

AFRICOM: act of treachery by Hichilema

Lusaka 'office' undermines our self-determination, sovereignty, national security, militarises our lives

Fred M'membe
Socialist Party President

ONE OF the most treacherous, unpatriotic and betraying things Mr Hakainde Hichilema has done is to allow the United States military to set up an AFRICOM office in Zambia.

By this single act, Mr Hichilema – knowingly or unknowingly, wittingly or unwittingly – has seriously undermined the sovereignty and self-determination of our country and our people. He has undermined our national security, militarised our lives and eroded the achievements of our national liberation. He has also undermined the security of our region and our continent.

What are the security interests of the United States and its NATO allies in Africa?

Today, Africa has 29 known United States military outposts across the Northern, Western, Eastern, and Horn regions, far greater than France (5), Germany (3), Turkey (1), Belgium (1), Israel (1), Japan (1), and the United Kingdom (1) combined. Foreign military bases, particularly those of the US and France, serve as a protection racket for neocolonial interests.

The enduring presence of foreign military outposts, offices and bases, not only symbolises the lack of unity and sovereignty; it also equally enforces the fragmenta-

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The crackdown on street vendors in Lusaka CBD has forced them to abandon their trading spaces and led to their goods being destroyed

Street vendors' tears break our hearts

THE TEARS and grief of the mothers who were pitilessly driven off the streets of Lusaka Central Business District recently will haunt Mr Hakainde Hichilema and his league, Socialist Party President Fred M'membe says.

"It breaks our hearts to see the street vendors in Lusaka becoming a subject of ridicule, abuse and neglect by this government, which they toiled for so much based on the heaven-like future, Mr Hichilema and the UPND promised them. These people had so much hope and expectation from this

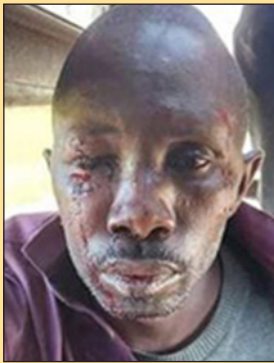
government because that is what they were guaranteed. They were promised a life of milk and honey, but they have been paid back with considerable cruelty," Dr M'membe said.

"As if this is not enough, these people have been endlessly mocked and taunted by Mr Hichilema and UPND online media ever since this tragedy began. Suddenly, Mr Hichilema's erstwhile beloved and reliable constituency of voters has become a nuisance, which deserves nothing but disrespect and must be kept to the extreme margins of economic structures and activities.

"We are not surprised because we have never harboured any illusions about Mr Hichilema's lack of empathy and total detachment from the suffering majority of this country. The past has shown that compassion, kindness and love for the poor has never been Mr Hichilema's strength in all his political dealings. Today, he has ostracised the vendors because he sees them as people of very little value to him now that he is at plot one.

"Mr Hichilema has forgotten so soon that the vendors they forcibly pulled off the

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THE SECRET WAR AGAINST APARTHEID

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Ask yourself why State House is silent on torture and brutality

Gestapo-style policing is part of President’s increasing ‘political clout’

Socialist staff reporter

STATE HOUSE is silent on the rising incidences of torture and brutality by the police. Why? Is it because it is complicit? Socialist Party President Fred M’membe asks.

“Recently, the US State Department released a detailed report dubbed ‘USA 2022 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Zambia’, which brought to light a number of human rights abuses committed by Mr Hakainde Hichilema’s administration,” he said.

“The Law Association of Zambia (LAZ) also condemned the increased incidents of police brutality against members of the opposition and cited the recent arrests of PF presidential hopeful Mr Emmanuel Mwamba, PF member and blogger Mr Rizwan Patel as well as Mr Given Phiri, a co-accused person with former State House Special Assistant for Politics, Dr Christopher Zumaniimba, as among the incidents where police brutality was in evidence.

“LAZ further condemned Inspector General of Police Graphael Musamba over his stance on police brutality, stating that there was no law which gave the police service power to brutalise citizens in the name of ‘minimum force’ during arrests. It also stated that it was not the function of the police to control the ‘toning down of citizens’, who had the right to freely express their views in line with their constitutionally protected freedoms. Earlier, Mr Musamba was reported as ‘urging the opposition to tone down and cooperate with the officers or else the police will use minimum force’.

“Amidst all these problems between the police and the public in general, State House has remained conveniently silent about what is going on. But we are not surprised because we have stated over and again that the gestapo style of policing that is currently taking place is under the orders and supervision of Mr Hichilema’s most trusted agent, Mr Fanwell Siandenge, the Deputy Inspector General of Police in charge of State House, who is working with a hit squad of well-known UPND cadres

drafted into the State House security system,” Dr M’membe said.

“It is also well known that in fact, Mr Siandenge is the de facto Inspector General of Police, and all key decisions are taken by him while Mr Musamba remains a powerless Inspector General of Police. We say this with utmost sincerity and sympathy for Mr Musamba because no human being should be forced into such a situation. But we understand because that is Mr Hichilema’s style of leadership, in which he keeps some people merely to save face or for convenience while he continues to pursue increased political clout.

Dissent

“Furthermore, the recent justifications and empty denials on this matter from Minister of Home Affairs Mr Jack Mwiimbu, Justice Minister Mr Mulambo Haimbe, and acting Information Minister Mr Makozo Chikote, only confirm one thing, the gross human rights violations by police are all part of the grand scheme to silence dissent

hence the silence from Mr Hichilema, who should ideally be the one to address such very serious concerns.

Dr M’membe said the partisan policing and torture the country is currently witnessing was fully sanctioned by the top UPND government leadership.

“It is now clear that those who don’t agree with Mr Hichilema or choose to align themselves with the opposition will be dealt with viciously. And the chilling incidents of brutality and torture by the police are calculated to intimidate the masses. This is meant to set the stage upon which the 2026 presidential and general election will be held – unlawful use of force by police – but it won’t work because the police are not the law unto themselves.

“We also want to remind Mr Hichilema and his hit squad in the police that they are not big enough to stop the revolution that is being waged against poverty, corruption and imperialist puppet leadership. The struggle for justice, equity and peace will go on and the hope for a better socialist Zambia will not die. The Zambian people are resolved and cannot be cheated anymore.

“To the international community, in particular, the European Union (EU), who have chosen to pay a blind eye to these violations, we say, pretending that all is well in Zambia today is being complicit in the crimes committed.

“It is barbaric, inhuman and disrespectful to the Zambian people to endorse this regime, given the trend of brutality and torture against the innocent citizens we are seeing today.

“The rapidly shrinking political space and decline in freedoms of expression, movement and association under Mr Hichilema’s leadership is a travesty and adds to the increasing crackdown on peaceful dissent in the country.

“This is not the Zambia we all want and, definitely, this is not how peaceful nations are built. Mr Hichilema’s heavy-handed approach must be stopped forthwith,” Dr M’membe said.

“We demand that investigations into these gross violations be opened and the perpetrators together with their superiors issuing orders be brought to justice.”

Confusion reigns at Zambia’s Defence Forces

Fred M’membe
Socialist Party President

SECRETARY to the Cabinet Mr Patrick Kangwa has appointed Mr Friday Nyambe, the Director General Office of the President Special Division, as chairman of the Central Joint Operations Committee (CJOC) with immediate effect.

The duties of the President and Commander-in-Chief are never shared or delegated, not even to the Vice-President. It is only the President who has authority over matters of deployment of the Defence Forces and their officers. CJOC was a creation of the Zambia Army and Zambia Police. Never in the history of Zambia, or any other defence force in world, has this happened.

The CJOC in Zambia consists of the chairman, the vice-chairman, the secretary, and members from other government agencies with work related to fields of border protection and inland security.

The collective body of the CJOC is headed by the chairman (or vice-chairman in the chairman’s absence), who sets the agenda and presides over meetings.

Responsibilities for members of the CJOC are to take precedence over tasks of national security as a team. The chairman of the CJOC is the Army Commander, the principal military adviser to the President, Ministry of Defence, and the Defence Council. However, all CJOC members are by law military advisers, and they may respond to a request or voluntarily submit, through the chairman, advice or opinions to the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces.

The executive authority of the CJOC in Zambia has never changed. It is as designed the world over. In World War II, the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff acted as executive agents dealing with area commanders, but the original National Security Act of 1947 saw the Joint Chiefs of Staff as planners and advisers, not as commanders of combatant commands. In spite of this, the 1948 Key West Agreement

allowed members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to serve as executive agents for unified commands, a responsibility that allowed the executive agent to originate direct communication with the combatant command. Congress abolished this authority in a 1953 amendment to the National Security Act.

Today, the Joint Chiefs of Staff have no executive authority to command combatant forces. The issue of executive authority was clearly resolved by the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganisation Act of 1986: “The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall assign all forces under their jurisdiction to unified and specified combatant commands to perform missions assigned to those commands.” The chain of command runs through the President to the commander of the combatant command.

In Zambia, the security system has a solid foundation dating as far back as the First and Second Republics. Dr Kenneth Kaunda laid a very strong foundation, which has proved extremely effective in the absence of a unified command.

It is important to mention here, or educate Mr Hakainde Hichilema and his team, that powers vested in the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces are for the President only.

Mr Hichilema should learn to consult the elders before attempting to change traditions that have kept the Zambian nation together. National security instruments of power are never shared anywhere in the world. The Minister of Defence, the Minister of Home Affairs, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence and Secretary to the Cabinet, have no power to issue orders or instructions to the Defence Forces. When this happens, it marks the beginning of a downfall and break down of systems.

Disorganising the Zambia Defence Forces is a very serious weakness on the part of the Presidency. We advise Mr Hichilema to put his house in order and not to allow any person to abuse or take over his responsibility as Commander-in-Chief.



UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMICS OF CLASS STRUGGLE

SEVENTY leaders drawn from the district, constituency and wards in Chililabombwe have undergone ideological training after receiving letters of appointment.

The objective of the training was to introduce the learners to the general concept of socialism with a key focus on justice, equity and peace.

“Training is essential because it enables us to develop a penetrative understanding of the current dynamics of the class struggle,” Socialist Party central committee member Faston Mwale said.

“Unless the working class realises that it is a class for itself, it will remain the workhorse of capital.”

The training was held at the Socialist Party office in Chililabombwe.

● Photo: Socialist Party Chililabombwe district’s intensified mobilisation programme in action. The party is holding a general ward formation drive while identifying potential candidates for the 2026 elections.

Two years of UPND in office have been a disaster

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M’membe says the UPND administration, which clocks two years in office next month, has been disastrous.

Dr M’membe said the UPND government would be remembered for gagging divergent views by arresting opponents and that even though tribalism was prevalent in previous administrations, the UPND had hit a record high.

He said the UPND administration had proven to be a puppet of Western governments by allowing an AFRICOM “office” in Lusaka, which posed a threat to neighbouring countries.

In addition, the government had failed to address the cost of living over the past couple of years with large increases in the prices of mealie meal, fuel and electricity.

● THERE is no corruption that Mr Hakainde Hichilema is truly fighting. It’s all hypocrisy and vengeance. This regime is more corrupt than that of the PF, Socialist Party President Fred M’membe says in a Facebook post.

“There’s grand corruption in fertiliser, mining, oil and so on. It won’t be long before Zambians know the truth and they won’t like it.

“Yes, corruption must be fought, but not by equally corrupt or even more corrupt people. This is the case of a thief chasing another thief. Actually, big thieves are more brutal to small thieves,” Dr M’membe said.

● KELVIN Kaunda says the decision to allow Vedanta back to run Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) is not in the best interests of the people on the Copperbelt.

Kaunda, who is Socialist Party National Youth Chairperson and was on the Copperbelt for a three-day visit, said people must be protected from companies that were not interested in the welfare of their employees.

He told the residents of Mufulira at a meeting that Zambians must start claiming what is theirs and benefit from the country’s resources.

● THE GOVERNMENT’S announcement that a million tonnes of mealie meal is to be sold to the Democratic Republic of Congo sends a very bad message when many poor families are facing hunger because they can’t afford to buy it, Joseph Kangwa, Socialist Party Copperbelt Youth League Provincial Training Coordinator, says.

“The sale is yet another sign of the

government’s insensitivity to people’s suffering because there is no way a responsible father would sell a commodity when his family were struggling to buy it. It is shameful.”

● IT IS important to offer checks and balances on the debt restructuring agreement, which is claimed as one of the achievements of President Hakainde Hichilema and his government, Joseph Kangwa, Socialist Party Copperbelt Youth League Provincial Training Coordinator, says.

“The debt restructuring agreement is vital for our economic recovery, but we need to examine our repayment strategy,” he said.

“We challenge Mr Hichilema’s government to come up with a workable repayment plan. This is what the Zambian people want to hear rather than the President’s continuous attempts at self-glorification.”

Zambia’s first puppet president is humiliating and dangerous

Hichilema even obeyed the IMF and phased out maize production subsidies

Socialist staff reporter

ZAMBIA has its first puppet president, Socialist Party President Fred M’membe says.

“No sooner had the Russia-Africa summit concluded in St Petersburg than Mr Hakainde Hichilema lifted off for a state visit to Israel,” he said in a Facebook post.

“Well, we have absolutely no problem with Mr Hichilema’s visit to Israel but what is of great concern and humiliation to this nation and its citizens is the net of puppetry and selling out this presidency is inextricably intertwined with.

“Mr Hichilema’s betrayal of our national pride, identity, and long-standing diplomatic traditions and principles for reasons of expedience is one of the biggest political shames in the foreign relations history of this nation.

“So, this is a leader who cowardly prefers to grip firmly to his seat at home while fellow African leaders without bias actively participate in a critical global summit that would model the future of our continent’s development and foreign relations.

“What kind of puppet leadership is this? We ask a question to people within the UPND who think our observations on these matters are driven by malice and mischief: with such elementary diplomatic miscalculations, how does one describe Mr Hichilema’s ignorant and irrational handling of foreign relations matters?”

Dr M’membe asked if this wasn’t “outright puppet leadership”. “Well, they can argue all they want, but the writing on the wall is clear, Mr Hichilema is a sell-out and a puppet of the West. For the first time in our history, Zambia has a leader who has been captured by transnational corporations and global imperialists.

Capture

“Zambians must know that Mr Hichilema is not only a front, but also an instrument of Western special interests. And one does not even need to go far to ascertain the scope of the capture around this particular presidency because the current occupant is so good at reading neocolonialist scripts and projecting an easygoing and excessively friendly attitude towards the discriminatory interests of the West and transnational corporations.”

Dr M’membe said the Western Sahara issue was an example of Mr Hichilema’s “puppetry stance”.

“The United States government reached an agreement with Morocco for the country to recognise Israel and for the US in return to support Morocco’s colonisation of Western Sahara. And, as expected, the far-right UPND government of Mr Hichilema has also in turn recognised Morocco’s colonisation of Western Sahara.

“And where does Zambia’s traditional support for the Palestinian cause against Israeli apartheid stand today?”

Dr M’membe said all this was a total departure from the non-aligned stance Zambia had taken since its independence.

“How can it be that Zambia, a

country with a very rich liberation struggle support history, is among the evil forces supporting colonialism in the 21st century?

“On top of that, like all puppets of the West, a closer look at Mr Hichilema’s governance style reveals a reputation for intellectual laziness, diplomatic spinelessness and a severe addiction for state power by just playing the role of President rather than enthusiastically shaping the nation’s development agenda, as well as corroborating and developing consensus with fellow African leaders to establish an independent and dignified direc-

tion and vision for the future of our nation and our continent in general.

“Our painful truth to the Zambian voters who braved those meandering queues in the August 2021 general election to elect Mr Hichilema, is that the man they voted for is not in command of this nation and its involvement in global affairs.

“Mr Hichilema is functioning on the end of a string held by his puppet masters in Washington, South Africa, and other imperialist capitals. That is why even his diplomatic travels and manoeuvres can only go as far as his puppet masters or foreign handlers are willing to stretch

out the string that is yoking him.

“And we genuinely feel sorry for Mr Hichilema because clearly, he underestimated the after-effects of the imperialist links and covenants he entered into when seeking office. But then, what is even worse is Mr Hichilema’s lack of awareness of how he is being used, and the repercussions of this for our national sovereignty, security and development interests.

“We cannot have a leader whose supervisory competence and decision-making are solely tied to the agenda of the string

pullers even when that agenda is unmistakably in conflict with our national values and interests.”

Dr M’membe cited an example of how far he said Mr Hichilema was willing to carry out the wishes of the imperialists and their institutions.

“Mr Hichilema was commanded by the IMF to phase out subsidies on maize production,” he said.

“Expensive maize production will mean expensive mealie meal – a staple, which is not just food, but sits at the heart of our culture as Zambians.

“But he did not think of the

people, and willingly obeyed the wishes of the IMF, putting the price of mealie meal beyond the reach of the people who depend on it. To take mealie meal out of the reach of a Zambian is no different to being ordered to point a gun at their head.

“A leader who is willing to listen to the West to the extent of harming his own people is dangerous for the country.

“This is an all-time low for this nation and its leadership. Ba Zambia mwali yi gong’a! We need to correct this mistake,” Dr M’membe said.

Action against vendors is ‘almost colonial’

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streets were merely trying to earn a living under the cruel conditions facilitated by this very government. For instance, according to the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) Basic Needs and Nutrition Basket for the month of June 2023, the cost of living for a family of five in Lusaka, increased to K9, 239.45. This is in comparison to the recorded figure of K9, 077.93 in May 2023, which signifies an increase of K161.52.

“It is therefore, indefensible that this government decided to handle such a delicate matter at a time such as this, in a purely colonial governance manner. It’s like the conditions suffered by the indigenous majority during colonial times have now been passed on to the vendor. The same harsh approaches used by colonial administrators to keep indigenous people at the peripheries of the Central Business District are similar to the ones being applied by this government on its own citizens,” Dr M’membe said.

“It is very strange that Mr Hichilema, who has not provided options to the vendor problem, wants the vendors not to exist at all. Since being elected into office, this government has not provided any policies and structures of dealing with this particular group of the informal sector yet they rush to inflict so much anguish and pain on the poor people as if it was their fault to find themselves on the streets. There is nothing wrong with keeping a clean, green and healthy environment but there should be empathy, humanity and planning attached to the attainment of these goals.

“It is therefore, unacceptable that our people should lose livelihoods at such an accelerated pace due to government’s inability to strategise and prioritise policy-making.

“Let them not be so focused on exploiting and abusing the toiling masses of this country. We demand that compensation be provided to those who lost property, and that sustainable alternatives anchored in policy be specified so that the voice and visibility of this group of the informal sector is guaranteed,” Dr M’membe said.



Fred M’membe praised over organic fertiliser

SMALL-SCALE farmers in Chipangali constituency, Eastern Province, have commended Socialist Party President Fred M’membe for teaching farmers about the benefits of using organic fertiliser.

Speaking during one of the Socialist Party training sessions, Chipangali farmer Mathews Dube said people in the area were happy with the project because there were many benefits.

Dube said a number of farmers in the area had failed to buy fertiliser because of the high prices and that during the last farming season many had not received farming

inputs from the government, which resulted in a poor harvest.

He said it was sad that the UPND government had made a number of promises to farmers but had failed to honour some of them.

Dube added that the training by the Socialist Party would help many small-scale farmers in Eastern Province who would no longer be panicking over buying fertiliser.

Speaking at the same training session, Socialist Party Eastern Province Agroecology Coordinator and Member of Central Committee Kelvin Phiri urged farmers to support

the programme. He said Dr M’membe was the only president who meant well for the country and whose policies would benefit the majority of the poor Zambians.

He assured people that the programme would be extended to all parts of the province.

Phiri added that Dr M’membe fully supported the programmes and no farmer should pay anything for the training.

A number of constituencies in Eastern Province, including Sinda, Chasafu, Kasenengwa, Luangeni, and Nyimba, have so far benefited from the training.

Police salaries reaction ‘disrespectful’

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M’membe has rejected insulting comments from Zambia Police command following his online call for the government to honour a pledge to review police salaries.

“The Zambia Police command issued a statement denouncing me for urging Mr Hakainde Hichilema to urgently improve remuneration and conditions of service for police officers and staff,” he said.

“They belittled me in all sorts of ways and tried to cheapen my well-intentioned message with utmost disrespect. Without a doubt, their statement was ill-advised, uncouth and unethical. But I am not surprised, because only UPND police officers under the direct command of Mr Hichilema’s trusted lieutenant, the deputy Inspector General of Police in-charge of State House, Mr Fanwell Siandenge, can behave in this improper manner.

“True and patriotic Zambia Police officers cannot be opposed to what I said and, worse still, be so disrespectful to a leader of a legally registered political party.

“In fact, the unprofessional and politically charged language in the statement reveals the

desperation and extent to which Mr Hichilema and his far-right UPND government are willing to go in belittling the effort of our hardworking men and women in the police service. And one wonders how my decent call for improved livelihoods for fellow citizens, who are dedicated to national service, can attract so much hate, anger and disrespect from the Zambia Police command. It is unprecedented!”

Dr M’membe said the reaction from the Zambia Police command was “telling”.

Gluttonous

“And going by their reaction, it is clear that the Zambia Police command are not interested in improving the welfare of police officers and staff. They want to be eating and living well alone, which is typical gluttonous behaviour of bad and selfish superiors.

“Nonetheless, I want to make it very clear to the Zambia Police command that no amount of uncouth, emotionally charged and unwise statements written and imposed on them to undersign by discredited UPND guerrilla channels will discourage my resolve to stand up and

speak for the suffering majority of this country, regardless of their status in society.

“What I said was not new. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with me calling for better remuneration and conditions of service for police officers and the civil service in general. If people are sincere, they will admit that I am not the first opposition political party leader to make this demand for better wages.

“Mr Michael Chilufya Sata (MHSRIP) when in opposition said and promised the same things to police officers and staff. As a matter of fact, Mr Sata delivered on his promise by reviewing police and civil servants’ salaries as soon as he was in government in 2011. Nobody from the police command of that time denounced him or called him names.

“Equally, Mr Hichilema did the same thing on June 6, 2021 as an opposition leader. No one from the police command at that time denounced him or called him names. However, Mr Hichilema has not delivered to the police officers and staff what he promised them.

“What is an opposition political party there for? To do just as I have done and what Mr Sata and Mr Hichilema did as opposition leaders.”

West's colonial thieves are after our valuable natural resources

They oppose Russia, China in Africa and will use puppet leaders for control

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tion and subordination of the continent's peoples and governments. While Africa continues to power the world via the West's exploitation of its resources, the West's main export to Africa is its endless wars.

The complete removal of foreign military bases is the only approach to this problem that will achieve sovereignty and self-determination in Africa. Their presence is an insult to our blood-soaked independence and ability to provide for and protect our people, forced to accept so-called defence (control) from former enslavers/colonisers, who are causally linked to the many problems we today face.

The military bases severely and disproportionately also aggravate climate damage and therefore pose a threat to the existence of Earth as a whole. Their function of maintaining capitalism and neocolonialism demonstrates that only socialism is the way forward for a united and sovereign Africa, protecting the African peoples, and saving the planet.

As of July 2023, the United States has the most military bases in Africa of any country outside the continent, at 29 known military facilities in 15 countries, followed by France, which has bases in ten countries. Of course, these statistics do not account for unclassified and unknown military bases or intelligence operations, which may be present on the African continent. It is also worth noting that AFRICOM is not currently headquartered on the continent but in Stuttgart, Germany. AFRICOM also stages training exercises on the continent.

The United States and France have 11 drone stations in Africa, which are in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Niger, Seychelles, Somalia, Tunisia, and Sahel, and which are at the heart of the surveillance operations – unarmed turboprop aircraft disguised as private planes that are equipped with hidden sensors that can record full-motion video, track infrared heat patterns, and vacuum up radio and cellphone signals.

Drones kill would-be attackers against the United States, but they also increase the likelihood of future attacks by encouraging retribution among the public.

Drones may kill more people with a single strike than infantry because they are less expensive to maintain, easier to operate, and lack emotions. These factors contribute to the growth of insurgencies and conflicts. Additionally, it excuses soldiers from responsibility if they kill civilians because they were not personally engaged in the decision to explode or cancel the mission.

Foreign military outposts connect to other sites in Africa and other continents via the telecommunications infrastructure of the host country, which threatens national security and allows the foreign power to have access to the population's GPS, interests, "likes", and other surveillance of individuals.

The United States military ful-



US Army's African Command (AFRICOM) currently involves 29 known military facilities in 15 countries on the African continent

fills two key roles on the African continent. resource exploitation and foreign policy. The United States military, together with the armies of other NATO nations, including France, serve not only to benefit the United States and its ruling elites but also to fulfill gendarme functions. These functions entail safeguarding Western corporate interests and upholding the principles of capitalism.

With the growing presence of Chinese private and public commercial interests in Africa, and their consistent success in outbidding Western companies, there has been an escalation in United States efforts to limit China's influence on the continent. The United States government's New Africa Strategy, formulated in 2019, framed the situation as a competition, highlighting China and Russia as great power competitors rapidly expanding their financial and political influence in Africa.

Challenges

The dependence on external engagement in African security affairs carries significant drawbacks. Firstly, this establishes an imbalance where external states take charge of the African security agenda, depriving African nations of the ability to shape their future. Secondly, external actors often prioritise swift military solutions in areas aligned with their national interests, instead of investing in long-term support to address local issues and underlying causes that could be effectively addressed through non-military means.

There has been a growing trend of non-security-related challenges in Africa being approached with a military mindset. Instances include the utilisation of military forces to tackle epidemics, local political unrest, and development concerns. Furthermore, political discussions and rhetoric are increasingly adopting a militarised tone

throughout the continent. For instance, politicians are increasingly linking security issues to the fight against terrorism and the security of regimes, rather than focusing on community resilience and human security. External powers employ a rhetoric of warfare and military peril to mobilise backing for development initiatives, peace promotion, and efforts against diseases or climate change. Previously distinct domains, like development and security, are now blending into a shared political agenda, where military interventions are presented as the universal solution to all challenges in these areas.

Africa possesses a vast range of valuable natural resources in its subsoil. It holds a staggering proportion of global reserves, including 98 percent of chromium, 90 percent of cobalt, 90 percent of platinum, 70 percent of coltan, 70 percent of tantalite, 64 percent of manganese, 50 percent of gold, and 33 percent of uranium. Additionally, the continent boasts significant reserves of other minerals such as bauxite, diamonds, tantalum, tungsten, and tin. With 30 percent of the world's mineral reserves, 12 percent of known oil reserves, 8 percent of known natural gas, and 65 percent of the planet's arable land, Africa's subsoil wealth is substantial. The UN Environmental Programme estimates that Africa's natural capital represents 30 percent to 50 percent of the total wealth of African countries. In 2012, the UN reported that natural resources accounted for 77 percent of total exports and 42 percent of total government revenue.

African nations heavily depend on the export of various raw materials due to the dominance of multinational corporations and insufficient industrialisation in many African countries. This reliance has led to a state of dependency on foreign capital. This condition of dependency was established through colonial policies that fo-

This militarised world is not only spending money. It is squandering the toil of its workers, the brilliance of its scientists, and the aspirations of its young people. In all actuality, this is not a way of life. Humanity is hung on an iron cross beneath the ominous cloak of war

cused on extracting and growing raw materials, which were then sold through colonial concessions to the rulers' countries. Subsequent generations of post-colonial elites inherited this dependency and derived benefits from it without making substantial changes to the structure.

Coups have become consequences or "backfires" rooting from United States "efforts" to mentor foreign troops. Security training by the USA gives the United States access to the African states, which results in influence on their militaries. For example, Col Assimi Goïta worked with United States Special Operations forces for years, participating in both Flintlock exercises and a Joint Special Operations University seminar at MacDill Air Force Base – and also headed the junta that overthrew Mali's government in 2020. After staging the coup, Goïta stepped down and took the job of Vice-President in a transitional government charged with returning Mali to civilian rule. But less than a year later, he carried out his second coup. Why do these officers, who were trained by the United States to defend their govern-

ments, topple them instead? In the United States government's 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, the authors wrote that, "Of the major and emerging powers, China has the greatest potential of any nation to militarily compete with the US and field disruptive military technologies that could over time offset traditional US advantages".

Over time, China has entered into several Memorandums of Understanding with the African Union, including one in 2015 as part of Agenda 2063, intending to support infrastructure development.

China has made substantial investments in critical infrastructure projects in Africa, such as the Mali-Guinea rail project and the Sudan-Senegal railway line. Additionally, it has contributed to energy infrastructure initiatives like the 2600MW Mambilla hydropower project in Nigeria and the 400MW Bui Dam in Ghana. China has played a pivotal role in the telecommunications sector by providing telecoms equipment to countries like Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, and Sudan.

Investments

Chinese aid, as opposed to IMF, Western commercial investments, and overseas development assistance, do not impose debilitating conditions. This can be observed through the various agreements signed by China, but more importantly, it is rooted in China's concept of patient capital, which has traditionally been applied within its own borders but has gradually extended beyond as Chinese state banks have emerged as significant investors internationally.

China currently ranks as the second-largest investing country globally, with the China Export-Import Bank and China Development Bank playing key roles as investors. The loans provided by these state agencies are long-term

investments and do not impose short repayment schedules.

China's GDP growth rate has never fallen below 6 percent in the years between 1992 and 2018. China's economy grew by double digits for most years. In the same period, the US economy has not been able to achieve a 5 percent growth rate. Moreover, while America's recovery from the 2007 financial crisis took a long time, China quickly overcame such crises. China's GDP was only US\$1.2 trillion in 2000, while the US GDP was US\$10.2 trillion in the same year. By the year 2000, while the GDP of the US doubled in 20 years to 23 trillion, China's GDP increased by about 15 times and reached US\$17.7 trillion in the same period.

To enable a capacity to respond to this relative decline in US hegemony, a strategy focusing on military readiness has been introduced. Steps contemplated within this framework involve bolstering alliance networks in the Asia-Pacific region to counter China, and in Europe to counter Russia. Additionally, there are plans to encourage allies to increase their defence budgets to 5 percent of their GDP and establish permanent military bases near countries considered to be adversaries. The strategy's essence is to economically, politically, and militarily besiege opponents.

United States military bases are destroying the planet and entrenching patriarchy. If the United States military were a nation-state, it would be the 47th largest emitter of carbon emissions in the world, and US military pollution has accounted for 1.2 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions, which amounts to 257 million passenger cars, annually. Additionally, the military bases pollute the surrounding communities due to the astonishing amount of toxic chemicals, such as perchlorate and other components of jet fuel, that are found to contaminate drinking water, aquifers, and the soil surrounding the bases.

Furthermore, the United States military bases exacerbate patriarchy and gender-based violence. The impunity often handed to US military personnel by their host countries puts women and other marginalised groups in danger, especially considering that it has already been reported that the Pentagon undercounts and ignores military sexual assault in Africa even within its own ranks.

One might be tempted to believe that military outposts in impoverished areas provide jobs, security, and counterterrorism efforts, but former United States President Dwight D. Eisenhower reminded us otherwise: "Every gun created, every battleship sent into action, every rocket fired, in the end, represents a robbery from those who are hungry and unfed, cold and unclothed."

This militarised world is not only spending money. It is squandering the toil of its workers, the brilliance of its scientists, and the aspirations of its young people. In all actuality, this is not a way of life. Humanity is hung on an iron cross beneath the ominous cloak of war.



Socialist Party President Fred M'membe: A politician is not the only leader. If the Church will not involve itself in the governance of this country, we should forget about a better country and peaceful Zambia

Parallel between Mobutu and Hakainde Hichilema

WE TAKE note of Mr Hakainde Hichilema's response through the Minister of Information and Media, Ms Chushi Kasanda, who also doubles as the Chief Government Spokesperson, to our concerns regarding the current terrible state of Zambia's foreign relations under Mr Hichilema's far-right UPND government.

We have carefully studied their reaction and realise that they are alien to the discourse they are attempting to engage us in. To put it simply, they are at sea. They do not grasp the geopolitical standpoints informing the deep foreign relation matters we have been consistently raising.

A puppet regime or puppet government is a state that is de jure independent but de facto completely dependent upon an outside power and subject to its dictates, orders or desires. Puppet states have nominal sovereignty, except that a foreign power effectively exercises control through economic or military support. By leaving a local government in existence, the outside power evades all responsibility, while at the same time successfully paralysing the local government they tolerate.

Puppet states differ from allies, who choose their actions of their own initiative or in accordance with treaties they have voluntarily entered into. Puppet states are forced into legally endorsing actions already taken by a foreign power.

And so, this government is merely pretending to be saying something even when it is vividly clear that it does not comprehend, let alone subscribe to, our detailed and patriotic stance on these matters. But since they are liars and hypocrites, they are busy issuing statements whose contents they do not fathom and in response to matters totally beyond their grasp, just to save face. With due respect, Mr Hichilema's reaction, through Ms Kasanda, is actually nothing but mere words on paper – not to be taken literally.

That said, we want to make it categorically clear once more that Mr Hichilema is leading a far-right Western puppet regime and is delivering on his key commitments to the West and NOT to the Zambian people. He is a Western project. A front for the West to dominate us and loot our minerals and national wealth in the 21st Century.

Isn't it odd that while Western countries are very happy with Mr Hichilema, who has created an enabling environment for foreign capital and individual accumulation of wealth for those who loot Africa's minerals and national resources, the Zambian people are waking up to the higher prices of commodities everyday? And Mr Hichilema seems not to care about the poor living conditions of our people at all.

But our people must know that this is not a new thing in Africa, because we have had leaders like Mr Hichilema before, who mortgaged their countries for personal gain and glory. Our neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), formerly Zaire, for instance, was once led by Mobutu Sese Seko, a leader installed by the United States and the Belgians to serve Western interests in exchange for personal power, glory and other benefits.

Today, Mr Hichilema appears very clearly to be inspired by Mobutu in his zeal to please the West while dividing the country and choking the poor masses with his neocolonialist puppet agenda. But the sad part of all this is that the losers will be the people of Zambia, in much the same way as the people of the DRC were the losers under Mobutu. Mr Hichilema must know that the Mobutu approach to foreign relations and irresponsible handling of national wealth and state power has always ended with disastrous consequences and hugely negated development in countries that attempted to entrench this repulsive style of governance.

Few will forget Mr Hichilema's excitement when he was summoned to the White House upon assuming office to meet, not Mr Joe Biden, but Kamala Harris, and in his excitement, he was not ashamed to tell the world how happy he was to be "the first to be invited to the White House" (even though this was not true as Mobutu and other puppets had been there before him). We do not know how many times Africa's founding fathers turned in their graves to see a reincarnation of

Mobutu in an era when leaders should know better than being a puppet of the West.

Mr Hichilema must know that owing to his puppeteering and foreign policy inconsistencies, Zambia is currently standing out on the continent as a bastion of diplomatic treachery, transnational corporations and Western interests, a situation which is getting the country increasingly isolated both in the sub-region and across the African continent.

If nobody has told him this, let him hear it from us that Zambia no longer commands the respect and admiration it once had on the continent and globally. We stand discredited and unnoticed due to this government's treachery and prostitution on key foreign policy matters. We have shamelessly abandoned our non-aligned position on global affairs, a policy that gained Zambia global recognition, support and respect – and we expect our traditional allies to look at us the same way?

Even back at home, the situation is the same. Mr Hichilema's commitment to serve the West and transnational corporations has distanced him from the masses who elected him, but who are left to scavenge for a living while he assists his Western masters to sustain their hegemony.

If indeed, Mr Hichilema and his far-right UPND government prioritises transparency and sovereignty throughout its decision-making process, as claimed by Ms Kasanda, we challenge them to make the AFRICOM office agreement public. If not, let them stop lying to our people and violating our territorial integrity and sovereignty through reckless decisions like allowing the US to be hovering and patrolling our country like a chosen race of prefects via AFRICOM.

What is a good leader?

GOOD leaders must be interested in the welfare of those in distress. We must expect them to be concerned with the increasing gap between those who have and those who do not have. We expect them to feel the distress of many who have a big problem about the cost of goods, medicine, with the tragedy of unemployment, of youth, of serious problems with transport, public and personal security, and many other important concerns where we are all involved.

We need people of courage who will defend the truth and demand justice for the poor and others struggling to make ends meet.

What we have today as leaders of our country are heartless people displaying a complete lack of feeling or consideration. These are cruel people wilfully causing pain or suffering to others, or feeling no concern about it.

The hunger for love

MOTHER Teresa said, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love . . . The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread . . . I have found the paradox, that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only more love"

"Love cannot remain by itself – it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action, and that action is service.

"I am not sure exactly what Heaven will be like, but I know that when we die and it comes time for God to judge us, he will not ask, 'How many good things have you done in your life?' rather he will ask, 'How much love did you put into what you did?'"

Fighting for the future

THE idea of the future society is the most important and most noble idea that a revolutionary can harbour.

Revolutionaries have always fought for the future. Nsingu and those 10,000 young Ngonis, who were killed by Cecil John Rhodes's army in December 1897 to February 4, 1898 fought for the future.

When Nsingu was executed by Cecil Rhodes on February 5, 1898 he knew he was dying for the future. He was not concerned about seeing the results of all that.

It would have been extraordinarily useful to have had him much longer. It can be said that he died in the prime of youth, when his talent was at its best. They were fighting for the future.

Hichilema is off to China . . . and we are watching

Friendship based on trust and respect

SOCIALIST Party President Fred M'membe says that "after lot of illusions and arrogance accompanied by ignorance", finally, President Hakainde Hichilema is to make a state visit to China very soon.

"He has conceded to guidance on the need to respect and uphold the traditional friendship between Zambia and China," he said.

"We are glad that eventually, commonsense has prevailed over Mr Hichilema's big-headedness and diplomatic ignorance on this matter of major interest to our country and its people.

"Sino-Zambia relations are a traditional friendship established by the founding leaders of a senior generation of the two countries, Chairman Mao Zedong and Dr Kenneth Kaunda. And these relations have withstood the test of time because they have always been anchored in mutual trust, respect, and cooperation."

Dr M'membe said that when Mr Hichilema heads to China, "he should take into account a few critical issues to enable him to represent our people and country well and prevent possible embarrassments to the country and himself as a leader":

- Let Mr Hichilema firmly and uncompromisingly stick to and reaffirm our country's support for the one-China policy and unequivocally state that the government of the People's Republic of China, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, is the sole legal representative of the Chinese people, and denounce US interference in the internal affairs of China over Taiwan.
- Mr Hichilema must appreciate

that strengthening Sino-Zambia ties and China-Africa friendship and cooperation in general has always been a vital cornerstone of China's foreign policy. And the Chinese have always been willing to work with Africa with mutual respect and equality in order to open up and advance new prospects of cooperation with practicality on a win-win basis.

● Mr Hichilema should realise that prostitution is for brothels and not for foreign relations. There is a need to stick to our traditional non-aligned policy and not allow our country to become an agent of US imperialism and its hegemonic agenda, and not allow AFRICOM to establish itself in our country.

● Mr Hichilema must exchange in-depth, genuine and unswerving views on Sino-Zambia ties with President Xi Jinping in order to deepen mutual trust, confidence, and cooperation between our two countries. There is no need for Mr Hichilema to start prostituting around clear matters of foreign policy, because the Chinese have always been consistent, sincere, and have helped Zambia in the cause of national development since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1964. The Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA) line is one of the many historical testimonies to their genuineness and dedication.

Frequent

● Mr Hichilema must realise that in order for Zambia to carry forward and sustain this inherited, traditional friendship between the two countries, frequent visits and exchanges are the surest way of cementing friendships closer and tighter. There was no need to wait this long to take this important trip, particularly when one considers

the longstanding relationship Zambia shares with China.

● Mr Hichilema must value the relevant cooperation plans from China and seek to expand them in areas such as technology, agriculture, commerce and trade, infrastructure, and so on, to enable Zambia to realise economic stability and self-development.

● Mr Hichilema must also guarantee the legal rights of Chinese enterprises operating in Zambia and not harass them at the instigation of his friends – the US – and other imperialist governments he is fraternising with.

"As we have always said, this particular state visit is crucial to resolving Zambia's current economic glitches, and Mr Hichilema must attach importance and honesty to this engagement.

"Let him not go to China with the usual diplomatic illiteracy he parades – egocentricity and his habitual lies – because the people he is going to meet are not fools. They are well ahead of him and very refined. They have already studied his personality, inclinations, intellect, emotions, behaviours, and so on.

"They will give him the full honours, ceremonies and pomp, which he seems to be enjoying so much lately, but if he proves to them that he is not a man of his word, they will never respect him as a decent human being, and that will be a great shame in the diplomatic history of our country, because China has been 'a good friend, partner and brother' to Zambia and the Chinese have always held successive leaders of this country in high esteem and trust since the establishment of Sino-Zambia relations.

"The die is cast. Zambia is watching," Dr M'membe said.

Fight against corruption 'must start with President declaring his assets'

THE UPND's fight against corruption must start with itself and with President Hakainde Hichilema declaring his assets so Zambians know how much he was worth before he was elected President, Socialist Party General Secretary and First Vice-President Cosmas Musheke Musumali says.

Speaking at a press briefing at Amigos Lodge in Kitwe, Dr Musumali said President Hichilema had deliberately refused to declare his assets so that Zambians wouldn't be able to tell how much he was worth before becoming president and how much he had acquired afterwards.

Dr Musumali said UPND was not only a party but also a violent one, and had failed to set the stage for the alleviation of hunger and poverty.

He said UPND, which used to label the Patriotic Front (PF) as corrupt, was turning out to be even more so by making policies that aimed to benefit individual businesses of the party leadership.

"The UPND used to label the PF as a corrupt party, but it has turned to be the most corrupt party. The fight against corruption must start within the UPND itself before looking at opposition parties and individuals. The fight against corruption must start with President Hichilema declaring his assets.

"It is sad that President Hichilema has been silent on issues of corruption, both fertiliser and others. When you are Republican President and you remain silent when there are corruption scandals, people will

conclude you are part of them," Dr Musumali said. Referring to the sacking of Luapula Province Minister Derrick Chilundika over the alleged Sugilite scandal, Dr Musumali said the opposition was not excited about his dismissal because it was "mere sugar coating and not a genuine fight against corruption".

Dr Musumali said Mr Chilundika had been implicated in the Sugilite scandal from the beginning and it had taken a long time for him to be fired, adding that there were many other corruption scandals that President Hichilema should also have acted upon.

Dr Musumali said Zambians had learnt a bitter lesson after replacing former president Edgar Lungu with President Hichilema, whose capitalist policies had resulted in worsening poverty and hunger.

Replacing the PF with the UPND not only plunged the nation into deeper poverty, but would also result in the country being delivered into the hands of imperialists.

"Zambians have seen the sky-rocketing prices of essential commodities, with mealie meal fetching almost K300 for a 25 kilogramme bag.

"Zambians are going through untold misery. There is serious poverty and hunger in the townships. It is sad that instead of laying a firm foundation for poverty alleviation and food security, the New Dawn administration is using law enforcement agencies, such as the Anti-Corruption Commission and others, to intimidate its critics," he said.

The London Recruits

Socialist Party [Zambia] President Fred M'membe recently attended a special screening of *uMkhonto we Sizwe, London Recruits* in Johannesburg, a film directed by Gordon Main scheduled to be released next year. The article below by **Lee Gordon** tells the story of how London Recruits were handpicked by the armed wing of the Africa National Congress to play a crucial role in the fight against Apartheid



LEFT TO RIGHT: Socialist Party [Zambia] President Fred M'membe gives a presentation before the screening of *uMkhonto we Sizwe, London Recruits*; Dr M'membe with Ronnie Kasrils

LEANING back in his seat, Pete Smith glanced nervously out of the aircraft window. He listened to the throb of the engines as the plane nosed through the London clouds and reflected on what he was leaving behind – his home, his job and his friends. And then he felt cold sweat creep down his back as he braced himself for his journey into the unknown.

This was no ordinary flight. It was 1970 and Smith had been recruited as an undercover agent in a secret war against South Africa's Apartheid – "apartness" in the Afrikaans language.

A dedicated Young Communist and university student in London, he had been handpicked for a mission by the armed wing of the African National Congress, known as Umkhonto we Sizwe (meaning "Spear of the Nation", or MK for short).

Noticing that the young passenger was unsettled, the stewardess smiled and offered him a dry martini. It was the first time Smith had drunk a martini and he picked awkwardly at the olive as he contemplated what lay ahead.

Posing as tourists, he and his fellow recruit Ken Keable were flying to South Africa to explode specially designed bombs that would shower banned African National Congress (ANC) leaflets over city centres, and to set off devices that would broadcast ANC messages in the street.

It was a mission fraught with danger. The ANC was in a life-or-death struggle with the Apartheid regime and its operatives were branded terrorists. If caught, Smith and Keable would be tortured and spend years in a South African prison.

Until Apartheid collapsed in 1994, South Africa was a white-dominated brutally racist country. Black South Africans were forced into cheap labour so British and US firms could exploit the country's vast gold, diamond and mineral resources. Backed by Washington, London and Western Europe, Apartheid was also on the frontline of their Cold War against the Soviet

Union and Cuba, which supported the ANC.

Militant opposition in South Africa was led by the ANC. But in 1970 when Smith and Keable set off, the ANC's morale was rock bottom. Its leaders had been jailed or scattered into exile, the MK had been contained and supporters were suffering a reign of terror.

To send a message it was still alive and kicking, the ANC decided to launch a covert war using scores of volunteer agents like Smith and Keable, from Britain, Holland, France, Ireland, Greece and North America. For almost 30 years a secret army of teachers, university students, factory workers, clerks, engineers, seamen and firemen, waged an underground war that eventually helped turn the tide against Apartheid.

Dubbed the London Recruits – organised from a tiny office in London – their job was to spread propaganda, smuggle weapons and support ANC and MK operations. Some even took part in a failed Granma-style invasion by a small band of guerrilla fighters.

Advantage

The Recruits had one decisive advantage; they were white with US or European passports and could penetrate South Africa unsuspected. Apartheid's blind hatred of black people meant its security struggled to conceive that white tourists from Britain and Europe might actually be agents helping black Africans.

Some, like Smith, were trained in the Soviet Union and Cuba. But they also had to learn on the job and more than once Smith used tricks borrowed from James Bond.

To protect against the agents giving away names under torture they were all in the dark about the scale of the London operation. It took the recent publication of a book by Keable, *London Recruits: The Secret War Against Apartheid*, for the astonishing story to emerge.

But on their way to South Africa in 1970 neither Smith nor Keable had any idea what lay ahead – only that their futures were hanging dangerously in the balance.

"I was a bit romantic, young and



The cover of Ken Keable's memoir on life as a London Recruit

enthusiastic," said Smith. "But I had studied Karl Marx so I had clear ideas. When my comrade in the Young Communist League, Ken Keable, asked if I would volunteer for some important work overseas I automatically said, 'Yes!' He wouldn't give details until I agreed but I knew that whatever the job I had an internationalist duty. Back then, of course, I couldn't imagine how things would turn out."

They were flying to a country scarred by centuries of violence. A slave colony after Europeans landed nearly 400 years ago, it was later part of the British Empire which plundered gold and diamonds then developed the first concentration camps in a brutal war on Dutch Afrikaner settlers and black Africans, which the young Winston Churchill called "great fun".

It gained partial independence from Britain and in 1948 imposed Apartheid rule. The Afrikaner word for separation, Apartheid was a system based on British divide-and-rule tactics and Nazi ideology. It categorised blacks as either "black" for Africans who were bottom of the pile, "coloured" for mixed-race, or "Indian" for workers the British had imported from the Indian sub-continent.

Most blacks lived in reservations called townships, had to sweat for poverty wages in mines, factories, on farms and as domestic servants, and were forced to carry passbooks controlling where they lived and worked. Streets, beaches, buses,

sports stadiums, drinking fountains and even public toilets were segregated, and mixed race marriages banned.

In his book *I Write What I Like*, South African campaigner Steve Biko recalled the humiliation of medical checks before being allowed to move city: "You are made to stand naked in front of some doctors supposed to be draining pus off you, because you may be bringing syphilis to the town ... Now I must feel that I am being treated like an animal, and as you enter the room ... there is a big notice saying: 'Beware – natives in a state of undress'."

Whites led privileged lives – the middle-class believed wealthy Western standards were their birthright, and working class whites thought blacks were a hateful enemy within. Just a handful of whites supported the ANC.

Demanding an end to Apartheid and a non-racial South Africa, the ANC worked closely with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and organisations for "Indian", "coloured" and "black" workers.

Apartheid responded by arresting ANC leaders, banning the communist party and crackdowns that saw British-supplied tanks firing on protesters and thousands rounded up under detention-without-trial laws.

But 1960 was a tipping point. Apartheid banned the ANC altogether but elsewhere in Africa it was the year liberation movements began toppling colonial governments.

Known as Africa Year, it was also the moment the dream was born that through armed struggle, Apartheid could be next to fall.

In a township called Sharpeville, police killed 69 protesters and soon after that the MK was born. Inspired by Cuba, its small force carried out 200 attacks in just 18 months, sabotaging infrastructure and bombing military installations in retaliation with the hope of sparking a popular uprising. Casualties among white civilians were avoided – the best hope for future race relations, Nelson Mandela said.

Over the following decades, the Soviets funnelled hundreds of millions of dollars into the ef-

fort, training guerrillas, providing military advisors and weapons – AK-47 rifles, machine guns, pistols, grenade-launchers, anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, rockets and mortars. East Germany and Czechoslovakia contributed propaganda and medical aid, Cuba gave military training, and more support came from China, Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia and Mozambique.

Apartheid learned new terror tactics from the French in Algeria and Vietnam, from the British in Africa and Asia, and the US in South America. Black townships were bulldozed, opponents disappeared and ANC networks dispersed. At the notorious 1963 Rivonia Trial, ANC leaders, including Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki, were given life sentences. A black factory worker was jailed for two years just for writing "Free Nelson Mandela" on his mug.

A wave of strikes by black workers and students culminated in the police killing 12 black schoolchildren protesting in Soweto in 1976. The country was engulfed and hundreds of protesters were shot dead. Images of tanks confronting blacks armed with sticks and dustbin lids were beamed round the world.

Boycotts

Global condemnation fuelled boycotts and protests. Dockworkers in Britain and Europe black-listed South African goods and hid ANC literature in cargo bound for the country.

From exile in friendly African states, the Soviet Union and London, the ANC leadership tried co-ordinating events. But it took an astonishing cloak-and-dagger operation in the mid-1980s to smuggle them back.

In a scheme straight out of a spy novel, make-up artists, actors and dentists – many from Holland – disguised the fugitives, artificially aged them or even transformed them into Arab and Asian travellers. Operation Vula (meaning open the way) is also the subject of a book.

Also locked out of South Africa, the MK never penetrated in significant numbers.

Hundreds of its guerrilla fighters

spent years languishing in camps precariously supported by African governments under pressure from London and Washington to expel them.

Mostly they marked time, drilling, undergoing political education and surviving on rations supplemented by Soviet tinned meat and Chinese canned fish, affectionately dubbed Mao Tse-tung. They also assisted in liberation wars in Zimbabwe – until the 1980s white supremacist Rhodesia – and Angola, where the Cubans decisively beat US and British-backed Apartheid troops in the 1980s in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

In the midst of all this, the London Recruits were supposed to strike vital blows against Apartheid. Masterminding the operations were fugitive MK operative Ronnie Kasrils, later a minister in Mandela's ANC government, SACP leader Joe Slovo and Doctor Yusuf Dadoo, an avuncular, pipe-smoking SACP veteran now buried next to Karl Marx in London.

In their central London office, between piles of books and under an old, chipped bust of Lenin, they plotted to smuggle propaganda, weapons, explosives, and documents, and drafted a blueprint for an audacious guerrilla landing on South Africa's coast.

Kasrils' wife Eleanor, a renowned MK veteran, was an operations chief, trouble-shooting and advising. Every now and again meetings were adjourned to the Kasrils' modest north London family home where the plotters sometimes broke off to watch Star Trek on television.

To frustrate eavesdroppers working for South African and British intelligence, they used code words and letters written in invisible ink that could only be deciphered using solutions of caustic soda and human blood. They met in secret locations, shaking-off security agents who tailed them by using techniques learned from the Soviets.

Ingenious devices were built to release giant ANC banners from rooftops in South African cities, sometimes using timing devices made from acid drops in condoms. False-bottomed suitcases were built to smuggle ANC literature, and

Who fought Apartheid



...s, former Minister for Intelligence Services in the Mandela government; with Dali Tambo, South African artist and media personality; with Professor Anton Harber, founding editor of the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper

leaflet bombs were tested at dawn in a London park, surprising dog-walkers.

The bombs included a small explosive under a pile of leaflets placed in a bucket. Left in busy areas used by black commuters, plastic snakes, spiders or dog faeces from a toy shop were put inside the buckets to dissuade meddlers from poking around.

The operation Smith and Keable took part in was a stunning success. Coordinated across five cities and reported around the world, the explosions showered commuters with thousands of ANC leaflets, a call-to-arms passed from hand-to-hand in townships.

“Guerrilla war has brought victory to the people of Algeria, to the people of Cuba,” the leaflets read. “Those people did not have big armies. They were like us. Guerrilla fighters organise themselves in small groups. Suddenly when the enemy is not expecting, they attack. They kill and grab the guns and disappear. You, sons and daughters of the soil, you must consider yourselves as soldiers in the guerrilla war”.

Simultaneously, tape-playing de-

To frustrate eavesdroppers working for South African and British intelligence, they used code words and letters written in invisible ink that could only be deciphered using solutions of caustic soda and human blood. They met in secret locations, shaking-off security agents by using techniques learned from the Soviets

vices were set off broadcasting the ANC anthem and a blood-curdling message – “[prime minister] Vorster – the black man is coming to get you!”

The effect was electric, recalled Keable, who took part in two propaganda missions:

“It seemed like nothing could stop Apartheid. It said it had buried the ANC, then suddenly people were reading about leaflet bomb-

ings and it raised morale, signalled the ANC was alive, was a serious challenge and worth joining. They gave information about what the ANC was doing and how to organise. I don’t know how much of a contribution we made to ending Apartheid but the leaflet bombings led to South Africans joining the MK.”

He added: “My passport and white skin meant I felt kind of protected. Anyway, I thought it was all too well planned for us to get caught.”

But just two years after Smith and Keable’s flight to South Africa the attempted landing of a boatload of guerrillas ended disastrously. An ageing yacht bought with Moscow cash sailed down the coast from Somalia shadowed by a Soviet navy ship.

When it broke down, its Greek crew were replaced with experienced engineers handpicked by the British communist party but they couldn’t restart it and the mission was aborted.

Police grabbed several agents who had been working inside South Africa. Young Greek Alex Moumbaris, his pregnant French wife

Marie-José, an Irish member of the London Young Communist League Sean Hosey, and three black South Africans were jailed. An international campaign freed Marie-José but the rest of the Pretoria Six were tortured and spent years behind bars; Hosey served five years – many in solitary confinement – and Moumbaris more than seven years before dramatically escaping with two comrades. About his torture he said only that his black comrades had endured far worse treatment: “There are different levels of torture and I don’t want to compare what I suffered with what the black comrades suffered.”

Unexpectedly, the trial boosted the ANC’s profile, proving its struggle had international support.

With their passports, Recruits could drive across Africa, which made them ideal gunrunners. One of the most daring operations became the subject of 2001 documentary movie, *Secret Safari*.

With the help of Recruits from Holland and Britain, including 19 year-old Stuart Round from Nuneaton, a converted truck was used to smuggle weapons. Packed with AK 47 rifles, Makarov pistols, gre-

nades, TNT and limpet mines, the truck made the 11,000-kilometre trip across the continent into South Africa more than 40 times between the early 1980s and 1994. The cover was groups of tourists who knew nothing of the secret cargo and thought they were on safari.

Its first mission was aborted after a Soviet tip-off that Apartheid police were waiting. In the book *London Recruits*, Round, who spent five years gunrunning on the safari, said the leak may have been an accomplice who left a blueprint in a London taxi after a drunken night out. “It was the most challenging experience of my life,” he said. “Driving up to 18 hours a day, then whatever maintenance the vehicle required – all of which I had to learn as we went. Bluffing my way through police questions I didn’t know the answers to, dealing with checkpoints, border crossings, sick passengers, angry rhinoceroses and belligerent elephants.”

Fugitives

London Recruit Roger Allingham, a teacher who joined up through the communist party, ran a safe-house for ANC fugitives in southern Africa and smuggled weapons through the Kalahari Desert in an old car. “We handed the stuff over the [border] fence,” he recalled. “The fence was nothing more than a cattle fence not more than waist high.” Trained by the Cubans for the aborted guerrilla landing, he became an officer in the South African navy after Apartheid.

Smith, who on Kasrils’ advice had taken a job as a high school mathematics teacher in London because the long holidays meant more time for missions, was another whom the Recruits trained abroad. In the Soviet Union, he learned counter-surveillance and in Cuba was taught combat. “When I arrived in Cuba I was nearly 40, I smoked and drank,” he said. “I tried explaining to the instructor I was just too old but couldn’t find a translator. He tried teaching me summersaults while shooting a pistol and stood on my stomach to toughen me up. I spent the next week in hospital recovering. Then I went back to the training and was

immediately hospitalised again.” Smuggling weapons, documents and running safe-houses in southern Africa, he often relied on tricks picked up from James Bond stories.

A hair stuck across his hotel door when he went out was a useful device. If it was displaced when he got back, there was a chance his room had been turned over.

Another was to sprinkle traces of talcum powder around his suitcase. If the powder was disturbed, his suitcase had been searched.

“Looking back, I was scared a lot of the time I was undercover,” he admitted. Now 64 and working for a teachers’ union, he left MK in 1992. “But I learned to control fear. I used to say to myself: ‘Look, this might be scary but as long as you focus on what you’re doing and not on the fear, you’ve got a chance’.”

Keable, who spent five years researching his book, said the full story of the London Recruits is still to emerge. Recalling a book launch in South Africa in 2012, government representatives were “very moved to meet us because our contribution came at a time when the ANC was at a very low ebb”. A memorial to the Secret Safari is planned.

“There have been many problems in South Africa but it was born into a difficult time,” said Keable. “With the Soviet Union suddenly gone it meant the US and Britain were no longer afraid a post-Apartheid South Africa was going to be pro-Soviet. Big business felt secure and put pressure on the ANC. But whatever happened to South Africa afterwards, ending Apartheid was the main thing and although the main credit for defeating it goes to the South African people, it’s important to remember the international solidarity they received, including from the London Recruits. This is because, in the 21st century, the need for international solidarity with all those fighting imperialism is greater than ever.”

● This article was published in Spanish on May 4, 2014 in *Artillería*, a weekly supplement to *Correo del Orinoco* (The Orinoco Post), a Venezuelan newspaper founded by Hugo Chavez. Lee Gordon is a British journalist who works for *Correo del Orinoco*.



Reported around the world, Recruits’ explosions showered commuters with ANC leaflets, a call-to-arms passed around in the townships

‘Socialist commitment’ the key to eradicating poverty

Challenge met by turning concepts like dignity into reality

Vijay Prashad

AT THE 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), member states decided to replace the Millennium Development Goals (established in 2000) with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The first SDG was to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere”. Despite the enthusiastic verbiage, it was clear that poverty was simply not going to be ended across the world. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the data showed that poverty had become intractable.

In October 2022, the UN Development Programme and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative released its 2022 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index report, which showed that at least 1.2 billion people in 111 developing countries live in acute multidimensional poverty.

The “deprivation bundles” referred to in the full title of the report explore how a range of necessary facilities are absent for over a billion people. For example, the report notes, “Almost half of poor people (470.1 million) are deprived in both nutrition and sanitation, potentially making them more vulnerable to infectious diseases. In addition, over half of poor people (593.3 million) are simultaneously deprived in both cooking fuel and electricity”. These deprivation bundles – the absence of both electricity and clean cooking fuel, for instance – amplify the low incomes earned by billions of people.

In 2017, the World Bank determined that the income threshold for poverty, which had been set at US\$1.90 per day, was far too low. They set the new poverty line at US\$2.15 per day, which accounted for more than 700 million people. The World Bank’s 2022 Poverty and Shared Prosperity report showed, using data from 2019, that if the poverty line is set at US\$3.65 a day, 23 percent of the world lives in poverty, and if the line is set at US\$6.85 a day, then almost half of the world’s population (47 percent) lives below the poverty line. These numbers are horrifying.

What is extraordinary is that the UN report on deprivation bundles did not refer to the programme to eradicate extreme poverty in China. On February 25, 2021, the Chinese government announced that the last 100 million people living below the poverty line had been lifted above it by the efforts of the Chinese people, thereby ending absolute poverty in China.

In June 2021, the authors of China’s submission for the voluntary national review of the SDGs wrote, “All the 98.99 million rural residents living under the current poverty line have been lifted out of poverty, marking the realisation of poverty eradication goal of the 2030 Agenda 10 years ahead of schedule”. “The rice bowl of the Chinese people”, the review noted, “is held firmly in their



ABOVE: China 2019-2022; BELOW: Fan Wennan, Comrade Change (China), 2022



own hands”. A few months later, UN Secretary General António Guterres lauded China’s “strong commitment and significant progress to eradicate poverty in all forms and dimensions, one of the world’s leading challenges”. Even a study by a former UN official, which contested some of the Chinese data, nonetheless accepted the enormity of this achievement.

In April 2022, the World Bank and China’s Development Research Centre of the State Council released an important study, *Four Decades of Poverty Reduction in China*, which tracked the trajectory of this historic achievement. And yet, the UN report neglected to highlight that the Chinese had eradicated absolute poverty, nor did it offer an assessment of how they did so.

At Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, we have been very interested in China’s project to abolish absolute poverty. In July 2021, we published a study entitled *Serve the People: The Eradication of Extreme Poverty in China*, which looked into the methods used by the Chinese state and by Chinese social institutions to break the back of what the UN’s Guterres called “one of the world’s leading challenges”. China’s achievement, we wrote, “is neither a miracle nor a coincidence, but rather a testament to its socialist commitment”. That phrase – “socialist commitment” –

governs our understanding of what has occurred in China since 1949. We explore this idea of China’s “socialist commitment” and the eradication of extreme poverty in issue no. 2 of the international edition of *Wenhua Zongheng*, China’s Path from Extreme Poverty to Socialist Modernisation. This issue contains three important essays:

Socialism 3.0: The Practice and Prospects of Socialism in China by the Longway Foundation; *The Battle Against Poverty: An Alternative Revolutionary Practice in China’s Post-Revolutionary Era* by Li Xiaoyun and Yang Chengxue; and *How Targeted Poverty Alleviation Has Changed the Structure of Rural Governance in China* by Wang Xiaoyi.

Strategy

The articles by the Longway Foundation and by Li Xiaoyun and Yang Chengxue foreground the importance of poverty alleviation throughout the historical stages of China’s socialist project, with the dual strategy of transforming the relations of production and expanding social wealth. Li and Yang emphasise the role of the Communist Party of China (CPC) during the targeted phase of the poverty alleviation campaign, which took place under President Xi Jinping and included the participation of 800,000 cadre in surveys carried

out in 2014, the dispatching of three million cadres who went to live in the poor villages for at least two years, and the 1,800 cadres who died during this fight against poverty. This enormous transformation, led by the CPC, re-established the party’s moral authority and brought the issue of socialism and social justice to the centre of Chinese discussions.

Wang Xiaoyi takes us to the countryside, where the problems of poverty once seemed intractable, and looks at how rural areas had been hollowed out by mass migrations and rural institutions impoverished during the post-1978 reform period. Central to the programme to eradicate extreme poverty, Wang points out, was the rebuilding of rural institutions, which was enabled by the transfer of three million CPC cadres to the countryside, mobilised by experiments that drew from the campaign-style governance of the Mao Zedong era. Wang hopes that the new rural infrastructure created by the programme to eradicate extreme poverty will remain in place, including the “high level of villagers” participating in public affairs through their village committees.

A key point made by the essays in this second issue of *Wenhua Zongheng* is that the principle of socialism and the socialist infrastructure – especially the CPC – that enabled it are central to the eradication of extreme poverty. It

will be difficult for the Chinese path to socialist modernisation to be seen as a model to be adopted by other countries unless these countries also ground their programmes on a socialist footing. Poverty was not eradicated by cash transfer schemes or by rural medical programmes alone, though these are valuable policy options, it was eradicated by a socialist commitment to take ideas such as dignity and realise them in the world.

When our team of researchers went to the Wangjia community in Guizhou Province to track the programmes to eradicate extreme poverty, they met HeYing, who became a CPC leader during her attempt to lift herself from being a poor migrant labourer. A member of the All-China Women’s Federation, He Ying described how she works with newly migrated peasant women to give them the confidence to transform their reality. Village life of the old kind is behind them.

He Ying now lives in a community of housing complexes that have kindergartens, elementary and middle schools, and community health centres. As she showed us photographs of her former home, old and dilapidated, she said – without romanticism but with a sense of loyalty – “I’ll bring my children back to my old village so that they can remember the life of yesterday and cherish the life of today”.

Tricontinental

CHINA WATCH

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

Focus on Global South

CHINESE companies are increasing their investments in countries of the Global South, while decreasing their investments in the West. According to the American Enterprise Institute, the G7 received 120 investments (63 in the US) in 2016 from Chinese state-owned and private companies, which dropped to 13 projects last year, receiving only US\$7.4 billion against more than US\$24 billion invested in Asia, South America, and the Middle East.

Wall Street Journal

Scientists flee the US

THE NUMBER of Chinese scientists leaving the US to return home continues to grow amid a climate of persecution. According to OECD data, in 2021 the US lost 896 scientific authors, while China gained 3,108. According to a survey last month, 70 percent of Chinese researchers in the US said they did not feel safe, and the visa rejection rate for foreign students in the US rose from 15 percent in 2014 to a record 35 percent last year.

South China Morning Post

New sectors go private

THE National Development and Reform Commission has published a “white list” of new sectors open to private investment. Some of the key industries and state projects include transportation, water, clean energy, new infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, and modern mechanised agriculture.

Caixin Global

Russia top oil supplier

CHINA imported record amounts of Russian oil in the first half of this year. It imported 11.4 million barrels of crude oil, up 11.7 percent year-on-year and 15.3 percent compared to pre-pandemic levels; that was about 2.13 million barrels per day, ahead of the 1.88 million barrels from Saudi Arabia, making Russia China’s top crude oil supplier so far this year.

Financial Times

The Star market shines

THE STAR market, known as the “NASDAQ of China”, has grown from 0 to 6.4 trillion yuan (US\$ 89 billion) in just four years. It is operated by the Shanghai Stock Exchange and allows the listing of new domestic companies, mainly in science and technology. In 2022, total investment in research and development by listed companies reached 128.5 billion yuan (US\$17.91 billion), a year-on-year increase of 28 percent.

Global Times

Poultry makes history

CHINA has started exporting domestic poultry breeds for the first time. The shipment of 15,500 “Jinghong 1” high-yield layers and 1,000 “Wode 188” broilers to Tanzania also marks a break in the global monopoly of European and US producers. After years of secret research to avoid cutting off supplies from foreign companies, three domestic varieties have been approved.

Global Times

Climate struggle is between the super rich and the marginalised

Plutocrats battle to sustain the system that gave them their power

George Monbiot

ACCORDING to Google's news search, the media has run more than 10,000 stories this year about Phillip Schofield, the British television presenter who resigned over an affair with a younger colleague.

Google also records a global total of five news stories about a scientific paper published recently showing that the chances of simultaneous crop losses in the world's major growing regions, caused by climate breakdown, appear to have been dangerously underestimated.

In mediaworld – a place that should never be confused with the real world – celebrity gossip is thousands of times more important than existential risk.

The new paper explores the impacts on crop production when meanders in the jet stream (Rossby waves) become stuck. Stuck patterns cause extreme weather. To put it crudely, if you live in the northern hemisphere and a kink in the jet stream (the band of strong winds a few miles above the Earth's surface at mid-latitudes) is stuck to the south of you, your weather is likely to be cold and wet. If it's stuck to the north of you, you're likely to suffer escalating heat and drought.

In both cases, the stuck weather, exacerbated by global heating, affects crops.

Complex

With certain meander patterns, several of the northern hemisphere's major growing regions – such as western North America, Europe, India and east Asia – could be exposed to extreme weather at the same time, hammering their harvests. We rely for our subsistence on global smoothing: if there's a bad harvest in one region, it's likely to be counteracted by good harvests elsewhere. Even small crop losses occurring simultaneously present what the paper calls "systemic risk".

Already, regional climate shocks have helped cause a disastrous reversal in the trend of global chronic hunger. For many years, the number of hungry people fell. But in 2015, the trend turned and has been curving upwards since. This is not because of a lack of food. The most likely explanation is that the global food system has lost its resilience. When complex systems lose resilience, instead of damping the shocks that hit them, they tend to amplify them. The shocks



We face the prospect the two greatest existential threats – environmental breakdown and food system failure – coinciding

amplified across the system so far have landed most heavily on poor nations that depend on imports, causing local price spikes even when global food prices were low.

If this happens when harvests are affected in just one country or one region, we can only imagine the results if extreme weather simultaneously hits several major growing regions.

Other papers have been published with similar themes, showing, for example, the impacts of the rising frequency of "flash droughts" and concurrent heatwaves in grain-producing regions, and how global heating hits food security. All have been largely or entirely ignored by the media.

We face an epochal, unthinkable prospect: of perhaps the two

greatest existential threats – environmental breakdown and food system failure – converging, as one triggers the other.

There are plenty of signs, some of which I've tried to explain in the Guardian newspaper and, with a sense of rising urgency, in a presentation to parliament, suggesting that the global food system may not be far from its tipping point, for structural reasons similar to those that tanked the financial sector in 2008.

As a system approaches a critical threshold, it's impossible to say which external shock could push it over. Once a system has become fragile, and its resilience is not restored, it's not a matter of if and how, but when.

So why isn't this all over the

front pages? Why, when governments know we're facing existential risk, do they fail to act? Why is the Biden administration allowing enough oil and gas drilling to bust the US carbon budget five times over? Why is the UK government scrapping the £11.6bn international climate fund it promised? Why has Labour postponed its £28bn green prosperity fund, while Labour Party leader Keir Starmer is reported to have remarked, "I hate tree huggers" (a pejorative term for environmental campaigners)? Why are the Sun, the Mail, the Telegraph and the Express competing to attack every green solution that might help to prevent climate chaos? Why does everything else seem more important?

The underlying problem isn't hard to grasp: governments have failed to break what the economist Thomas Piketty calls the patrimonial spiral of wealth accumulation. As a result, the rich have become ever richer, a process that seems to be accelerating. In 2021, for example, the ultra-rich captured almost two-thirds of all the world's new wealth. Their share of national income in the UK has almost doubled since 1980, while in the US it's higher than it was in 1820.

The richer a fraction of society becomes, the greater its political power, and the more extreme the demands it makes. The problem is summarised in one sentence in the resignation letter of the UK environment minister Zac

Goldsmith: instead of attending a crucial environment summit, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak went to Rupert Murdoch's summer party. We cannot work together to solve our common problems when great power is in the hands of so few.

What the ultra-rich want is to sustain and extend the economic system that put them where they are. The more they have to lose, the more creative their strategies become. As well as the traditional approach of buying media outlets and pouring money into the political parties that favour them, they devise new ways of protecting their interests.

Corporations and oligarchs with massive fortunes can hire as many junktanks (so-called thinktanks), troll farms, marketing gurus, psychologists and micro-targeters as they need to devise justifications and to demonise, demoralise, abuse and threaten people trying to sustain a habitable planet. The junktanks devise new laws to stifle protest, implemented by politicians funded by the same plutocratic class.

It could scarcely be more screwed up. The effort to protect Earth systems and the human systems that depend on them is led by people working at the margins with tiny resources, while the richest and most powerful use every means at their disposal to stop them. Can you imagine, in decades to come, trying to explain this to your children?

Looking back on previous human calamities, all of which will be dwarfed by this, you find yourself repeatedly asking "why didn't they . . . ?" The answer is power: the power of a few to countermand the interests of humanity.

The struggle to avert systemic failure is the struggle between democracy and plutocracy. It always has been, but the stakes are now higher than ever.

The UK Guardian

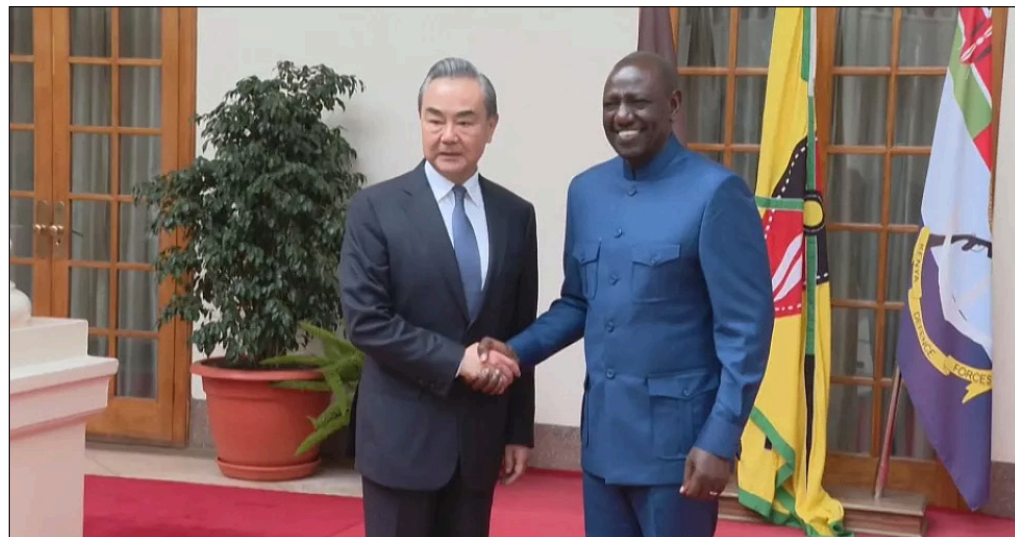
Ruto and Wang Yi meet ahead of BRICS summit

KENYAN President William Ruto has met with Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, ahead of the BRICS summit in South Africa to discuss deepening Belt and Road cooperation between the two countries.

Wang, who is also director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, conveyed Chinese President Xi Jinping's sincere regards to Ruto during the meeting.

Ruto praised China's efforts for growing relations with Kenya based on the principle of mutual respect, noting that Kenya was committed to deepening its comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership with China.

He expressed his willingness to strengthen inter-party exchanges and deepen cooperation in areas such as railways, highways, water conservancy, aviation, and renewable energy under the frameworks of Belt and Road cooperation and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. He said the aim was to promote connectivity, regional



Kenyan President William Ruto with Communist Party of China Political Bureau member Wang Yi

integration in Africa, and achieve win-win results.

Wang said that China and Kenya had treated each other as equals, supported each other, and jointly strived for revitalisation since the establishment of diplomatic ties 60 years ago. He noted that the two countries had

become good friends, sharing political and mutual trust and were good partners engaged in win-win cooperation. He said China approached relations with Kenya from a strategic perspective and was willing to work with the country to align their strategies for revitalisation with

a focus on development and cooperation.

The two sides also discussed strengthening the strategic guidance of their leaders, enhancing political mutual trust, and increasing exchanges between governments and political parties in various fields.

Wang said China firmly supported Kenya in safeguarding its sovereign independence and national dignity, fighting terrorism, and taking a development path in line with its own national conditions.

China was willing to actively promote cooperation with Kenya in railway, highway, aviation, information, and other fields, jointly advancing Belt and Road cooperation, the Global Development Initiative, and the "nine programmes" of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. He said this would help Kenya advance its economic and social development, and promote regional integration in Africa.

Wang said China also stood ready to work with Kenya to practise multilateralism, preserve the central role of the United Nations in international affairs and the common interests of developing countries, promote the implementation of the Outlook on Peace and Development in the Horn of Africa, and safeguard regional peace and development.

Dimsumdaily, Hong Kong

NATO aims to expand its global influence

Organisation ‘positioning itself to replace the UN’

THE NORTH Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) held its annual summit on July 11-12 in Vilnius, Lithuania. The communiqué released after the first day’s proceedings claimed that “NATO is a defensive alliance”, a statement that encapsulates why many struggle to grasp its true essence.

A look at the latest military spending figures shows, to the contrary, that NATO countries, and countries closely allied to NATO, account for nearly three-quarters of the total annual global expenditure on weapons. Many of these countries possess state-of-the-art weapons systems, which are qualitatively more destructive than those held by the militaries of most non-NATO countries.

Over the past 25 years, NATO has used its military might to destroy a number of states, including Afghanistan (2001) and Libya (2011), shattering societies with the raw muscle of its aggressive alliance, and end the status of Yugoslavia (1999) as a unified state. It is difficult, given this record, to sustain the view that NATO is a “defensive alliance”.

Currently, NATO has 31 member states, the most recent addition being Finland, which joined in April this year. Its membership has more than doubled since its 12 original members, all countries in Europe and North America that had been part of the war against the Axis powers, signed its founding treaty (the Washington Treaty or the North Atlantic Treaty) on April 4, 1949. It is telling that one of these original members – Portugal – remained under a fascist dictatorship at the time, known as Estado Novo (in place from 1933 until 1974).

Ambition

Article 10 of this treaty declares that NATO members – “by unanimous agreement” . . . can . . . “invite any other European state” to join the military alliance. Based on that principle, NATO welcomed Greece and Turkey (1952), West Germany (1955), and Spain (1982), expanding its membership at the time to include 16 countries. The disintegration of the USSR and communist states in Eastern Europe – the purported threat that compelled the need for NATO to begin with – did not put an end to the need for the alliance. Instead, NATO’s increasing membership has doubled down on its ambition

to use its military power, through Article 5, to subdue anyone who challenges the “Atlantic Alliance”.

The “Atlantic Alliance”, a phrase that is part of NATO’s name, was part of a wider network of military treaties secured by the US against the USSR and, after October 1949, against the People’s Republic of China. This network included the Manila Pact of September 1954, which created the Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO), and the Baghdad Pact of February 1955, which created the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO).

Turkey and Pakistan signed a military agreement in April 1954, which brought them together in an alliance against the USSR and anchored this network through NATO’s southernmost member (Turkey) and SEATO’s westernmost member (Pakistan). The US signed a military deal with each of the members of CENTO and SEATO and ensured that it had a seat at the table in these structures.

At the Asian-African Conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955, India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru reacted strongly to the creation of these military alliances, which exported tensions between the US and the USSR across Asia. The concept of NATO, he said, “has extended itself in two ways”: first, NATO “has gone far away from the Atlantic and has reached other oceans and seas” and second, “NATO today is one of the most powerful protectors of colonialism”. As an example, Nehru pointed to Goa, which was still held by fascist Portugal and whose grip had been validated by NATO members – an act, Nehru said, of “gross imperitence”. This characterisation of NATO as a globally belligerent organization and defender of colonialism remains intact, with some modifications.

SEATO was disbanded in 1977, partly due to the defeat of the US in Vietnam, and CENTO was shuttered in 1979, due to the Iranian Revolution that year. US military strategy shifted its focus from wielding these kinds of pacts to establishing a direct military presence with the founding of US Central Command in 1983 and the revitalisation of the US Pacific Command that same year. The US expanded the power of its own global military footprint, including its ability to strike anywhere on the planet due to its structure of military bases and armed flotillas (which were no longer restricted once the 1930 Second London Naval Treaty expired in 1939).

Although NATO has always had global ambitions, the alliance was



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: ArtLords (including Kabir Mokamel, Abdul Hakim Maqsodi, Meher Agha Sultani, Omaid Sharifi, Yama Farhard, Negina Azimi, Enayat Hikmat, Zahid Amini, Ali Hashimi, Mohammad Razeq Meherpour, Abdul Razaq Hashemi, and Nadima Rustam), *The Unseen Afghanistan*, 2021; Nino Morbedadze (Georgia), *Strolling Couple*, 2017; Shefa Salem al-Baraesi (Libya), *Kaska, Dance of War*, 2020. Original selection of images to accompany this article can be seen at: <https://thetricontinental.org/newsletterissue/nato-united-nations/>



given material reality through the US military’s force projection and its creation of new structures that further tied allied states into its orbit (with programmes such as “Partnership for Peace”, set up in 1994, and concepts such as “global NATO partner” and “non-NATO ally”, as exemplified by Japan and South Korea). In its 1991 Strategic Concept, NATO wrote that it would “contribute to global stability and peace by providing forces for United Nations missions”, which was realised with deadly force in Yugoslavia (1999), Afghanistan (2003), and Libya (2011).

By the Riga Summit (2006), NATO was confident that it operated “from Afghanistan to the Balkans and from the Mediterranean Sea to Darfur”. Nehru’s focus on colonialism might seem anachronistic now, but in fact, NATO has become an instrument to blunt the global majority’s desire for sovereignty and dignity, two key anti-colonial concepts. Any popular project that exerts these two concepts finds itself at the end of a NATO weapons system.

Collapse

The collapse of the USSR and the Eastern European communist state system transformed Europe’s reality. NATO quickly ignored the “ironclad guarantees” offered by US Secretary of State James Baker to Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in Moscow on February 9, 1990 that NATO’s “forces would not move eastward” of the German border. Several states that bordered the NATO zone suffered greatly in the immediate period af-

ter the fall of the Berlin Wall, with economies in the doldrums as privatisation eclipsed the possibility for their populations to live with dignity.

Many states in Eastern Europe, desperate to enter the European Union (EU), which at least promised access to the common market, understood that entry into NATO was the price of admission. In 1999, Czechia, Hungary, and Poland joined NATO, followed in 2004 by the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, and Slovakia. Eager for investments and markets, by 2004 many of these countries waltzed into the Atlantic Alliance of NATO and the EU.

NATO continued to expand, absorbing Albania and Croatia in 2009, Montenegro in 2017, and North Macedonia in 2020. However, the breakdown of some US banks, the waning attraction of the US as the market of last resort, and the entry of the Atlantic world into a relentless economic depression after 2007 changed the context. No longer were Atlantic states reliable as investors or as markets. After 2008, infrastructure investment in the EU declined by 75 percent due to reduced public spending, and the European Investment Bank warned that government investment would hit a 25-year low.

The arrival of Chinese investment and the possibility of integration with the Chinese economy began to reorient many economies, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe, away from the Atlantic. In 2012, the first summit between China and central and eastern European countries (China-CEE

summit) was held in Warsaw (Poland), with 16 countries in the region participating. The process eventually drew in 15 NATO members, including Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia (in 2021 and 2022, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania withdrew from the initiative). In March 2015, six then-EU member states – France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, Sweden, and the UK – joined the Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Four years later, Italy became the first G7 country to join the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Two-thirds of EU member states are now part of the BRI, and the EU concluded the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment in 2020.

Competitor

These manoeuvres towards China threatened to weaken the Atlantic Alliance, with the US describing the country as a “strategic competitor” in its 2018 National Defense Strategy – a phrase indicative of its shifting focus on the so-called threat of China. Nonetheless, as recently as November 2019, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that “there [are] no plans, no proposals, no intention to move NATO into, for instance, the South China Sea”. However, by 2020, the mood had changed: a mere seven months later, Stoltenberg said, “NATO does not see China as the new enemy or an adversary. But what we see is that the rise of China is fundamen-

tally changing the global balance of power”.

NATO’s response has been to work with its partners – including Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea – “to address . . . the security consequences of the rise of China”, Stoltenberg continued. The talk of a global NATO and an Asian NATO is front and centre in these deliberations, with Stoltenberg stating in Vilnius that the idea of a liaison office in Japan is “on the table”.

The war in Ukraine provided new life to the Atlantic Alliance, driving several hesitant European countries – such as Sweden – into its ranks. Yet, even among people living within NATO countries there are groups who are sceptical of the alliance’s aims, with the Vilnius summit marked by anti-NATO protests. The Vilnius Summit Communiqué underlined Ukraine’s path into NATO and sharpened NATO’s self-defined universalism. The communiqué declares, for instance, that China challenges “our interests, security, and values”, with the word “our” claiming to represent not only NATO countries but the entire international order.

Slowly, NATO is positioning itself as a substitute for the UN, suggesting that it – and not the actual international community – is the arbiter and guardian of the world’s “interests, security, and values”. This view is contested by the vast majority of the world’s peoples, seven billion of whom do not even reside in NATO’s member countries (whose total population is less than one billion). Those billions wonder why it is that NATO wants to supplant the United Nations.

Tricontinental

We need a development theory without debt and social despair

Post-colonial societies need to reject capitalism in favour of socialism

Vijay Prashad

IN JUNE, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Solutions Network published its Sustainable Development Report 2023, which tracks the progress of the 193 member states towards attaining the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"From 2015 to 2019", the network wrote, "the world made some progress on the SDGs, although this was already vastly insufficient to achieve the goals. Since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020 and other simultaneous crises, SDG progress has stalled globally". This development agenda was adopted in 2015, with targets intended to be met by 2030. However, halfway to this deadline, the report noted that "all of the SDGs are seriously off track".

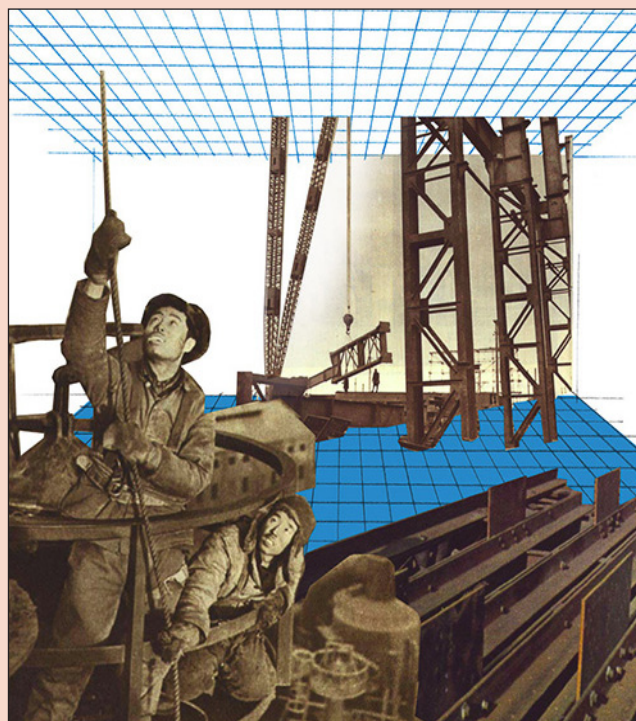
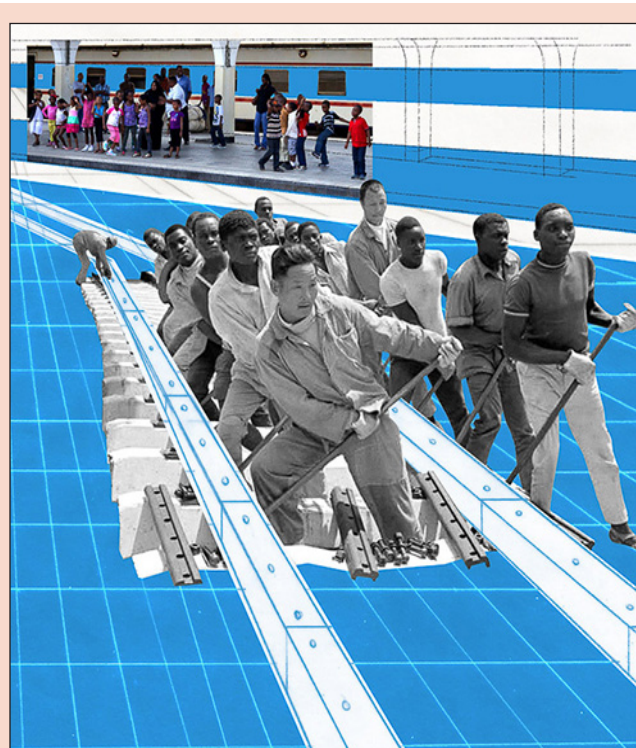
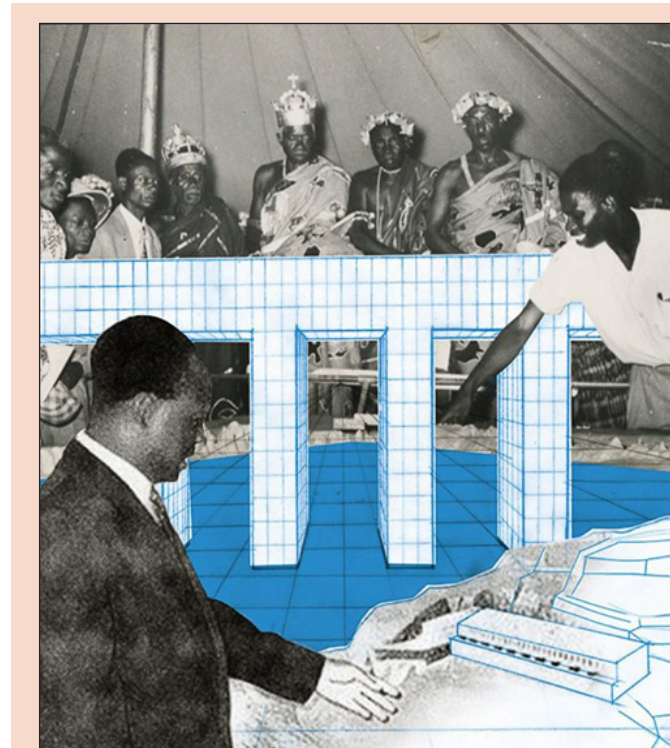
Why are the UN member states unable to meet their SDG commitments? "At their core", the network said, "the SDGs are an investment agenda: it is critical that UN member states adopt and implement the SDG stimulus and support a comprehensive reform of the global financial architecture". Yet, few states have met their financial obligations. Indeed, to realise the SDG agenda, the poorer nations would require at least an additional US\$4 trillion in investment per year.

Liquidity

No development is possible these days, as most of the poorer nations are in the grip of a permanent debt crisis. That is why the Sustainable Development Report 2023 calls for a revision of the credit rating system, which paralyses the ability of countries to borrow money (and when they are able to borrow, it is at rates significantly higher than those given to richer countries). Furthermore, the report calls on the banking system to revise liquidity structures for poorer countries, "especially regarding sovereign debt, to forestall self-fulfilling banking and balance-of-payments crises".

It is essential to place the sovereign debt crisis at the top of discussions on development. The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimates that "the public debt of developing countries, excluding China, reached US\$11.5 trillion in 2021". That same year, developing countries paid US\$400 billion to service their debt – more than twice the amount of official development aid they received. Most countries are not borrowing money to invest in their populations, but to pay off the bondholders, which is why we consider this not financing for development but financing for debt-servicing.

Reading the UN and academic literature on development is depressing. The conversation is trapped by the strictures of the



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Akosombo Dam in the Volta River, inaugurated in 1965 during Kwame Nkrumah's presidency; The TAZARA Railway (or Uhuru Railway), connecting the East African countries of Tanzania and Zambia, was funded by China, constructed by Chinese and African workers, and completed in 1975; Anshan Iron and Steel Company was renovated and expanded as one of the 156 construction projects in China that was supported by the Soviet Union in the 1950s; Collage of the Aswan High Dam (Egypt), Bhilai Steel Plant (India), and the Eisenhüttenstadt high-rise housing project (German Democratic Republic)

intractable and permanent debt crisis. Whether the issue of debt is highlighted or ignored, its existence forecloses the possibility of any genuine advance for the world's peoples.

Conclusions of reports often end with a moral call – this is what should happen – rather than an assessment of the situation based on the facts of the neocolonial structure of the world economy: developing countries, with rich holdings of resources, are unable to earn just prices for their exports, which means that they do not accumulate sufficient wealth to industrialise with their own population's well-being in mind, nor can they finance the social goods required for their population. Due to this suffocation from debt, and due to the impoverishment of academic development theory, no effective general theoretical orientation has been provided to guide realistic and holistic development agendas, and no outlines seem readily available for an exit from the permanent debt-

austerity cycle. At Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research, we are eager to open a discussion about the need for a new socialist development theory – one that is built from the projects being pursued by peoples' movements and progressive governments. As part of that discussion, we offer our latest dossier, *The World Needs a New Socialist Development Theory*, which surveys the terrain of development theory from 1945 to the present and offers a few gestures towards a new paradigm. As we note in the dossier:

Starting with the facts would require an acknowledgement of the problems of debt and deindustrialisation, the reliance upon primary product exports, the reality of transfer pricing and other instruments employed by multinational corporations to squeeze the royalties from the exporting states, the difficulties of implementing new and comprehensive industrial strategies, and the need to build the technological, scientific, and

bureaucratic capacities of populations in most of the world. These facts have been hard to overcome by governments in the Global South, although now – with the emergence of the new South-South institutions and China's global initiatives – these governments have more choices than in decades past and are no longer as dependent on the Western-controlled financial and trade institutions.

These new realities demand the formulation of new development theories, new assessments of the possibilities of and pathways to transcending the obstinate facts of social despair. In other words, what has been put back on the table is the necessity for national planning and regional cooperation as well as the fight to produce a better external environment for finance and trade.

A recent conversation in Berlin with our partners at the International Research Centre DDR (IF DDR) led to the realisation that this dossier failed to engage with

the debates and discussions around the development that took place in the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic (DDR), Yugoslavia, and the broader international communist movement. As early as the Second Congress of the Communist International, held in Moscow in 1920, communists began to formulate a theory of "non-capitalist development" (NCD) for societies that had been colonised and integrated into the capitalist world economy while still retaining pre-capitalist forms of production and social hierarchy. The general understanding of NCD was that post-colonial societies could circumvent capitalism and advance through a national-democratic process to socialism. NCD theory, which was developed at international conferences of communist and workers' parties and elaborated upon by Soviet scholars such as Rostislav A. Ulyanovsky and Sergei Tiulpanov in journals like the *World Marxist Review*, was centred on three transformations:

- Agrarian reform, to lift the peasantry out of its condition of destitution and to break the power of landlords.

- The nationalisation of key economic sectors, such as industry and trade, to restrict the power of foreign monopolies.

- The democratisation of political structures, education, and healthcare to lay the socio-political foundations for socialism.

Unlike the import-substitution industrialisation policy advanced by institutions such as the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, NCD theory had a much firmer understanding of the need to democratise society rather than to merely turn around the terms of trade. IF DDR's "Friendship" series features a powerful recounting of the practical application of NCD theory in Mali during the 1960s in an article written by Matthew Read. IF DDR and Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research will be working on a comprehensive study of NCD theory.

Prior to colonialism, African and Arab scholars in West Africa had already begun to work out the elements of a development theory. For example, Uthman ibn Muhammad ibn Uthman ibn Fodyo (1754-1817), the Fulani sheikh who founded the Sokoto Caliphate (1804-1903), wrote *Usul al-'Adl li-Wullat al-Umur wa-Ahl al-Fadl wa-al-Salatin* ('The Administration of Justice for Governors, Princes, and the Meritorious Rulers') to guide himself and his followers on a path to lift up his people.

Caliphate

The text is interesting for the principles it outlines, but – given the level of social production at the time – the caliphate relied on a system of low technical productivity and enslaved labour.

Before the people of West Africa could wrest power from the caliphate and drive their own society forward, the last caliph was killed by the British, who – along with the Germans and French – seized the land and subordinated its history to that of Europe.

Five decades later, Modibo Keita, a communist militant, led Mali's independence movement, seeking to reverse the subordination of African lands through the NCD project. Keita did not explicitly draw a direct line back to ibn Fodyo – whose influence could be seen across West Africa – but we might imagine the hidden itineraries, the remarkable continuities between those old ideas (despite their saturation in the wretched social hierarchies of their time) and the new ideas that were put forward by Third World intellectuals.

- The extended Tricontinental Dossier: *The World Needs a New Socialist Development Theory*, which this article is based on, can be found by clicking this link: <https://thetricontinental.org/dossier-66-development-theory/>

Tricontinental



THE SECOND RUSSIA-AFRICA SUMMIT, ST PETERSBURG

WE ATTENDED the Second Russia-Africa Summit from July 27-28 in St Petersburg, Russia, under the theme "For Peace, Security, and Development".

The theme was the same as the first summit, which took place in the Black Sea resort of Sochi in October 2019.

The Sochi summit was the first time such a large-scale event had been held in the history of modern Russia and was unprecedented in Russian-African relations. The participants identified priority areas of economic cooperation where concrete results could be achieved in the coming years.

A closing declaration was adopted at the end of the summit, outlining the approval of goals and objectives for the future development of Russian-African cooperation across politics, security, economics, science and technology, culture and the humanitarian sphere; goals to be discussed and reaffirmed at the second summit in St Petersburg.

The declaration of the first summit included the following aims:

- To build on the friendly ties between the Russian Federation and African States, the traditions of joint struggle for decolonisation and independence of African States, as well as the rich experience of multifaceted and mutually beneficial cooperation that serves the interests of our peoples.
- A commitment to the fundamental principles and purposes of the UN Charter and norms of the international law, as well as emphasising the need for their strict compliance by all States.
- Expressing a firm intention to fully contribute to achieving international peace and security and to building a more just and equitable system of international relations based on the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs of States, preservation of national identity and civilisational diversity.
- Noting the convergence or similarity of ap-

proaches to many issues on the global and regional agendas.

- Sharing and supporting the goals of African States enshrined in their social and economic programme "Agenda 2063" adopted in January 2015 at the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, as well as those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN General Assembly in resolution 70/1 of September 25, 2015.
- Reaffirming the resolve to progressively develop comprehensive cooperation between the Russian Federation, African States and leading sub regional organisations in Africa.

The photo above shows President of the Socialist Party [Zambia] Fred M'membe with President Emmerson Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe, Namibia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, and also the South West Africa Organisation (SWAPO) Party's Vice-President.

Fred M'membe, Socialist Party President

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