live with that in the short term, but contracting the economy by reducing liquidity in the market is like removing blood from a patient. Achieving a single digit inflation number is meaningless if the patient dies. This is a very narrow perspective on how to solve the economic malaise of the country’s economy and grow it.

“A balance needs to be struck between creating an environment for economic growth while also managing inflation, and this may mean inflation trends outside the 6-8 percent target range for a while.

“However, once the economy starts to grow, inflation will drop as a consequence,” Dr M’membe said.

KK set an example difficult for today's leadership to match

His wealth could fit into the pockets of his safari suits when he died

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M'membe says Zambia's founding leader, the late Dr Kenneth Kaunda, set an example that will be difficult to match as far as our national leadership is concerned.

Speaking on Diamond TV's Costa programme, Dr M'membe said KK Day, which was celebrated at the end of last month, sets a leadership standard that people needed to follow.

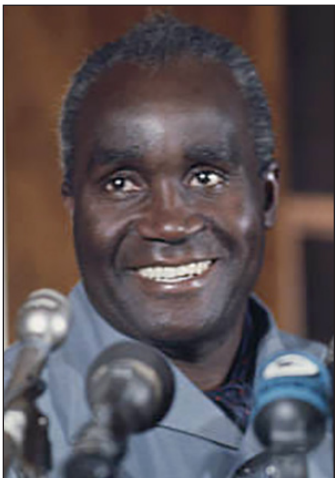
He said the late president set the principles upon which the country's development and future should be based.

Dr M'membe said Dr Kaunda set very high standards of honesty in public life, adding that he did not amass wealth in the way today's leaders have.

"KK's wealth could fit into the pockets of his safari suits at the time of his death, or even at the time he left office. He left with nothing. He died with almost nothing or very little. It is not the money or the wealth that we use to measure the importance of KK. It is his principles, what he stood for; his honesty, commitment, selflessness and humility," he said.

"If we follow even a tenth of what KK stood for as a leader, we will achieve much more. He was not the most educated person, together with his comrades. Most of them were standard six, but they were honest people who were seeking the best for their country, for their people, and they achieved a lot."

Dr M'membe said some "colleagues of KK in other countries" amassed so much land, while he



Founding leader Kenneth Kaunda

and his comrades left nothing. "Our people today, our leaders today, own more land than KK and his colleagues owned. Despite having limited education, they achieved a lot

under extremely difficult conditions because they were honest and committed.

"The conditions under which they ran Zambia were not as easy as the conditions today.

"At independence, they had only 100 college and university graduates from which to pick the government, pick the civil service leadership, construct a military, appoint diplomats and so on."

Dr M'membe said that despite the country having highly experienced people in different fields, poverty levels have remained high.

"The country was blockaded. We did not have the Zimbabwe we have today, we did not have the Botswana we have today as neighbours, we did not have Namibia, we did not have the

independent or free South Africa that we have today. There was no free Mozambique, there was no free Angola, Tanzania was a poor country," he said.

"Today, we have highly experienced people in many fields and we are still struggling. We still have very high poverty levels, extremely high poverty levels.

"And when you look at the statistics, the future of this country is frightening. Today we are almost close to 20 million Zambians. In 15 years' time we will have not less than 38 million."

Dr M'membe questioned how leaders would manage to feed Zambians once the population grew.

"The population is going to double within the next 15 years at our current population rate growth of 2.3 percent. Previously, the popu-

lation of Zambia used to double every 20 years. In the current way we are doing things, how are we going to feed the doubled population if we are struggling to feed 19 million plus people," he said.

Dr M'membe added that Dr Kaunda was neither a communist nor a socialist.

"Comrade KK was not a communist. I can even say, probably, he was not a socialist. He was simply a decent human being.

"His main belief was a man-centered society, the centrality of a human being in everything that he did or we do.

"And because he was honest and he put the human being at the centre of everything, he cared for that human being, he was compassionate towards that human being," he said.

● KK lives in our hearts – P12

SP 'has now taken the centre stage'

SOCIALIST Party Central Province chairman Patrick Dube Tembo says the election results from Muchinda ward in Serenje district are an indication that the party led by Dr Fred M'membe is gaining ground and is now a force to be reckoned with.

In an interview, Tembo said the party demonstrated it had taken centre stage. "We have recorded good results from the Muchinda ward by-elections and many other local government by-elections," he said. "This is confirmation that the Socialist Party is now taking stage and affirmation that it is a force to be reckoned with.

"We are becoming more popular by the day because of our political ideologies and manifesto anchored on the promotion of equity and equality, among other core values."

Tembo said that had the Muchinda ward by-election not been affected by the electoral violence, the Socialist Party would have emerged victorious.

And Southern Province Minister and UPND spokesperson Cornelius Mweetwa said the clean sweep from the by-elections showed UPND was breaking into former PF strongholds but added they would not deceive themselves that all was well for 2026.



THE WRITE APPROACH

THE FRED M'membe Literacy and Agroecology Campaign is gearing up in Lusaka Province.

Dr M'membe and the Socialist Party believe that knowing how to read and write is everyone's right and are determined to

roll out the programme to all corners of the country. In Lusaka District, more than 5,000 adults have registered for the classes, which will last for six months

The lessons are free, together with pens and writing books.



UPND stubbornness to blame for continuing mealie meal crisis

SOCIALIST Party Copperbelt youth league training coordinator Joseph Kangwa has expressed concern over the continuing shortages of mealie meal, especially the cost of a 25kg bag, as well as the skyrocketing prices of other essential commodities.

"It is painful to see how the UPND leadership continues to attack the living standards and dignity of the Zambian people, even threatening their very survival," Kangwa said.

"The shortages of mealie meal and the price hikes are alarming. The Zambian people are

now suffering beyond endurance, with thousands of families sleeping on empty stomachs and many others eating just one meal a day.

"The mealie meal crisis has worsened to the extent that the majority of people can now hardly afford it. It is sad that the President and his ministers remain woefully uninterested in ending this crisis and finding a lasting solution despite the fact that Mr Hichilema was aware mealie was a serious issue when he was in opposition, "ubunga is a serious issue. Hunger leads to anger, that's a fact," (14/3/2020).

"The President and UPND used to accuse the Patriotic Front government of causing the people to go hungry. Today, they are the cause and are therefore fermenting anger against their government. Their stubbornness is the cause of both the shortages and price hikes, and they ignore advice.

"The people are so angry they cannot wait for 2026 to vote this government out of office because it is very clear that it has worsened their suffering. Having said that, we are asking the UPND government to put measures

in place as a matter of urgency to end the crisis and reduce prices. Importing mealie meal from South Africa and other countries is not and never will be a solution and the fact that the government thinks it is just underlines its failure.

"It is inhuman for them to continue to live in luxury while their people go hungry. They should cut their allowances and reduce their salaries in order to minimise the cost of mealie meal and make it affordable for every Zambian."

Let's put this debt claim to the test

OUR government has continuously agitated that the current economic hardships our people are enduring are solely due to delayed debt restructuring and that once it is done, manna from heaven will fall on Zambia, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

"Debt restructuring, according to the government, is the silver bullet that will address our economic challenges," he said.

"Let's put this narrative to test:

"The previous government told us that 48 percent of the budget was utilised on public service payroll and roughly 42 percent on debt service prior to the November 2020 debt default. Effectively, only 10 percent of the budget was available to service government operations.

"If this scenario changes as a result of debt restructuring and, say, the numbers will be 50 percent public service payroll as a result of new recruitments for teachers, health, and security personnel, and, say, the debt service burden is halved to 21 percent of the budget, then the government will have freed up 21 percent in addition to the 10 percent prior to debt restructuring, giving the government 31 percent of the budget for operational financing.

"In reality, will this really be a game changer or it will just provide a marginal relief to fund government operations? What about the capital projects Members of Parliament are asking for on a daily basis? Completion of existing unfounded projects, health sector demands, to mention just a couple.

"Clearly, the government needs to tone down overplaying debt restructuring because it is not a panacea for our economic challenges.

"Government focus should be on expenditure cuts and expanding revenue collection initiatives because current economic challenges will not go away even post debt restructuring. Stop promising, start delivering!"



It has become habitual for UPND cadres to attack SP by-election campaign teams without provocation as they did in Kaumbwe, Lubufu, Sokontwe, Lukutu, Serenje, Luangwa, and other places, with impunity

Ruling Zambia with brute force

Fred M'membe
Socialist Party President

LEADERS with uncontrolled appetites for electoral victory will have no scruples deploying violence as an electoral tool.

In a video released ahead of the Chitimukulu ward by-election in Chililabombwe district on the Copperbelt, a well-known senior UPND official indicated that opponents would be attacked and beaten.

And the Socialist Party Zambia media team in Chililabombwe reported that:

"Last night a horde of UPND cadres in six vehicles invaded the Socialist Party campaign camp in Area X of Chitimukulu Ward in Chililabombwe, beating, abducting and assaulting five Socialist Party members and forcibly grabbing their phones and a Toyota Land Cruiser they found at the camp."

The UPND, after beating, harassing and assaulting the SP members later took them to Chililabombwe police station and ordered the police to detain them. They concocted lies claiming that our people were carrying guns and were dishing out money.

As a party we wish to put the record straight that none of our members were carrying guns. Our team was at the campaign camp when UPND thugs ambushed them.

We demanded the immediate release of our people and our vehicle and called upon the police to act professionally and not to succumb to the undue pressure from UPND cadres who were using the power of incumbency to order the police on what to do.

We also demanded that the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) enforce the Electoral Code of Conduct and hold UPND accountable for their continued violence, intimidation and vote buying.

The UPND realised they could not win the elections in Chililabombwe and resorted to intimidation, violence, vote buying and their usual lies and propaganda.

We want to urge the public to

ignore the lies and falsehoods the UPND is running on their propaganda social media platforms claiming that our people had guns and were going round dishing out money to the electorate.

The truth is that UPND thugs raided our camp, abducted our comrades and forcibly grabbed our vehicle.

We condemn this violence and ask the ECZ to intervene.

And let's not allow ourselves to be deceived that political violence ended with the removal of the PF from government. It didn't.

We were attacked, and after being attacked we were framed as the attackers, as the violent ones.

This is what used to happen under the PF. UPND used to be framed as the attackers when they were the victims.

I was accused of assaulting a UPND cadre when I was nowhere near. I saved a situation that could have ended up with the death of a UPND or Socialist Party cadre.

I fired a few shots to disperse the people and, indeed, they managed to run away. And if I hadn't done that, we would have had deaths.

Nobody was aimed at, nobody was assaulted by myself. But there was an attempt to make me look like a violent person, which I am not. It won't work.

A warn-and-caution statement was recorded from me when I was the first one to go to the police to complain about this violence.

Think twice: a time of reckoning is fast approaching

THE EMOTIONAL stress imposed on us by the news of a serious attack on our President, his aides, comrades and supporters in Serenje ahead of the April 20 ward by-election was deep, political adviser to the SP President, Faston Mwale says.

"Be that as it may, we will remain stoical and soldier on. We wished comrade Preston Chinyama, political adviser to the president, a quick recovery and have committed the safety and wellbeing of our leader into the unfailing hands of the Almighty," he said.

"It is a fact that the UPND, being a timid government, lives under the spell of violence as a strategy to entrench and perpetuate its hold on power. By all means we, who constitute the

great majority of the struggling masses, must not submit to the diabolical schemes of the UPND of turning democratic elections into a bloodbath.

"It beats all logic as to why a party that graduated only recently from the American democracy summit school should be so brutal. Is this the democracy they learnt from the Americans? Their strategy is to attack and immediately thereafter fabricate media propaganda to twist facts so that the victim is portrayed as a villain. Small wonder that there has been no occasion when the UPND leadership rose to decisively condemn and deplore violence perpetrated by the UPND cadres. Many a time, they have spoken against violence 'under armpits' merely

when the UPND was in opposition. It will not work now with the UPND in power. Framing someone is a difficult thing, it disintegrates when matters go to court.

I was myself assaulted and threatened in front of police officers at the police station.

This is the type of policing we are

seeing today. When we complained about the structure of the police leadership – the composition of the police leadership – we were seen as being malicious, but this is what happens when you run the police this way.

More things, worse things, are to come.



● THE VIOLENCE of UPND cadres against PF supporters in Copperbelt Province on Youth Day shows what happens when people defend a leadership that has failed them and the Zambian people, Socialist Party Copperbelt youth league provincial training coordinator Joseph Kangwa says.

"These are poor, ignorant and vulnerable youths," he said. "They are the tools of political violence, paid with petty things like alcohol to spill blood. They have no say or role in shaping Zambia."

Kangwa said the violence between UPND and PF youths at the Wusakile roundabout while waiting for President Hakainde Hichilema, who was on his way to Arthur Davies Stadium in



Kitwe, was "an embarrassment to UPND party leaders". It resulted in a number of injuries.

"This inhuman behaviour is a clear indication that UPND is a party anchored on violence," he said. "It is sad that due to scarce employment, a lack of empowerment and poor access to tertiary education because of high tuition fees, youths from underprivileged families have lost their fundamental identity."

"We have many youths who are young men in form only, whose souls have long evaporated in the cadreism industry."

Kangwa said UPND cadres' close proximity to the leadership had given them a false sense of power and made them feel immune to the lawful outcomes of their actions.

● From Page 1

was after known UPND cadres warned us in front of police officers at a police post of doing so. But up to now there have been no arrests.

Why are UPND cadres untouchable by the police or seem to be above the law? It is because their violence is sponsored and supported by their leaders, who command the police and other law enforcement agencies, and to some extent the courts of law.

So, when it comes to violence, the words of UPND leaders are not matched by deeds – they are worthless, like salt that has lost its taste. Here we are dealing with very shameless hypocrites who speak eloquently with their tongues but with hearts that are telling lies and are full of evil.

If Mr Hakainde Hichilema really wanted political violence to end he could easily achieve this by stopping UPND violence first. If this were stopped, the police would easily deal with whatever opposition violence arises. The rotten elements in the opposition can easily be dealt with. As we observed in Serenje – and the PF government experience – the police have serious difficulties dealing with the violence of ruling party cadres.

Part of this UPND cadres' violence arises from their leaders' desire to win every election at any cost. Violence is used as a tool to stop, paralyse, slow down, or frustrate their opponents' campaigns.

Leaders with uncontrolled appetites for electoral victory will have no scruples deploying violence as an electoral tool.

We shouldn't forget that even the most violent don't say they want violence; they claim to stand for peace. It's not what they say that matters but what they do. It is said that actions speak louder than words. Moreover, how many things have they promised but not delivered, or even delivered the opposite – fertilisers, mealie meal, fuel, jobs?

And the buck for UPND cadres' violence stops with Mr Hichilema.



Man of the people:
Socialist Party
President Fred
M'membe

Lying is a disease of the heart that only gets worse

PSYCHOLOGISTS tell us that it's impossible not to lie, that we all do it every day, consciously or subconsciously, in one way or another.

This view almost makes it look like lying is normal and that a certain amount of lying is OK. But even the psychologists who make this claim admit that lying can become addictive and destructive, destroying relationships, families, communities, even whole countries. Alhamdulillah, the Quran is clear on where the good road lies.

1. We are not to lie, even if this might win us an advantage.
- And do not be like she who untwisted her spun thread after it was strong [by] taking your oaths as [means of] deceit between you because one community is more plentiful [in number or wealth] than another community. Allah only tries you thereby. And He will surely make clear to you on the Day of Resurrection that over which you used to differ. [Quran, 16:92]
2. We're not only to avoid lying ourselves, we're also to avoid supporting liars in their sin. And do not argue on behalf of those who deceive themselves. Indeed, Allah loves not one who is a habitually sinful deceiver. [Quran, 4:107]
3. When we lie, we lie first and foremost to ourselves, which puts us on a slippery slope to hellfire.
- They [think to] deceive Allah and those who believe, but they deceive not except themselves and perceive [it] not. [Quran, 2:9]
4. Lying is a disease of the heart that only gets worse if left uncorrected.
- In their hearts is disease, so Allah has increased their disease; and for them is a painful punishment because they [habitually] used to lie. [Quran, 2:10]
- So He penalised them with hypocrisy in their hearts until the day they will meet Him – because they failed Allah in what they promised Him and because they [habitually] used to lie. [Quran, 9:77]
5. Lying – especially lying about Allah – is a symptom of injustice and results in extreme humiliation.
- And who is more unjust than one who invents a lie about Allah or says, "It has been inspired to me," while nothing has been inspired to him, and one who says, "I will reveal [something] like what Allah revealed." And if you could but see when the wrongdoers are in the overwhelming pangs of death while the angels extend their hands, [saying], "Discharge your souls! Today you will be awarded the punishment of [extreme] humiliation for what you used to say against Allah other than the truth and [that] you were, toward His verses, being arrogant." [Quran, 6:93]
6. How do we tell liars from truth-tellers? Allah doesn't guide liars.
- And a believing man from the family of Pharaoh who concealed his faith said, "Do you kill a man [merely] because he says, "My Lord is Allah" while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? And if he should be lying, then upon him is [the consequence of] his lie; but if he should be truthful, there will strike you some of what he promises you. Indeed, Allah does not guide one who is a transgressor and a liar." [Quran, 40:28]
7. We don't need to worry about guarding ourselves against deception; Allah is ever ready to protect us.
- But if they intend to deceive you – then sufficient for you is Allah. It is He who supported you with His help and with the believers. [Quran, 8:62]
8. No one can ever get away with lying; in the end it will be clear who was truthful and who was not.
- But we have certainly tried those before them, and Allah will surely make evident those who are truthful, and He will surely make evident the liars. [Quran, 29:3]
9. The truthful have a wondrous reward!
- Allah will say, "This is the day when the truthful will benefit from their truthfulness." For them are gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever, Allah being pleased with them, and they with Him. That is the great attainment. [Quran, 5:119]
- Embrace truth – it is your God-given friend!
- May your mind be informed and your deed strengthened.

Liars make best promises

WHEN someone doesn't follow through with what they promised, it can be devastating. Whether in politics, business or personal relationships, dealing with someone who doesn't follow through can cause turmoil.

- There's an old Gaelic proverb which says, "There is no greater fraud than a promise not kept."
- American author Richard Paul Evans says, "Broken vows are like broken mirrors. They leave those who held to them bleeding and staring at fractured images of themselves."
- Danish crime fiction writer Jussi Adler-Olsen warns: "But promises based on ignorance always prove disappointing."
- Master magician Amit Kalantri cautions: "Sometimes your pledges become your problems."
- American science fiction author Pierce Brown says, "Liars make the best promises."
- And I say, "Ababufi balaya ifingi."

From frying pan to the fire

WHEN a government targets for destruction the pillars that hold society together it is actually destroying itself.

There's no doubt that this government of Mr Hakainde Hichilema has, from as early as late 2021, targeted the Catholic Church leadership, relatively influential politicians, and civil society activists for neutralisation or destruction.

Among the highly targeted are Catholic bishops as well as PF and Socialist Party leaders.

But such methods have seldom produced the desired results. The only sure way of getting the best or positive results is by doing the right things; delivering the essential services needed by our people and giving them a better and happier life.

One can eliminate individuals and send opponents to jail or early graves but that doesn't improve the living conditions of our people.

I see very dangerous signs that this government is turning tyrannical, into a killing machine.

But the ending of tyrants is always the same. They say those who live or rule by the sword perish by it.

It seems we have jumped from the frying pan into the fire and back again.

Zambia's lasting solution

ZAMBIA, the lasting solution to OUR 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 to 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 still subsidise their own agriculture industry.

It lies in increased state investment to social sectors, such as education and health.

We must grow agriculture

AGRICULTURE offers us the highest growth potential, but our agricultural programmes don't seem to be focused and well prioritised; there's too much rhetoric, posturing with not much substance or clarity.

With the right approach and programmes we can grow up to as much as 50 percent of the current GDP from agriculture.

Today, although 54.8 percent of our workforce is deployed in agriculture, the sector only accounts for 7.5 percent of the GDP.

Industry, upon which we have deployed 9.9 percent of our workforce, is making a contribution of 35.3 percent to our GDP. And 35.3 percent of our workforce, which is deployed in services, is producing 57.2 percent of our GDP.

The contribution to agriculture – in which we have deployed the majority of our workforce – to GDP is dismally too low to make a meaningful contribution to poverty reduction or its eradication.

Socialism not to blame for basic food shortages

Claims it is are 'based on ignorance'

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M'membe has rejected the claim that socialism had anything to do with the shortage of basic commodities at any time in Zambia and puts the assertion down to ignorance.

"Mr Hakainde Hichilema once attributed the shortages of essential commodities like cooking oil, and luxury items like Coca-Cola under the Kaunda era to socialist policies. He linked the shortages of basic commodities to socialism," Dr M'membe said.

"Mr Hichilema said, 'communism and socialism failed, It did not just fail here, it failed even in the heart of communism, so when I see advancement of those issues, sometimes I say, do we want to go back to shortages. We heard of the cooking oil, queueing for cooking oil . . . the Coca-Cola you take for granted today, was not there'

Dr M'membe said the serious mealie meal shortages today of the kind the country has not witnessed in a long time were taking place in the "very capitalist Zambia of Mr Hichilema", and asked how he would explain this ideologically.

"Our response to Mr Hichilema's claims at the time he made them was as follows:

"It's very sad that some key political leaders of our country don't know or understand what caused shortages of cooking oil and other essential commodities during the last part of Dr Kenneth Kaunda's reign.

"These leaders are out of ignorance attributing the shortages of many consumer goods under the Kaunda era to socialism.

"Firstly, the Kaunda government was not a socialist government. At most, Dr Kaunda can be said to have been a social democrat. And these were extremely honest leaders who cared more about their people than self-enrichment. They had opportunities to enrich themselves like their colleagues did in Kenya and other African countries that robbed their people of land.

"The period of shortages was at the height of the liberation struggle in southern Africa when the country was totally blockaded – with no

dealings with South Africa, Namibia, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Angola, Mozambique, and Botswana was not the prosperous Botswana of today.

"Tanzania was also not the Tanzania of today. And oil prices had shot up worldwide. They had to start companies to produce their own cooking oil and other essential commodities. And these were the companies some of these leaders denigrating them today came to privatise at very exorbitant fees or commissions and enriched themselves.

"It was thanks to the very high sacrifices our leaders and our people had to make that it is possible for our leaders today to go to liberated South Africa and do deals with representatives of corporations that colonised, exploited and humiliated us for centuries.

"People who claim to be economists should have a better understanding of things than this. This is really an exhibition of crass ignorance and dishonesty.

Dr M'membe said socialism was not about, or synonymous with, shortages of mealie meal, cooking oil and other essential commodities.

"How can someone in this era and age think having or drinking Coca-Cola is a big achievement, an indicator of economic and social prosperity? What is Coca-Cola anyway? A mixture of carbon dioxide, water, sugar and caffeine! Of what nutritional value is Coca-Cola? It is actually dangerous and harmful to the human body.

Solidarity

"Is this how empty and pro-imperialist they are? What will remain of this country at the end of their rule? Coca-Cola will be everything! They will own everything. What will remain under the ownership of our people?

"Socialism is about a better and dignified life for all our people anchored on equity, solidarity, humility, honesty and sovereignty of their homeland.

"And socialism has shown how poor nations can get out of poverty in the shortest historical time. Look at the achievements of Cuba – a country fought and blockaded for over 63 years. Without the miner-

als Zambia has, Cuba in 2020 had a GDP of around US\$107.35 billion. GDP is an important indicator of a country's economic power.

"GDP in Zambia was expected to reach US\$24 billion by the end of 2021. In the long-term, Zambia's GDP, which has been pursuing unbridled neoliberal capitalist policies for more than 30 years, is projected to trend around US\$27 this year, according to econometric models.

"India's socialist state of Kerala is leading in many economic and social indicators and scientific achievements.

"Whatever their attempts to credit China's achievements to capitalism, that is a great socialist state pursuing socialism with Chinese characteristics. And this is what its leaders say. They attribute their economic successes to socialism. We also have the successes of Vietnam.

"The ignorant attempt to smear socialism and socialists to hide their greed and corruption quest to become billionaires won't do. No matter what they say or do, socialism will one day triumph in our homeland.

"Capitalism has for centuries failed our people. Let them show us where capitalism has succeeded in Africa.

"And more interesting is the fact that the most achievements scored in Zambia can be attributed to certain socialist-inspired principles that were implemented in the country. The creation of free education, infrastructure development, creation of state-owned enterprises that employed many and some still standing today are as a result of having a human face towards national economic development, which in itself is socialism.

"Most leaders today who are a product of free education and other socially oriented programmes want to ridicule a system that moved them from poverty, and then support imperialist policies that only benefit a few foreign interests.

"Zambia needs a citizen-led economic development agenda which under a socialist government will be attained.

"We want a Zambia where Zambians can have genuine businesses and not these crooked dealers, tenderpreneurs calling themselves businessmen."

Mealie meal measures 'won't do'

THE DESPERATE measures to address the mealie meal shortages won't do, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

"The issuing of a Statutory Instrument by the Minister of Finance removing duties on the importation of mealie meal is a really desperate measure," he said.

"The real issue that needs to be addressed is maize parity pricing in the region.

"Our maize is too cheap in comparison to other countries in the region so the pressure of our maize leaving the country will always be there.

"If, for instance, we allow regional market prices to prevail in Zambia then the issue of smuggling will be mitigated. However, the consequence of that is that mealie prices will sky rocket to K400/500 per 25kg bag, which the government knows can cause civil strife.

"Despite duties being waived, the imported product will almost definitely land at a higher price than local product. A 25 kg bag of mealie meal in South Africa is presently retailing at R240, so add transportation and insurance costs and also financing costs from

the banks, and the landed costs will be around K300. Even under the duty waiver, the export pressure given highly lucrative prices in neighbouring countries will still incentivise the smuggling of the imported mealie meal.

"Sadly, the Food Reserve Agency (FRA) stocks have been depleted due to careless release of the maize reserve and, as alluded in my previous articles, we do not have a fallback position.

"The challenges the government is faced with here in summary are twofold: trying to control or influence price, and secondly, maintain steady supply.

"Now the laws of supply and demand dictate a price jump should supply lag. So we are caught between a rock and a hard place. Stabilise supply by increasing prices and people will react; increase supply at depressed prices and smuggling will continue with shortages persisting as a result.

"Conclusion: it is unlikely that the Minister of Finance's Statutory Instrument will help solve this problem until parity price in the region normalises."

Capitalist contradictions

Vijay Prashad discusses the response from political leaders and intellectuals from across the world to the imperialists' 'Rules-Based Order' that has brought the planet's risk of annihilation to 90 seconds before midnight on the Doomsday Clock. He says we are entering a new phase of world history

THE BULLETIN of the Atomic Scientists has now moved the Doomsday Clock to 90 seconds to midnight, the closest it has been to the symbolic time of the annihilation of humanity and the Earth since 1947.

This is alarming, which is why leaders in the Global South have been making the case to halt the warmongering over Ukraine and against China.

As Namibia's Prime Minister Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila said, "We are promoting a peaceful resolution of that conflict so that the entire world and all the resources of the world can be focused on improving the conditions of people around the world instead of being spent on acquiring weapons, killing people, and actually creating hostilities."

In line with the alarm over the Doomsday Clock and assertions from people such as Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, the rest of this article features a new text called Eight Contradictions in the Imperialist "Rules-Based Order" (which you can download as a PDF using this link:

https://thetricontinental.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/20230308_Eight-Contraditions_EN_Web.pdf

It was drafted by Kyeretwie Opoku (Convenor of the Socialist Movement of Ghana), Manuel Bertoldi (Patria Grande/Federación Rural para la producción y el arraigo), Deby Veneziale (senior fellow, Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research), and me, with input from senior political leaders and intellectuals from across the world. We are offering this text as an invitation to a dialogue. We hope that you will read, circulate, and discuss it.

We are now entering a qualitatively new phase of world history. Significant global changes have emerged in the years since the Great Financial Crisis of 2008. This can be seen in a new phase of imperialism and changes in the particularities of eight contradictions.

1. The contradiction between moribund imperialism and an emerging successful socialism led by China.

THIS contradiction has intensified because of the peaceful rise of socialism with Chinese characteristics. For the first time in 500 years, the Atlantic imperialist powers are confronted by a large, non-white economic power that can compete with them. This became clear in 2013 when China's GDP in purchasing power parity (PPP) overtook that of the United States. China accomplished this in a much shorter period than the West, with a significantly larger population and without colonies, enslaving others, or military conquest. While China stands for peaceful relations,



LEFT: Zaya Saikhan Sambuu (Mongolia), *Survivors*, 2013. CENTRE: The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists announcing at a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington

the US has become increasingly bellicose.

The US has led the imperialist camp since World War II. Post-Angela Merkel and with the advent of the Ukraine military operation, the US strategically subordinated dominant sections of the European and Japanese bourgeoisie. This has resulted in weakening intra-imperialist contradictions.

The US first permitted, and then demanded, that both Japan (the third-largest economy in the world) and Germany (the fourth-largest economy) – two fascist powers during World War II – greatly increase their military expenditure. The result has been the ending of Europe's economic relationship with Russia, damage to the European economy, and economic and political benefits for the US.

Despite the capitulation of most of Europe's political elite to full US subordination, some large sections of German capital are heavily dependent on trade with China, much

more than on their US counterparts. The US, however, is now pressuring Europe to downgrade its ties with China.

More importantly, China and the socialist camp now face an even more dangerous entity: the consolidated structure of the Triad (the United States, Europe, and Japan). The US's growing internal social decay should not mask the near absolute unity of its political elite on foreign policy. We are witnessing the bourgeoisie placing its political and military interests over its short-term economic ones.

The centre of the world economy is shifting, with Russia and the Global South (including China) now accounting for 65 percent of the world's GDP (measured in PPP). From 1950 until the present, the US share of the global GDP (in PPP) has fallen from 27 percent to 15 percent. The growth of the US's GDP has also been declining for more than five decades and has now fallen to only around 2 percent per year. It

has no large new markets in which to expand. The West suffers from an ongoing general crisis of capitalism as well as the consequences of the long-term tendency of the rate of profit to decline.

2. The contradiction between the ruling classes of the narrow band of imperialist G7 countries and the political and economic elite of capitalist countries in the Global South.

THIS relationship has undergone a major change from the heydays of the 1990s and the height of US unilateral power and arrogance. Today, there are growing cracks in the alliance between the G7 and Global South power elites

Monopoly

Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani, India's largest billionaires, need oil and coal from Russia. The far-right Modi-led government represents India's monopoly bourgeoisie.

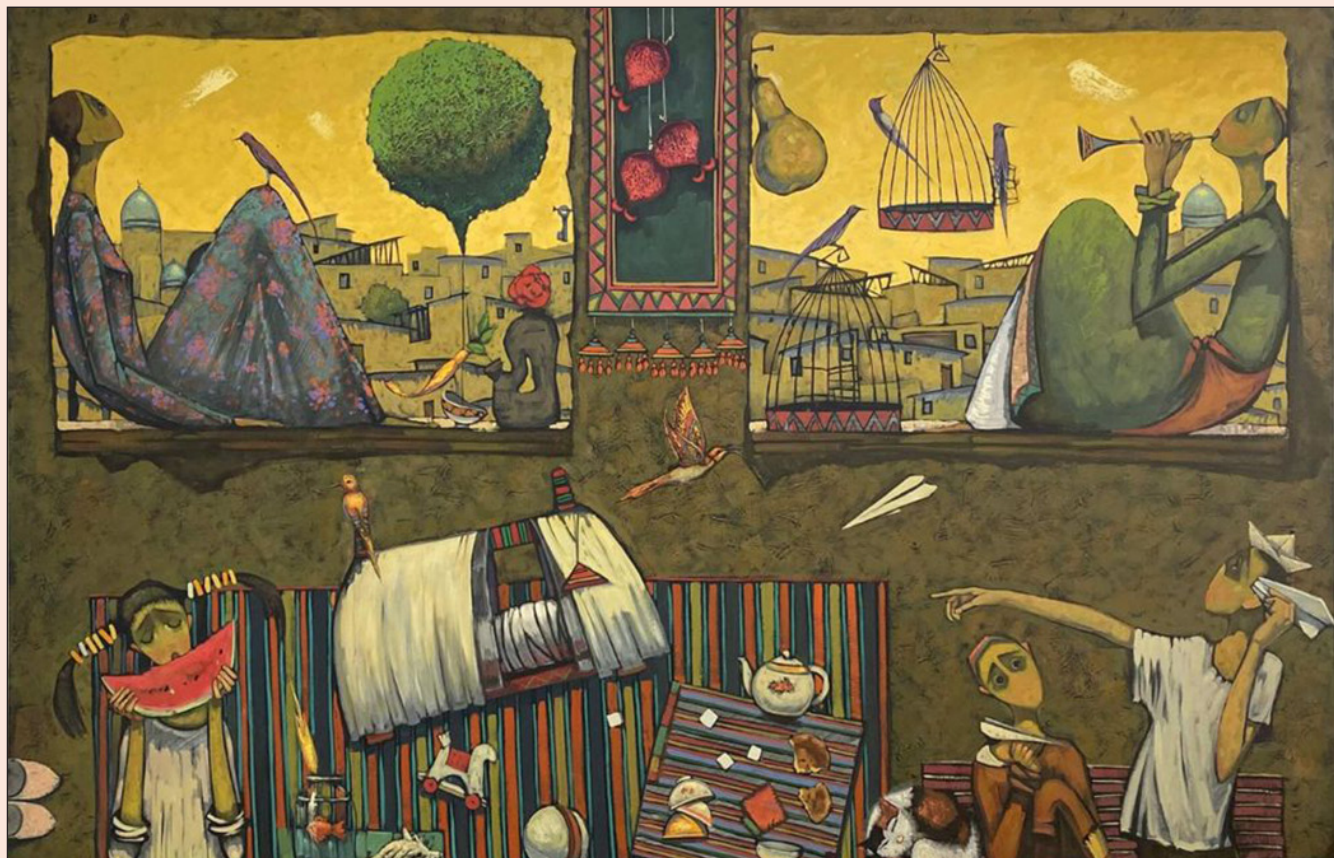
Thus, the Indian foreign minister now makes occasional statements against US hegemony in finance, sanctions, and other areas. The West does not have the economic and political ability to always provide what power elites in India, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey need. This contradiction, however, has not sharpened to the degree that it can be a focal point of other contradictions, unlike the contradiction between socialist China and the US-led G7 bloc.

3. The contradiction between the broad urban and rural working class and sections of the lower petty bourgeoisie (collectively known as the popular classes) of the Global South versus the US-led imperial power elite.

THIS contradiction is slowly becoming sharper. The West has a great soft power advantage in the Global South among all classes. Yet, for the first time in decades, young Africans have come out to support the expulsion of French troops in

Mali and Burkina Faso in West Africa. For the first time, the popular classes in Colombia were able to elect a new government that rejected the country's status as a vassal outpost of US military and intelligence forces. Working-class women are at the forefront of many critical battles of both the working class and society at large. Young people are rising up against the environmental crimes of capitalism. Growing numbers of the working class are identifying their struggles for peace, development, and justice as explicitly anti-imperialist. They are now able to see through the lies of US "human rights" ideology, the destruction of the environment by Western energy and mining companies, and the violence of US hybrid war and sanctions.

4. The contradiction between advanced rent-seeking finance capital versus the needs of the popular classes, and even some sections of capital in non-socialist coun-



Left: Maksud Mirmuhamedov (Tajikistan), *Hearth*, 2020. Centre: Norma Bessouet (Argentina), *Abracadabra*, 1947. Right: Boris Mikhailov (Ukraine SSR), *Red*, 1968–1975. All images



s at 90 seconds to doom



...n that it has moved the minute hand of the Doomsday Clock to 90 seconds to midnight. RIGHT: Taisia Korotkova (Russia), Technology, 2007



tries, regarding the organisation of societies' requirements for investment in industry, environmentally sustainable agriculture, employment, and development.

THIS contradiction is a result of the decline in the rate of profit, and the difficulty of capital to increase the rate of exploitation of the working class to a sufficient level able to finance increasing investment requirements and remain competitive.

Outside of the socialist camp, in almost all of the advanced capitalist countries and in most of the Global South – with some exceptions, especially in Asia – there is an investment crisis. New types of firms have arisen that include hedge funds, such as Bridgewater Associates, and private equity firms, such as BlackRock. “Private markets” controlled US\$9.8 trillion worth of assets in 2022. Derivatives, a form of fictitious and speculative capital, are now worth US\$18.3 trillion in

“market” value but have a US\$632 trillion notional value – a value more than five times higher than the world's total actual GDP.

A new class of information technology-based network-effect monopolies, including Google, Facebook/Meta, and Amazon – all under full US control – have emerged to attract monopoly rents. US digital monopolies, under the direct supervision of US intelligence agencies, control the information architecture of the whole world, outside of a few socialist and nationalist countries. These monopolies are the basis for the rapid expansion of US soft power in the last 20 years. The military-industrial complex, the merchants of death, also attract growing investments.

This intensified speculative and monopoly rentier accumulation phase of capital is deepening a strike by capital against necessary social investments. South Africa and Brazil have seen dramatic levels of deindustrialisation under neoliberal-

ism. Even advanced imperialist countries have ignored their own infrastructure, such as the electricity grid, bridges, and the railway. The global elite has engineered a tax strike by providing huge reductions in tax rates and taxes as well as legal tax havens for both individual capitalists and their corporations to increase their share of surplus value.

Tax evasion by capital and the privatisation of large swathes of the public sector have decimated the availability of basic public goods like education, healthcare, and transportation for billions of people.

Profiteers

It has contributed to Western capital's ability to manipulate and gain high interest income from the “manufactured” debt crisis facing the Global South. At its highest level, hedge fund profiteers like George Soros speculate and destroy the finance of entire countries.

The impact on the working class

is severe, as their work has become increasingly precarious and permanent unemployment is destroying large sections of the world's youth. A growing section of the population is superfluous under capitalism. Social inequality, misery, and desperation are abundant.

5. The contradiction between the popular classes of the Global South and their domestic political and economic power elites.

THIS manifests quite differently by country and region. In socialist and progressive countries, contradictions among the people are resolved in peaceful and varied ways. However, in several countries in the Global South, where the capitalist elite has been fully in bed with Western capital, wealth is held by a small percentage of the population. There is widespread misery among the poorest people, and the capitalist development model is failing to serve the interests of the majority. Due to the history of neocolonial-

ism and Western soft power, there is a decidedly pro-West middle-class consensus in most of the large Global South countries. This class hegemony of the local bourgeoisie and the upper stratum of the petty bourgeoisie is used to block the popular classes (who make up most of the population) from accessing power and influence.

6. The contradiction between US-led imperialism versus nations strongly defending national sovereignty.

THESE nations fall into four main categories; socialist countries, progressive countries, other countries rejecting US control, and the special case of Russia. The US has created this antagonistic contradiction through hybrid warfare methods such as assassinations, invasions, NATO-led military aggression, sanctions, lawfare, trade war, and a now incessant propaganda war based on outright lies. Russia is in a special category, as it suffered more than 25 million deaths at the hands

of European fascist invaders when it was a socialist country. Today, Russia – which notably has immense natural resources – is once again a target for complete annihilation as a state by NATO. Some elements of its socialist past are still present in the country, and there remains a high degree of patriotism. The US's goal is to finish off what it started in 1992: at a minimum, to permanently destroy Russia's nuclear military capacity and install a puppet regime in Moscow in order to dismember Russia in the long term and replace it with many smaller, permanently weakened vassal states of the West.

7. The contradiction between the millions of discarded working-class poor in the Global North versus the bourgeoisie who dominate these countries.

THESE workers are showing some signs of rebellion against their economic and social conditions. However, the imperialist bourgeoisie is playing the white supremacist card to prevent a larger unity of working people in these countries. At this moment, workers are not consistently able to avoid falling prey to racist war propaganda. The number of people present at public events against imperialism has diminished precipitously over the last 30 years.

8. The contradiction between Western capitalism versus the planet and human life.

THE inexorable path of this system is to destroy the planet and human life, threaten nuclear annihilation, and work against the needs of humanity to collectively reclaim the planet's air, water, and land, and stop the nuclear military madness of the United States. Capitalism rejects planning and peace. The Global South (including China) can help the world build and expand a “zone of peace” and commit to living in harmony with nature.

With these changes in the political landscape, we are witnessing the rise of an informal front against the US-dominated imperialist system. This front is constituted by the convergence of:

- Popular sentiment that this violent system is the main enemy of the people of the world.
- Popular desires for a more just, peaceful, and egalitarian world.
- The struggle of socialist or nationalist governments and political forces for their sovereignty.
- The desires of other Global South countries to reduce their dependence on this system.

The main forces against the US-dominated imperialist system are the peoples of the world and the socialist and nationalist governments. However, there must be space provided for integrating governments that wish to reduce their dependency on the imperialist system.

The world currently stands at the beginning of a new era in which we will witness the end of the US global empire. The neoliberal system is deteriorating under the weight of numerous internal contradictions, historical injustices, and economic unviability. Without a better alternative, the world will descend into even greater chaos. Our movements have revived hope that something other than this social torment is possible.

We hope that Eight Contradictions in the Imperialist “Rules-Based Order” will stimulate debate and discussion and assist us in our broader battle of ideas against toxic social philosophies that seek to suffocate rational thought about our world.

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...except for the Doomsday Clock, top, are from Tricontinental's original newsletter, which you can read here: <https://thetricontinental.org/newsletterissue/eight-contradictions/>

Asia-Pacific a ‘powder keg’ after Taiwan, Philippines actions

Joint war games ‘a message to China’

John Malvar

LAST month United States and the Philippines launched the largest joint war games ever staged by the two countries, involving more than 17,500 troops, including approximately 12,000 Americans, 5,000 Filipinos, and 111 Australians. The military operations, which lasted for 18 days, make clear that Washington is prepared to go to war with China.

Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has, since his election last year, dramatically reoriented Philippine foreign policy back toward Washington, restoring ties damaged by the six-year presidency of Rodrigo Duterte who had sought friendlier relations with China.

Marcos Jr. is the son of the country’s brutal dictator, who ruled for a decade and a half, and is himself guilty of carrying out many of the same crimes as his father’s regime. He faces a US\$353 million contempt order in US courts for human rights abuses, but the Biden administration is all too willing to cover this up in pursuit of Washington’s war aims.

The war games follow on the heels of the provocative visit to the United States by Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-Wen. Beijing has long made clear that China’s territorial claim to the island of Taiwan constituted a red line the violation of which would not be tolerated. Tsai’s visit to the US, where she was treated in a manner akin to the representative of sovereign nation and where US military training for Taiwanese troops was openly discussed, came perilously close to rendering the US longstanding One China policy a dead letter.

Beijing responded with militarist bluster, ratcheting up the danger of war. The People’s Liberation Army staged air and naval drills around Taiwan and simulated strikes on the island, releasing a video of missiles arcing from China and exploding on Taiwan.

The Asia Pacific region has been turned into a powder keg by the unstinting provocations of Washington and the fuse is short.

Over the past two years, Washington has conducted war games around the world of unprecedented scope, each designed to deal with the outbreak of global conflict with Russia and China. Just last month, Washington staged the longest continuous military exercises on record in South Korea that drew on the experiences of the war in Ukraine to prepare for war with China.

The joint war games in the Phil-

ippines are annual exercises known as Balikatan (Tagalog for shoulder-to-shoulder), now in their 38th year. Like Washington’s war games elsewhere, the character of Balikatan has fundamentally changed and the Philippine *Daily Inquirer* noted that the exercises were “applying lessons learned from the Russia-Ukraine war”.

In decades past, the exercises focused largely on internal suppression. Balikatan’s operations were tailored to the suppression of the Communist insurgency, the armed Moro secessionist movement in the southern Philippines, and domestic unrest generally.

This year’s Balikatan exercises are the stuff of world war. US and Philippine military spokespersons highlighted the fact that Washington was supplying the Philippines with the same hardware that it was sending to Ukraine. HIMARS artillery, Patriot and Javelin missiles, Avenger air defence systems and Reaper drones were all deployed in exercises explicitly targeting China.

The exercises prepare for a war with China that could break out in either the South China Sea or over Taiwan. Retired Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Emmanuel Bautista, laid out the stakes when he told the press that “it was impossible for the Philippines not to get drawn in a Taiwan or South China Sea conflict ... if you cannot deter war, prepare for war”.

US and Philippine military forces staged live fire drills in the South China Sea, sinking a military vessel in waters near the Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal, which has been a flashpoint of immense contention in the past. They also staged littoral exercises designed to simulate the retaking of islands from hostile military forces.

Rotational

The transformed war games take place in the wake of the announcement that Manila would be providing Washington with four additional basing locations in the Philippines under the auspices of the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA). This brings the total number of US basing facilities in the country to nine.

The four new bases were selected for war with China. Three are in the northernmost provinces of Cagayan and Isabela, just across the Bashi Channel from Taiwan, and the fourth is on the westernmost fringes of Palawan, as close as possible to the disputed Spratly Islands.

These will be military bases controlled entirely by the United States. Washington presents the facilities as servicing a “rotational



Philippines protesters (above) demand an end to the ‘balikatan’ military exercises with the US (top)

presence” for “enhanced interoperability”. The terms of EDCA reveal, however, that these are rent-free facilities controlled exclusively by Americans and subject to American extraterritorial sovereignty. They are neocolonial assets in Washington’s war drive.

The commemoration of the Fall of Bataan to Japanese forces in 1942 took place while the military exercises were in progress. The Japanese Occupation, and the subsequent “Liberation” by the returning US Army, ravaged the country. Manila was one of the most devastated capital cities of the war, along with Berlin and Warsaw.

There is a great deal of concern and fear in the country that the Philippines is being dragged into another world war. As US troops arrived in the country, the Manila police rounded up peacefully protesting youths outside the US embassy and dragged them off to jail.

In a speech delivered at a commemoration event, Marcos declared, “We will not let our bases be used for whatever offensive actions.” History gives the lie to this claim. The US bases in the Philippines – Clark Airbase and Subic Naval Base – were the nerve centres of US the empire. They repaired and refueled the planes that carpet-bombed Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, raining death on hundreds of thousands.

As the war games were launched, the Philippine secretary of foreign affairs and defence secretary travelled to Washington to meet with their counterparts to stage a 2+2 ministerial dialogue, the first in seven years. US Secretary of State

Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin met with Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo and Defence Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr.

They issued a joint statement which insisted that China “fully comply” with the 2016 ruling of the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea, which the four secretaries declared was “final and legally binding”. Washington’s hypocrisy is staggering. It is not even a signatory to the international law that it insists China must honour. The 2+2 meeting announced that the US and the Philippines would be conducting joint patrols in the disputed South China Sea with the intent of enforcing this ruling, possibly beginning during Balikatan

Provocation

At Washington’s instigation, Manila is in discussion with Tokyo regarding the deployment of Japanese troops to the Philippines, and there were Japanese forces present at Balikatan as observers. The Ferdinand Marcos Jr. administration is negotiating a possible basing arrangement with the Japanese. Japanese fighter jets visited the Philippines for the first time since World War II on December 7, 2022 – a stunning provocation, returning to the country on the very anniversary of the invasion.

The advanced preparations for world war, with Ukraine in flames and sabres rattling throughout the Asia Pacific region, express the crisis of world capitalism. Like their class brothers and sisters around the globe, workers in the Philip-

ippines confront dire poverty. In excess of 10 percent of the population has been compelled to seek work overseas, leaving behind spouses and children, in order to provide for their families. The government squanders the country’s social resources preparing for war with China, while vast wealth accrues to a narrow layer of corrupt and powerful family dynasties.

The working class throughout the world is increasingly coming into open struggle against their exploitation and the apparatus of the state that enforces it. Capitalism has nothing to offer them.

Confronting an increasingly militant working class, with crises threatening the volatile world financial system, US imperialism seeks to secure its profits through the forcible redistribution of the world.

Washington is set on war and, as it does in Ukraine and Taiwan, it presents itself as defending the sovereignty of the Filipino people.

China has never taken a square foot of Philippine soil. It has never been an imperialist power. The United States, by contrast, conquered the Philippines in a bloody colonial war that killed hundreds of thousands and crushed the democratic aspirations of the Filipino people underfoot. Japan, now remilitarising with the aid of the United States, brutally subjected the Filipino people to three years of terror.

It is the imperialist powers, and above all Washington, that are dragging the world to war. They must be stopped.

wsws.org

CHINA WATCH

INTEREST in China is growing, yet most news and analysis outside the country is produced by mainstream media from the global north. To provide Chinese perspectives, the *Dongsheng Collective* – researchers from various countries – offers a China digest. This is an edited selection. <https://dongshengnews.org/en>

Global South trade up

CHINA continues to increase its exports to the Global South, which in March again exceeded exports to Japan, Europe, and the US combined. The trend that began in 2022 has deepened in the first three months of the year; China is investing heavily in energy, mineral resources, and rail transport across Asia, with exports to Central Asia up 55 percent year-on-year in March.

Asia Times

C+C5 summit due

CHINA is preparing to hold the C+C5 Summit in Shaanxi Province later this month. China’s foreign trade volume with the countries in this region increased by 40 percent from 2021 to 2022, reaching US\$70.2 billion, while the value of China’s investments in these nations was about US\$970 million. Beijing wants construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project to begin as soon as possible.

South China Morning Post

AI rules on the way

THE Cyberspace Administration of China has published a draft with regulations for Artificial Intelligence services, such as ChatGPT. The measures aim to regulate content moderation, security, and algorithmic transparency, and ensure the content generated is in line with socialist values. The measure will come into force later this year, once the public consultation that began in April is over.

Reuters

Yuan overtakes dollar

THE yuan has surpassed the US dollar as the most used currency in China’s international transactions for the first time. In March, the dollar’s share in China’s international payments and receipts fell to 46.7 percent (from 48.6 percent in February), while the yuan hit a record high equivalent to US\$549.9 million, reaching 48.4 percent of the total.

Reuters

Soybean imports plan

CHINA aims to increase soybean and oilseed planting areas by more than 666,000 hectares this year to ensure supply. The country imports more than 80 percent of the soybeans it consumes, with Brazil being the largest import source, accounting for nearly 60 percent in 2022, while the US came in second with 32.42 percent. The government’s goal is to increase national soybean production by 5kg per mu (0.0667 hectares).

Global Times

Protein from tea waste

CHINESE researchers have developed a source of cheaper, healthier alternative protein from green tea waste. It has the potential to diversify the alternative protein market, which uses soy or wheat, for which Asia relies on Western imports. One ton of tea waste can generate about 400kg of protein at a cost of 2,000 to 3,000 yuan per ton – 50 percent cheaper than from soybeans.

South China Morning Post

So many lies, so much stealing and intimidation from the IMF

We need a way forward that fosters cooperation rather than competition

Vijay Prashad

REMARKABLY, during her visit to Ghana in late March this year, US Vice-President Kamala Harris announced that the US Treasury Department's Office of Technical Assistance would "deploy a full-time resident adviser in 2023 to Accra to assist the Ministry of Finance to develop and execute medium- to long-term reforms needed to improve debt sustainability and support a competitive, dynamic government debt market".

Ghana certainly faces significant challenges in this arena, with its external debt standing at US\$36 billion and its debt to gross domestic product ratio hovering over 100 percent.

As Harris left Accra, the Reuters news agency reported that Ghana had hired the Bermuda-based financial adviser Lazard to represent it in talks with the Paris-based Rothschild & Co., which will represent the international bondholders that are the largest creditors of this cash-strapped nation. Rather than pressure these wealthy bondholders to cancel some of the debt (what is known as a "haircut") or to extend a moratorium on debt-servicing payments, the US government merely provided Ghana with a "technical adviser".

In December, Ghana signed an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) through its Extended Credit Facility to receive US\$3 billion over three years. In return, Ghana's government agreed to "a wide-ranging economic reform programme" that includes a commitment to "increase domestic resource mobilisation and streamline expenditure". In other words, Ghana's government will conduct an austerity regime against its own people.

At the time of this agreement, consumer inflation in the country had risen to 54.1 percent. By January 2023, it was clear that electricity, water, gas, and home prices had risen by 82.3 percent over the course of a year.

Despair

The World Bank estimates that Ghana's poverty rate is already 23.4 percent, which it projects will "increase slightly, due to the cumulative effects of increases in electricity and water tariffs, rising food prices, and an increase in [consumption taxes]". Further cuts to public spending alongside the restructuring of domestic debt will mean despair for almost all of Ghana's roughly 33 million people.

It is unlikely that the US government's "full-time resident adviser" on Ghana's debt will offer either a factually based assessment of the escalating debt or proffer practical solutions to what has become a permanent debt crisis.

It is already clear that there will be no focus on the wealthy Western bondholders, such as the United Kingdom's Abrdn and Amundi



Images from Nigerian musician Seun Kuti's video for his song 'IMF' from the album 'A Long Way To The Beginning'

BRICS expansion in war on US dollar

THE growing prominence of the BRICS countries is set to continue with 19 nations submitting membership requests ahead of their annual summit, set to take place in South Africa next month.

As the bloc of countries has now surpassed the G7 nations in GDP, it seems expansion could continue to implement a shift in the global balance of power, specifically, the continued efforts to replace the US dollar in international trade.

Bloomberg reported the emerging application list following the statements on BRICS' willingness to expand.

Anil Sooklal, South African ambassador to the group, recently discussed what topics are set to be on the agenda for discussion at the June event.

"What will be discussed is the expansion of BRICS and the modalities of how this will happen," he said, adding that "thirteen countries have

formally asked to join and another six have asked informally". Sooklal said new applications were being submitted "every day".

Last year, China initiated a discussion regarding potential expansion, although there was concern among other BRICS nations about their "influence being diluted," the report said. There is concern over Beijing's close allies being included, mostly due to China's gross domestic product already being twice the size of the four other BRICS countries combined.

The five member states will have foreign ministers in attendance at the summit and it appears that discussion of expansion will be a primary item on the agenda.

The demand for entry could make BRICS growth inevitable with implications for its war against the US dollar.

watcher.guru

etary policies that are built on an agenda committed to solving the problems of the African people, not facilitating the demands of wealthy bondholders and the Western states that back them".

The principles that ground our dossier emerged out of a statement written by the Collective on African Political Economy (CAPE) titled The IMF Is Never The Answer, which is published in the dossier. Among other key reflections, this statement points out that there is a need for a "new kind of institutional apparatus that fosters cooperation rather than competition", which includes "establishing currency arrangements that bypass the US dollar".

Why is de-dollarisation such an important point? US Senator Marco Rubio provided clear insight on this question: "We won't have to talk about sanctions in five years because there will be so many countries transacting in currencies other

than the dollar that we won't have the ability to sanction them".

Reliance upon the dollar not only allows the US to sanction countries, it is also "a strong lever of IMF conditionality", as the CAPE statement notes. The statement also indicates the importance of the "urgent need to restore and reinvigorate the capacity and autonomy of the African state to deliver on its development agenda". This includes increasing the ability of states to mobilise tax revenues and use these funds to build the dignity of their populations.

Any approach to development in our times that respects nations' sovereignty must be focused on creating a new form of financing for development apparatus as well as a new role for state institutions in this process. If you are interested in getting involved with CAPE, do write to the collective's coordinator, Grieve Chelwa, at grieve@thetricontinental.org

At the mid-April World Bank meeting, Ajay Banga, a former executive from Citigroup and Mastercard, will be anointed as its president. He will be the 14th US citizen to hold this job and the 14th man since the bank's first president was appointed in 1946. Banga has no experience in the world of development. Prior to commercial banking, he was involved in launching the US fast-food franchises Pizza Hut and Kentucky Fried Chicken in India. Meanwhile, the New Development Bank, also referred to as the BRICS Bank, has just elected its new president, Dilma Rousseff, the former president of Brazil. Rousseff comes to the BRICS Bank with extensive experience of Brazil's programme to eradicate absolute poverty. Unlike Banga, who will promote the religion of privatisation, Rousseff will bring her experience of working with robust state policies, such as the income transfer programme Bolsa Familia (Family

Grant) and the social protections programme Brasil Sem Miséria (Brazil Without Extreme Poverty).

As we note in the dossier, the emergence of the BRICS Bank, alongside other institutions in the Global South, has already begun to put pressure on the IMF and World Bank on key issues such as the exhaustion of the neoliberal debt-austerity model and the need for new tools, including capital controls, for governments to increase the sovereignty of their states and the dignity of their populations.

Ten years ago, the Nigerian musician Seun Kuti released a song called "IMF" on his album A Long Way To The Beginning. The song is a damning critique of IMF policy, and the video, directed by Jerome Bernard, develops that critique through the personage of an African businessman being bribed and, ultimately, turned into a zombie. When King Midas touched objects, they turned into gold. When the IMF touches people, they turn into zombies. The art in our dossier is based on images from Seun's music video, some of which are reproduced here. The song is hypnotic:

*So much lying from the IMF
People power
So much stealing from the IMF
People power
So much killing from the IMF
People power
Manipulation from the IMF
People power
Intimidation from the IMF
People power
So much suffering from the IMF
People power*

Tricontinental

Xi welcomes Brazil's Lula and pledges stronger ties

Countries are 'comprehensive strategic partners', he says

CHINA'S President Xi Jinping rolled out the red carpet for his Brazilian counterpart in Beijing, pledging to work with Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to take bilateral ties to new heights.

In a meeting at the Great Hall of the People, Xi first congratulated Lula on his third term in office and thanked him for making the trip after a recent bout of pneumonia.

"You came from afar soon after recovery," he said. "This shows the great importance you attach to the relationship between our two countries."

Xi said that as the biggest developing countries in the eastern and western hemispheres, China and Brazil were "comprehensive strategic partners that share extensive common interests".

"China always views and develops relations with Brazil from a strategic height and a long-term perspective, and places China-Brazil relations as a diplomatic priority," he said.

Xi said he would work with Lula to develop new opportunities between the two countries and for the world economy.

"I believe sustained, healthy, and stable development of China-Brazil relations will surely play an active and important role in the peace, stability, prosperity, and development of the region and the world," the China's president said.

The two leaders also discussed the Ukraine crisis and agreed that dialogue and negotiations were the only viable way out, state broadcaster CCTV reported.

They called on more countries to play a constructive role in promoting a political settlement of the crisis, the report said.

Multilateral

After the talks, the two leaders signed a series of cooperation deals covering a number of areas, including trade and investment, the digital economy, and aerospace.

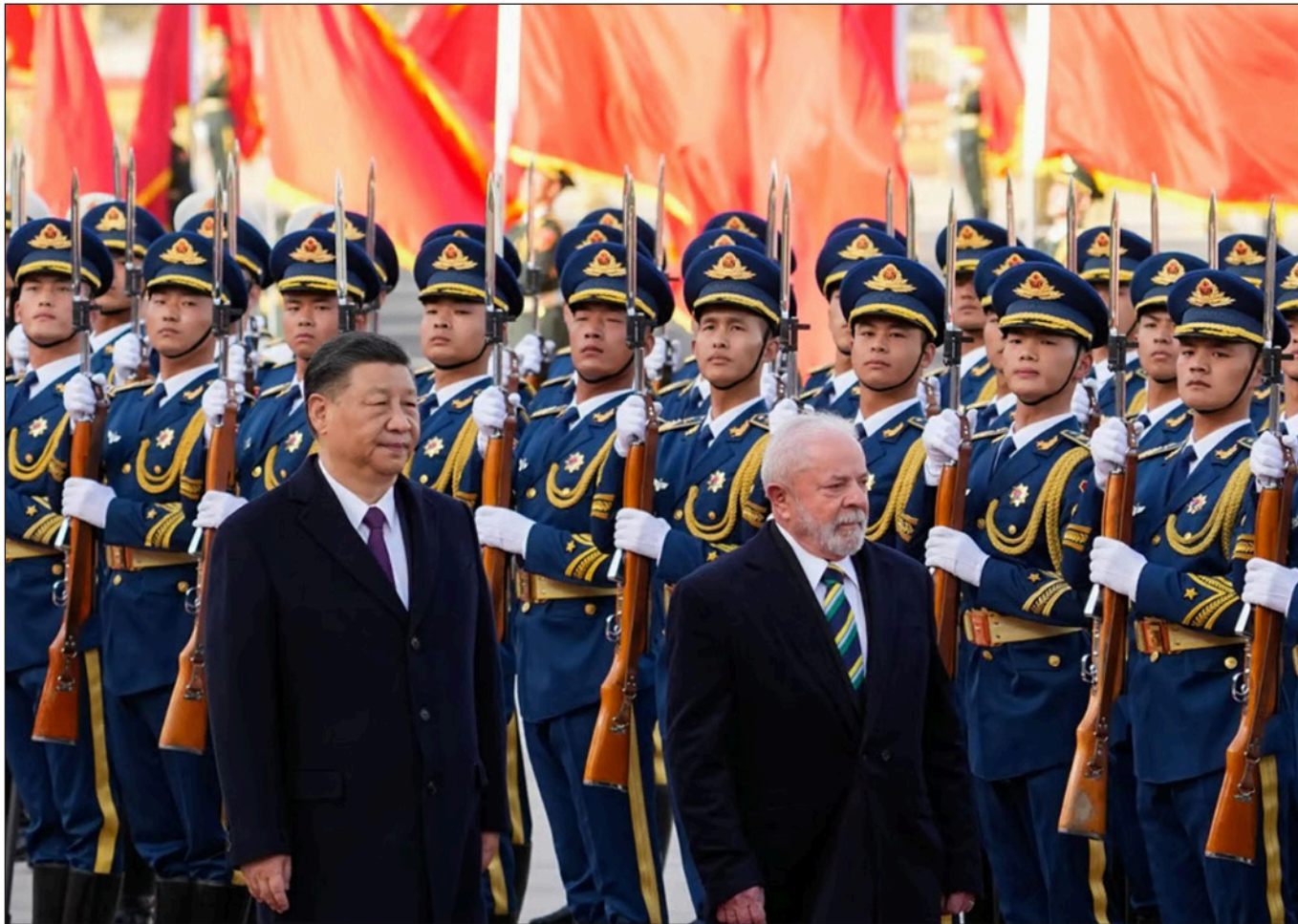
Earlier in the day, Lula met Premier Li Qiang, who said China was willing to strengthen communication and coordination with Brazil on multilateral affairs, and make greater contributions to safeguarding the rights and interests of developing countries, China National Radio reported.

After the meeting, Lula tweeted that the two countries would "work to expand trade and balance world geopolitics".

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the strategic partnership between the two countries, and Li said China would take the opportunity to promote all-round, multilevel and high-level cooperation to a new level.

Lula said Brazil attached great importance to its relations with China, and was willing to deepen cooperation with China in politics, the economy, trade, education, science and technology, and culture.

The two countries should also strengthen communication and coordination in international affairs, jointly safeguard the interests of



China President Xi Jinping and Brazil President Lula da Silva attend a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing

developing countries, and jointly build a peaceful and stable world, he said.

The Brazilian president's day also included meetings with Zhao Leji, head of China's national legislature, and Zhang Zhigang, president of China's State Grid Corporation.

He paid tribute to China's war heroes in Tiananmen Square, laying a wreath at the Monument to the People's Heroes.

The Brazilian leader travelled to Shanghai and attended the inauguration of former Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff as president of the BRICS New Development Bank. The bank was established in 2014 by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa to support sustainable development in member countries.

In a speech at the bank, Lula criticised the dominant status of the US dollar, saying times had changed and other currencies should play a greater role in the global economy.

"I ask myself every night why

all countries are obliged to do their trade backed by the dollar? Why can't we carry out trade backed by our currency?" he was quoted by Chinese state media as saying.

"Why can't the New Development Bank extend loans in the currencies of member countries? I know we are accustomed to using the US dollar, but we are in the 21st century, and we can do something different."

China and Brazil reached an agreement in February to adopt yuan-settlement in transactions, a move deemed to reduce US dollar exposure. Lula also lashed out at the International Monetary Fund, suggesting that it was too harsh in forcing cash-strapped countries such as Argentina to cut spending in exchange for bailout loans.

During his brief stop in Shanghai, Lula also visited a Huawei wireless communications centre and met executives from BYD, one of China's top electric car makers.

Lula's trip would be a chance for

the Chinese and Brazilian presidents to discuss agreements related to the Belt and Road Initiative, according to Jiang Shixue, director of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' Institute for Latin American Studies.

"Over the past few years, when [Jair] Bolsonaro was the president, Brazil was greatly affected by the US, and hadn't signed Belt and Road Initiative deals. Now there's a good chance [Lula will do so]," Jiang said before the meetings.

Xi and Lula would also talk about how to bring an end to the Ukraine crisis and could come up with a plan for the US, European Union or United Nations to consider, he said.

"After Lula's visit, the relationship between the two countries will definitely develop faster. As for how to deal with the relationship with the US, this requires Lula to use his political wisdom and not choose sides in the Sino-US conflict," Jiang said.

By last year, more than 150 countries and 32 international organisations had signed belt and road cooperation pacts with China, but Brazil was not among them.

China has been accused of using the initiative as a debt trap, with some countries struggling to repay loans for projects – a claim it denies.

The 77-year-old Brazilian president was accompanied on his four-day visit by a delegation that included dozens of senior business executives, Senate head Rodrigo Pacheco and Finance Minister Fernando Haddad.

China is Brazil's largest export destination, with soybeans, beef, and iron ore as the main products. Meanwhile, Brazil is China's tenth-largest trading partner, with bilateral trade value rising by 4.9 per cent to US\$171.5 billion last year, according to Chinese customs data.

South China Morning Post

Beijing increases trading pressure with yuan

CHINA is leveraging its trade advantages to promote the use of its currency with major commerce partners, building up the yuan's strength to challenge the US dollar's dominance in the international monetary system.

The push for yuan settlements in trade and investment, rather than US dollars as an intermediary, is one of many ways Beijing has set out to reduce its exposure to dollar assets and prevent China from being financially strangled by Washington.

A leap forward was reported in its agreements with Brazil – its 10th-largest trading partner and a key supplier of iron ore and soybeans – and analysts expect a bigger use of currency in out-bound investment in countries included in China's Belt and Road Initiative, energy trade with Middle East countries, and cross-border payments in digital currency.

Brazil has begun to accept trade settlements and investments in yuan, with an agreement reached between central banks in February, and the appointment of a yuan-clearing bank and access to the Cross-border Interbank Payment System, the China equivalent to international financial messaging service Swift. Meanwhile, Brazil's yuan-denominated foreign-exchange assets reached a new high of 5.37 per cent of the total by the end of 2022, surpassing euro assets to be the second largest.

It marked a strong increase since the yuan was included in Brazil's foreign-exchange reserves four years ago, as its US dollar assets fell to 80.24 per cent at the end of 2022 from 89.93 per cent in 2018.

Russia, China's ninth-largest trading partner, which has been largely kicked out of the US dollar system due to its Ukraine invasion, has already significantly increased its holdings of the yuan in foreign-exchange reserves and sovereign funds, with more than two-thirds of bilateral trade settled in yuan or roubles.

The yuan now accounts for just 2.19 percent of global payments, 3.5 percent of global foreign exchange transactions, 2.69 percent of reserves held by central banks, and 12.28 percent of the International Monetary Fund's special drawing rights currency basket.

China has reported double-digit growth in yuan-denominated trade settlement and investment in recent years.

Around 7.92 trillion yuan (US\$1.15 trillion) worth of commodity trade was settled in yuan last year, an increase of 37.3 percent from a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Yuan settlements concerning direct investments rose by 16.6 percent, year on year, to 6.76 trillion yuan in 2022.

Chinese leaders have also been lobbying for the use of the currency in bilateral crude oil trade with Middle Eastern countries.

It poses a potential challenge to the petrodollar, as there are already positive responses – Iraq announced in February that it would accept yuan trade settlement, and last month state-owned oil giant China National Offshore Oil Corporation paid yuan to Total Energies in a liquefied natural gas deal brokered by the Shanghai Petroleum and Natural Gas Exchange.

South China Morning Post

Every night I ask why we rely on the dollar

BRAZIL'S President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has called on developing countries to work towards replacing the US dollar with their own currencies in international trade, lending his voice to Beijing's efforts to end the greenback's dominance of global commerce.

Kicking off his first state visit to China since taking office in January, Lula called for the countries of the so-called BRICS group of nations, which in addition to Brazil and China includes Russia, India and South Africa, to come up with their own alternative currency for use in trade.

"Every night I ask myself why all countries have to base their trade on the dollar," Lula said in an impassioned speech at the New Development Bank in Shanghai, known as the "BRICS bank".

"Why can't we do trade based on our own currencies?" he added, drawing loud applause from the audience of Brazilian and Chinese dignitaries.

"Who was it that decided that the dollar was the currency after the disappearance

of the gold standard?" Lula's call to shed dollar dependence dovetailed with Beijing's increasing efforts to promote use of the renminbi (yuan) in settlement of cross-border commodities trades, as Chinese policymakers seek to strengthen the role of the world's second-largest economy in the global financial system.

The warm reception in Shanghai also came as Brazil's left leader has sought to redirect the country's foreign policy to a more multilateralist stance, with an emphasis not only on good relations with the US – he visited President Joe Biden in February – but also with China and the developing world.

Lula's far-right predecessor Jair Bolsonaro had prioritised bilateral ties with the US under former president Donald Trump as well as with other nations led by populist leaders such as Hungary and Israel.

China's leader Xi Jinping was keen to persuade the Brazilian president to demonstrate that appetite for rebalancing by backing a number of Beijing's foreign policy

initiatives. These range from the Belt and Road trade and infrastructure programme to other schemes that seek to create alternative international governance systems to those dominated by the US.

Bilateral trade has ballooned over the past decade to US\$150.4 billion last year, with China buying Brazil's agricultural commodities and minerals and investing in the Latin American country's large consumer market and infrastructure sector.

During his visit, 1 Lula visited Huawei, the Chinese telecom equipment company that is subject to US sanctions.

The growing economic relationship has encouraged both countries to promote greater use of their respective currencies in bilateral trade.

The Brazilian branch of the state-owned Industrial and Commercial Bank of China settled its first transaction directly in renminbi in the country recently, Chinese state media reported.

Financial Times

Mission: work towards a world of collaboration, not confrontation

Vijay Prashad

writes: As the United States pushes for a major power conflict in the Asia-Pacific, it is essential to develop lines of communication and build bridges towards mutual understanding between China, the West, and the developing world

ON MARCH 20, China's President Xi Jinping and Russia's President Vladimir Putin spent more than four hours in private conversation.

According to official statements after the meeting, the two leaders talked about the increasing economic and strategic partnership between China and Russia – including building the Power of Siberia 2 pipeline – and the Chinese peace initiative for the war in Ukraine.

Putin said that “many of the provisions of the peace plan put forward by China are consonant with Russian approaches and can be taken as the basis for a peaceful settlement when the West and Kiev are ready for it”.

These steps towards peace have not received a warm welcome in Washington. Ahead of Xi's visit to Moscow, John Kirby, the spokesperson for the US National Security Council, declared that any “call for a ceasefire” in Ukraine by China and Russia would be “unacceptable”.

As details of the meeting emerged, US officials reportedly expressed fear that the world might embrace China and Russia's efforts to secure a peaceful resolution and end the war. The Atlantic powers are, in fact, redoubling their efforts to prolong the conflict.

Deleterious

On the day of the meeting between Xi and Putin, the United Kingdom's Minister of State at the Ministry of Defence, Baroness Annabel Goldie, told the House of Lords that “alongside our granting of a squadron of Challenger 2 main battle tanks to Ukraine, we will be providing ammunition including armour-piercing rounds which contain depleted uranium”. Goldie's statement came on the 20th anniversary of the US-UK invasion of Iraq, in which the West used depleted uranium on the Iraqi population to deleterious effect.

In reference to the UK's provision of depleted uranium to Ukrainian forces, Putin said that “it seems that the West really has decided to fight Russia to the last Ukrainian – no longer in words, but in deeds”. In response, he said that Russia would deploy tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus.

Within China, Xi's visit to Russia was widely discussed with a general sense of pride that China's government is taking leadership both to block the ambitions of the



Clockwise from the top: Xiong Wenyun (China), Moving Rainbow, 1998-2001; Abstract (detail); Zhu Wei (China), China Diary, No. 52, 2001; Zhou Chunyu (China), New Generation Tibetan, 1980; Liu Xiaodong (China), East, 2012

West and to seek peace in the conflict. These discussions, reflected in journals and on social media platforms such as WeChat, Douyin, Weibo, LittleRedBook, Bilibili, and Zhihu, emphasised how China, a developing country, has nonetheless been able to overcome its limitations and take on a leadership position in the world.

These discussions within China are largely unavailable to people outside the country for at least three reasons: first, they take place in Chinese and are not often translated into other languages; second, they take place on social media platforms that, in addition to being in Chinese, are not used by people from outside the Chinese-speaking community; and third, growing Sinophobia, stemming from a longstanding colonial history of thought and exacerbated by the New Cold War, has deepened a disregard for discussions in China that do not adopt the Western worldview.

For these reasons, and more, there is a genuine lack of under-

standing about the range of opinions in China concerning the shifts in the world order and the country's role in these shifts.

Within China, there is a rich tradition of intellectual debate that takes place in journals inspired in one way or another by Chen Duxiu's *Xin Qingnian*, or New Youth, first published in 1915. In the first issue of that journal, Chen (1879-1942), who was a founding member of the Communist Party of China, published a letter to the youth which included a list of admonitions that seems to have set the terms for the intellectual agenda of the next hundred years:

- Be independent and not enslaved,
- Be progressive and not conservative,
- Be in the forefront and not lagging behind,
- Be internationalist and not isolationist,
- Be practical and not rhetorical,
- Be scientific and not superstitious.

The experience of New Youth set in motion journal after journal, each with an agenda to build more adequate theories about developments in China that seek to establish the country's sovereignty and lift them out of the so-called “century of humiliation”, a period that was characterised by Western and Japanese imperialist intervention.

In 2008, several leading intellectuals in the country founded a new journal, *Wenhua Zongheng*, which has increasingly become a platform to debate what Xi called the “great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation”. The bi-monthly journal features the country's leading voices, who offer various perspectives on important issues of the day, such as the state of the post-COVID-19 world and the importance of rural revitalisation.

Last year, Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research and Dongsheng began a conversation with the editors of *Wenhua Zongheng* which led to the production of a quarterly international edition of the journal.

Through this partnership, select essays from the Chinese editions of the journal are translated into English, Portuguese, and Spanish, and an additional column is featured in the Chinese edition that brings voices from Africa, Asia, and Latin America into dialogue with China. We are proud to say that the first issue of this international edition (vol. 1, no. 1) has now just launched, with the theme “On the Threshold of a New International Order”.

This issue features three essays by leading scholars in China – Yang Ping (editor of *Wenhua Zongheng*), Yao Zhongqiu (professor at the School of International Studies and dean of the Centre for Historical Political Studies, Renmin University of China), and Cheng Yawen (dean of the Department of Political Science at the School of International Relations and Public Affairs, Shanghai International Studies University), as well as my brief editorial. Both Professors Yao and Cheng discuss the changes in the current international order,

mainly the decline of US unipolarity and the emergence of regionalism. Professor Yao's contribution, which goes back to the Ming dynasty (1388-1644), makes the case that the changes taking place today are not necessarily the creation of a new order, but the return of a more balanced world system as China “revives” its place in the world and as the ambitions of the US find their limits in the emergence of key countries in developing countries, including China, India, and Brazil.

All three essays focus on the importance of China's role in the developing world, both in economic terms (such as through the ten-year-old Belt and Road Initiative, or BRI) and in political terms (such as through China's attempt to restart a peace process in Ukraine).

Editor Yang Ping is firm in his view that “China's historical destiny is to stand with the Third World”, both because – despite its major advances – China remains a developing country and because China's insistence upon multilateralism, as Professor Cheng argues, means that it does not seek to displace the US and become a new global hegemon.

Yang ends his account with three considerations: first, that China must not be led merely by commercial interests but must “prioritise what is necessary to ensure strategic survival and national development”; second, that China must intervene in debates about the new international system by introducing the BRI's principles of “consultation, contribution, and shared benefits”, which include seeking to expand the zone of peace against the habits of war; and third, that China must encourage the creation of an institutional mechanism beyond economic cooperation – such as a “Development International” – to promote the genuine sovereignty of nations, the dignity of peoples faced with the International Monetary Fund's debt-austerity trap, and a new internationalism.

Perspectives

Yang, Yao, and Chen's perspectives are essential reading as part of an important initiative for global dialogue. We look forward to your feedback about the first international edition of *Wenhua Zongheng* and are currently working on the second edition, which will focus on China's path to modernisation.

As the United States pushes for a major power conflict in the Asia-Pacific, it is essential to develop lines of communication and build bridges towards mutual understanding between China, the West, and the developing world. As I wrote in the closing words of my editorial, “Instead of the global division pursued by the New Cold War, our mission is to learn from each other towards a world of collaboration rather than confrontation”.

- To find out more about the international journal on the theme “On the Threshold of a New International Order”, contact Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research at: <https://thetricontinental.org/contact>

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KK LIVES IN OUR HEARTS!

APRIL 28 was the 99th birthday of Comrade KK – Kenneth Kaunda Day.

We are grateful that this great revolutionary leader was born in our homeland and became our leader.

We are saying “we are grateful” because as Christ put it, there are people we would wish were not born – “The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born” (Matthew 26:24).

There are men who have betrayed our homeland, who have sold out to imperialists, who have hired themselves out to imperialists, as leaders of our country.

Whereas Comrade KK took our country to greater heights of international respectability, others have turned us into a laughing stock – a joke.

We give thanks to the Most High for giving us Comrade KK – an honest, selfless, anti-imperialist, patriotic leader.

Kenneth Kaunda said: “A child born is allowed time to grow. Not so with a

country. Zambia cannot wait. Our needs are immediate – and unlimited. This is a sobering thought but an exciting prospect.”

Let’s remember this great revolutionary leader and meditate deeply over his life of great selfless, incorruptible service to our homeland, and how we continue his struggle to free our homeland from ignorance, disease, poverty, backwardness and neocolonialism.

Let the revolutionary spirit of Comrade KK continue to live in us – in our hearts!

Fred M’membe, Socialist Party President

**JUSTICE
EQUITY
PEACE**

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