



THE

APDUSAN

AFRICAN PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC UNION
OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

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**THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS AND LANDLESS PEASANTS
SHALL BE PARAMOUNT !**

THE PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS STRIKE

After many deadlocks, accusations of negotiating in bad faith, marches and lunch-time pickets, more than 600,000 Public Sector Workers went on strike on 24 August 1999. The government then unilaterally implemented a 6.3% increase for public servants against their original demand of 10-15% increase.

"The dispute goes back to January 1999, to a workshop dealing with the budgetary process. At this meeting the Department of Finance outlined its Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, for the first time to the public sector workers. In the MTEF the parameters for wage cuts, and 'non-negotiability' were already set. All unions in the public service bargaining council presented their wage demands - 10% to 15%" [COSATU paper on Public Sector Workers Fight for a Living Wage.]

Thereafter COSATU and government officials met over the next few months until May 1999, when a dispute was declared. On the 29th March 1999, COSATU commented 'To the Unions it is clear, government is not prepared to negotiate - it has already made up its mind' [COSATU document - Public Sector Workers Fight for a Living Wage] During the period May-June COSATU Unions decided to "throw their weight behind the ANC election campaign." [ibid.]. By the August 1999 the unions compromised their demand from 10% to 7.3% increase.

Towards the end of August the government unilaterally implemented a 6.3% increase for public sector workers, and 4% increase for itself. It then went on an ideological media campaign against the workers claiming that the 4% increase for members of parliament is much less than what has been granted to the public sector workers. Let us look at the real value of these increases:

	Salary	Increase
Average Public Servant	R3 000	R 189.00
General Assistant	R1 500	R 94.50
Director General	R35 000	R1 400.00
Cabinet Minister	R40 000	R1 600.00

The table above shows that a Director General or a Ministers increase (4%) is the equivalent of a general assistant's salary. A minister will earn in one month what a general assistant earns in two years. As President Mbeki declared after the ANC elections victory "The people has spoken", Equality ANC style! COSATU has poured millions of Rands and manpower into the recent ANC elections campaign.

At the recent COSATU Special Congress, Secretary General Zwelinzima Vavi denied that there was any danger of a split between the ANC and COSATU. Vavi stated that "the alliance still has a long role to play". "The trade unionists", Engels wrote a hundred and fifty years ago "are very nice people indeed nowadays to deal with, for any sensible capitalist in particular and for the whole capitalist class in general."

The same thing can be said about those peculiar communists such as the South African Communist Party deputy chairperson, Mrs Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi. As Minister of Public Services and Administration, she has been in the forefront of the attack on the wages of the public service workers. During a parliamentary debate on the recent strike, she assured the Democratic Party leader, Tony Leon, that her department will deduct all hours lost from workers' October salaries.

There is an important lesson for workers to learn from this strike - it is far better to judge their trade union leaders and those in parliament by their actions and not their words. ●

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and much more!

THE SACTWU DEMONSTRATION

The recent demonstration of The SACTWU workers in Cape Town left one with serious thoughts. The trade union bureaucratic leadership was unable to teach the workers a lesson in workers' solidarity. Their 'buy local goods' campaign divides the workers. The strike was marred by ill feelings towards Somalian traders in Cape Town and other workers selling foreign products. I spoke to a worker employed in a shop owned by an East Asian couple. Here are some the answers that Marina Gilmore gave to the questions I asked her.

APDUSAN: Marina, you are working for a boss who sells products from Taiwan and there has been a protest march against the dumping of foreign goods, in particular, clothes, leather and textile articles. How do you see this in relation to your work?

Marina: I understand the anger and frustration of my fellow workers, but I need to look to the daily needs of my family; clothing, food. The stuff that we are selling is cheaper than the locally produced ones and the people are willing to buy our products.

APDUSAN: Do you support the march of the textile workers although they are threatening your job?

Marina: Yes! After the march we even decided not to sell Nike takkies anymore and we pinned their (the demonstrators') badges on our clothes.

APDUSAN: Marina, can you tell me anything about your conditions of employment with these bosses?

Marina: We are working a seven hour day with one day off. We are not paid sick leave and are without holiday pay. It only means we are not covered by the Basic Conditions of Employment and Labour Relations Acts.

APDUSAN: Why don't you join the trade union?

Marina: The workers are afraid of losing their jobs!

APDUSAN: Do you think it is possible for us to stem the tide of job losses of the Southern African clothing and textile workers ever?

Marina: As long as the South African bosses are exploiting my fellow workers for super profits as long as the workers are unable to buy the products they are producing, so long will the international bosses be able to dump cheaper products produced by child labour. The GEAR policy of the government is allowing this lowering of tariffs dictated to them by the IMF and the World Bank. The bosses of South Africa and Taiwan are the same: they all exploit the workers.

Comrades, after talking to this worker we realise that oppression and exploitation is a world-wide problem and it is our task as workers to unite to fight international exploitation. ●

THE CLASS STRUGGLE AND THE TRADE UNIONS

Thousands of textile workers marched to the gates of parliament on the 8th of September to demand an end to tariff cuts and cheap imports. Workers carried banners with slogans such as "*Cape Underwear says buy South African*" and "*Imports kill our jobs*". According to Ebrahim Patel of the South African Textile Workers Union, 22000 jobs has been lost in the textile industry since last year. He also said that the union was encouraged by the support shown by industry managers, many whom had signed its petition. He also urged the government and industry to launch a Buy South African campaign.

What Mr Patel is telling workers are, that the current social crises (job losses) are caused by lower tariffs and cheap imports. The solution to the problem according to Mr Patel is more South African Capitalism (higher tariffs) and a good dose of Nationalism (buy South African). A hundred and fifty years ago Karl Marx wrote: "The need of a

constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere" and later "To the great chagrin of reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood.... Working men have no country." [Manifesto of the Communist Party Marx and Engels 1848].

Marx proposed to the trade unions that they abandon their conservative slogan, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," and replace it with the revolutionary demand, "Abolition of the wages system." "The workers", they continued, "have nothing of their own to secure and to fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property". Thus, what Mr Patel and his South African Textile Workers' Union bureaucrats and managers proposes, is the anti-thesis of Marxism. ●

AFTER THE MARCH

For many members of trade unions and political organisations the participation in a picket and/or a march represents the sum total of their involvement in struggle. Joining in the normally carnival atmosphere of a march, carrying posters and banners, issuing pamphlets, singing and sloganeering as we go along, has become common currency. All this is well and good. But what happens afterwards?

After the memorandum has been handed over, and the usual promises and handshakes have occurred, people feel tired and liberated from this expression of opposition to the government and or the bosses. Until the next time.

We cannot allow the situation to continue where we do not read and discuss the ideas and literature that organisations such as APDUSA put out during marches and pickets. We can learn from these ideas and use them to advance our struggles. ●

CAPE TOWN CITY COUNCIL MOVES AGAINST TORNADO VICTIMS

The tornado which hit the Cape Town suburbs of Manenberg, Gugulethu and Surrey Estate on 29 August, destroyed the homes and possessions of hundreds of families. A major relief programme was immediately put into operation. Donations to the disaster relief fund poured in from the public, business and private organisations. Many of the destroyed homes and flats were council-owned and covered by insurance. The government also officially declared the affected places disaster areas, which means that special state funds will be allocated to the relief program.

Any normal person will imagine that the aim of the disaster program will be to rebuild the homes of the affected families and to assist them as far as possible to pick up their lives from where they were before they were hit by this unforeseen disaster. But that is not how the Cape Town City Council sees it. According to a report in the Cape Times a meeting of the Executive Committee of the City Council held on 21 September 1999 decided that the affected people will not automatically be provided with new homes. Those people who were the tenants of council properties at the time of the disaster will be offered new homes on a "rent-to-buy basis". "The new houses will be offered to the former tenants first, either for sale or bought through a government-subsidised housing programme, but if they decline the offer they will not be rehoused and will have to go back to the end of the housing queues". (Cape Times 22 September 1999). According to the same report the council claims that its legal obligations to its tenants ended when the houses they were occupying were destroyed. The City Council is further demanding

that people sign acknowledgements of debt for outstanding service payments before they will be rehoused. Furthermore, the council claims it has no responsibility for people who were living in backyard structures.

To say that the attitude of the Cape Town City Council is cynical and opportunistic would be putting it mildly. As the key body in the task of reconstructing the victims' lives its obligations go far beyond its petty legal considerations and its own financial interests. The restoration of the lives of these unfortunate families should be unconditional. Why should tenants now be forced to buy? That was not the situation before the disaster struck. Why does the Council decide it has no obligation to people who were living in backyard structures? Were they not victims too? And what morality is there in using this terrible disaster as a debt collecting exercise? The Cape Town City Council should bear in mind that it is working with funds made available for the benefit of the victims and not itself! It has a social responsibility to its citizens who voted it into office and its duty is not to grind them further into the dust when they have become victims of a natural disaster. This sorry episode is another reason why all people should look more closely at our much vaunted, new system of democracy. APDUSA says: *"The elected representatives of the people, at organisational level or in the local, regional or national political institutions of state, must be fully accountable to those who elect them and they must be fully bound by the demands and aspirations of the working class and its allies, the landless peasantry."*

MBEKI'S ZERO TOLERANCE FOR CORRUPTION

When President Thabo Mbeki stepped into his position as head of state he promised the country that he would show zero tolerance for corruption and he would stamp it out. We did not have to wait long before the ANC premier of Mpumalanga, Mr Ndaweni Mahlangu went right ahead to appoint two persons to his executive Council whose credentials were highly questionable. One, Mr Steve Mabona had previously been declared unfit for public office by the Moldenhauer Commission. The other is Mr Jaques Madipane who has serious question marks over his role in the scandal

involving the illegal sale of nature reserves in Mpumalanga to a foreign company. Under criticism, Premier Mahlangu defended Mr Jaques Madipane with his infamous statement that it was all right for politicians to lie. In response to the outcry that followed Mr Mahlangu duly apologised for his statement but stood firm on his appointment of the two persons in question.

Not surprisingly, the matter came up for discussion in parliament. In stepped President Mbeki. He lashed out at the critics of Premier Mahlangu and stated that he should be shown mercy since he

had apologised. Now in the language of ordinary people zero tolerance for corruption means no mercy! But now it seems that in Mr Mbeki's language it means zero tolerance for the critics of corruption.

Premier Ndaweni Mahlangu appears to be unfazed by all these concerns about corruption and has since re-appointed Mr Shadrack Mashele as finance director of Mpumalanga. Mr Mashele was previously dismissed from this position after having been found guilty on four charges of serious corruption. ●

RIGHT-WING COMMUNISM

In the public service wage dispute the Minister of Public Services and Administration, Ms Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, accused the striking workers of "economism", i.e. placing their own, narrow economic interests ahead of the national interest. She claims that she was helped in reaching this conclusion by reading Lenin's pamphlet; *"Left-wing" Communism - an Infantile Disorder*. Now V.I. Lenin was a revolutionary and his concern in writing this pamphlet was to clarify the role of a revolutionary leadership in raising the consciousness of workers from economism towards the understanding of the need to overthrow the bourgeois-democratic order by revolutionary means and to construct socialism on its ruins. But this is clearly not what Ms Fraser-Moleketi, Deputy Chairperson of the South African Communist Party, is trying to do.

She is calling on the workers to support a bourgeois-democratic parliament in carrying out its duties. As a professed communist sitting in a bourgeois-democratic parliament, one wonders how she understands Lenin's view of her role in that position when he stated in the same pamphlet: "participation in a bourgeois parliament ... actually helps ... to prove to the backward masses why such parliaments deserve to be done away with; it facilitates their successful dissolution, and helps to

make bourgeois parliamentarism 'politically obsolete'". Lenin was of course speaking on the aim of revolutionary socialists in participating in a bourgeois parliament. Ms Fraser-Moleketi's actions may very well help workers to the same conclusion. It would also make her right-wing communism politically obsolete. ●

THE STATE LOTTERY

It was recently announced with a lot of fanfare that we will soon have a state lottery. This is supposed to be a way that the government can collect a large amount of extra money each year without resorting to additional taxes which few can bear. This money could then be used to improve social services and to uplift the poor. But what is the truth behind these claims? The government will not run the lottery itself but is giving a licence to a private company to do it. According to various reports the sale of lottery tickets can draw in anything between R3 billion and R5 billion per year. Then we have been told that of this money, we can expect between R150 million and R300 million will be donated to charities. So the poor will benefit by R300 million - a miserable drop in the ocean. But if you subtract 300 million from 3 billion you are left with R2.7 billion. Who gets the R2.7 billion? How much will be going into the pockets of the bosses of the company that will run the lottery? Is this another case of black empowerment for the benefit of a privileged few? ●

FACTORIES OF THE FUTURE!

The "Inside Labour" column in the 17 September edition of the Business Report conveyed an account of prison labour being used by companies to make quite handsome profits. Apparently South African prisons are also in line for privatisation if what the authorities and spokesmen of POPCRU say is anything to go by. This would be in line with a trend in the USA where, according to the article, inmates are paid 22 cents an hour to produce goods that are sold on the open market at considerable profits. We are not here concerned with the reasons people end up in prisons. What should be noted is the extent to which the capitalists will go to exploit human labour.

BAUMANN'S WORKERS' DESPERATE PLIGHT

The Baumann's company, after a long period of operations in Cape Town, has decided to relocate. Many of the employees have been working for the company for periods up to fifteen years - as casuals. Today the company refuses to pay these workers any

benefits after many years of slaving away for the Baumann's bosses.

APDUSA has taken up the struggle of the Baumann's workers. A fund-raising effort will be held on the 15th of October. We call on all organisations and individuals to make a contribution in respect of this battle of the workers against their class enemies. (See also Letter to the Editor).

Defend The Rights Of The Baumann's Workers!

MAKING TYRES

From France comes the following story: Michelin, the giant tyre-producing company, had a very good first six months this year. Their net income grew by 20%. How did the bosses respond? They announced that they would soon sack 7500 of the workers who brought in that bigger income.

Perhaps some of these workers saw the mass unemployment in France and thought: "Hey, we better work hard so the bosses can make money and our jobs can be safe." To no avail. For the worker the only safety lies in struggle. ●

From the Constitution of the APDUSA

APDUSA demands:

◆ The revision of labour legislation for the liquidation of all discrimination against the worker. This also means:

(i) The right to work, which must be implemented both via the institution of necessary adjustments to the length of the working week to provide employment for all, without a reduction in wages, as well as by the institution of a progressive public works program with the full representation of the unemployed in its management.

(ii) The fixing of a living minimum wage as well as a sliding scale to compensate for any price increases.

(iii) The unconditional right to strike which includes the right of occupation of the workplace.

◆ The promotion of the self-organisation and united independent struggle of the labouring masses who produce the wealth of the country and carry it on their backs. This means:

(i) The promotion of independent and democratic worker committees and unions which arise from the ranks of the workers themselves, whether employed or unemployed.

(ii) The removal of all forms of bureaucratic control in the trade union movement and the promotion of workers power.

We Demand: *"The convening of a democratically elected Constituent Assembly, charged with the task of drawing up a new constitution, governed by the interests of the oppressed and exploited working class and peasantry, based on the demand for full, unfettered political rights for all with majority rule in a unitary state, the removal of all artificially created regional political boundaries, the liquidation of all special minority rights and privileges which militate against the interests of the majority. The Constituent Assembly must have full powers to discharge these duties, untrammelled by any directions and constraints designed to serve self-interested minorities."*



EDITORIAL

The Struggle Continues Beyond Strike Action

A recent report by the CCMA stresses the fact that strike action in South Africa has become more intense. It says that bosses and workers are adopting more and more uncompromising positions when it comes to wage and other disputes. The recent public sector strike shows us that the state, as an employer, has in a way set the tone for other employers when it comes to wage demands. This fact alone should open the eyes of those workers who still believe that the government's programme is to improve their lot.

In this situation of the intensity of the class struggle many questions are going to be asked in the heat of the struggle. One such question is whether the leadership of the working class is dynamically and strongly linked to those it claims to represent and lead. Here we are not referring only to marching ahead and being in the forefront of pickets and demonstrations. The question is whether that leadership represents the interests of the workers and peasants beyond the work situation and beyond the situation of land hunger.

Are they engaging their constituencies in the field of



GENOCIDE IN EAST TIMOR

The death and destruction wreaked by the Indonesian army on the people of East Timor in the run up to and following the referendum on independence, is a continuation of the policy pursued by Indonesia since it annexed the country in 1975. Following the collapse of the Portuguese dictatorship and Portugal's withdrawal from East Timor in 1974, the military dictatorship in Indonesia led by General Suharto was encouraged by the USA in 1975 to invade East Timor. It was US imperialism that played a vital role in Sukarno's bloody rise to power in 1965 in Indonesia, when the military were responsible for the death of over half a million people. For the USA, Sukarno was a regional bulwark against communism. Its spokesmen did not utter one word of protest when the Indonesian army killed more than 200,000 people, more than one third of the population of East Timor, in the campaign to occupy the country.

The heroic resistance of the East Timorese and their

ideological and political training? Are they stressing the need for collaboration and unity across trade union and other organisational lines? Are they unearthing and revealing to the working class and peasant youth the lessons of past struggles? Are they teaching proper lessons that can be learnt from struggles in the international socialist movement? Are they telling their constituencies that while despondency can perhaps be understood, it is only by taking up the struggle against capitalist oppression and exploitation that there will be any chance of improving their own situation?

If these things are not being done then we should start doing them. If workers are not being told of these things then APDUSA and other progressives must do it visibly and consistently.

The Remainder of the Year

While the bosses are preparing to throw lavish millennium parties the working class and landless peasants will be engaged in struggle:

- the struggle to keep their jobs
- the struggle to raise children
- the struggle to survive physically

APDUSA says that we must unite our struggles and march forward. ●

The hollowness of imperialism's claim, when it launched a savage war against Yugoslavia earlier this year, that it was guided by "a new internationalism where the brutal repression of whole ethnic groups will no longer be tolerated" is once again laid bare.

guerrilla army, Fretilin, to the occupation of the country. caught the attention of people all over the world, who organised protests against the Suharto regime. Suharto and his imperialist masters ignored these protests and the latter continued to arm the military dictatorship and to aid it diplomatically, while reaping the benefits of investments in the Indonesian economy. For the East Timorese however, the occupation was a hell on earth with the population subjected to aerial bombing, campaigns of deliberate starvation and wholesale annihilation of villages and peoples. The USA and Britain, as the Sukarno dictatorship's main arms suppliers, ensured it had the military hardware to carry out its genocidal policies against the population of East Timor. Imperialism took advantage of Indonesia's ►

➡ “favourable political climate” to invest in the country. In December 1989, Australian, British and US companies reached an agreement with Indonesia for the extraction of oil from the Timor

Suharto Ousted

With the collapse of the Indonesian economy in 1997 and the IMF imposed measures which slashed subsidies, cut social spending and created mass unemployment, the urban poor rose up in revolt and this together with a large student protest movement forced the resignation of the dictator, Suharto. His replacement by his heir, Habibie, with the consent of the army, ensured that the existing social order remained intact. Habibie was forced however to introduce limited reforms such as unbanning some trade unions and newspapers and releasing a few political prisoners. The election to parliament that was organised was undemocratic because of the police and military interference in the election process, and there was obvious fraud during the extended vote-counting procedure. If this were not enough, the military were granted a continuing political presence of 38 seats in a 500 member parliament. Demands for deep going changes in Indonesian society, particularly among the students became prevalent. It is the power wielded by the military in civil as well as military affairs that is deeply disturbing to the people of Indonesia. Since Suharto was evicted from office, the country's social fabric has begun to unravel but the military only know the language of force to deal with the demands of the people. In parts of the country, where the population have suffered particularly harshly and are now demanding their rights, such as Aceh, where there is a movement for autonomy and Ambon, hundreds have recently been killed by the army.

Independence Referendum Conceded to East Timor

The victories of the pro-democracy movement across Indonesia inspired the East Timorese people, who demonstrated against continued Indonesian rule and demanded a referendum on independence. In January, Habibie was forced by internal and international pressure to promise a referendum to the people of East Timor on autonomy or independence from Indonesia. The Indonesian military, who feared the loss of East Timor would lead to the break up of Indonesia and threaten their positions of power and privilege, had begun to prepare a campaign of terror against the population of East Timor. They organised training of militias recruited from West Timor and Java. This plan was known to the imperialists through their intelligence agencies, but they did nothing to expose it. By the time Habibie had made

an announcement of the referendum, the militias were already terrorising and killing the population of East Timor. In terms of the agreement reached between the United Nations Organisation(UNO) and Indonesia, the UNO was to oversee the vote while the Indonesian army was to be responsible for “maintaining law and order”, in spite of the campaign of terror that it had already instituted.

Revenge of Indonesian Military

The brave people of East Timor, in spite of the massive intimidation by the Indonesian army and the militias, in the referendum(turnout of 98%) voted by an overwhelming majority(78%) for independence. The Indonesian army, having prepared for such an outcome, now unleashed its campaign of killing, raping, looting and laying waste to the country including the capital city, Dili. There are an estimated 250,000 refugees scattered throughout East Timor, most of them starving and another 150,000 have been forcibly removed to West Timor. The policy of genocide carried out by the Indonesian military provoked outrage internationally. The UNO passed a resolution sending in a peacekeeping force, which specified that this force would work together with the Indonesian army, to “restore peace” to a devastated, almost depopulated country. Even if the Indonesian army withdraws as it now says it will when the peacekeeping force arrives, the militias it trained will be left behind to carry on their campaign of terror.

The hollowness of imperialism's claim, when it launched a savage war against Yugoslavia earlier this year, that it was guided by “a new internationalism where the brutal repression of whole ethnic groups will no longer be tolerated” is once again laid bare. It has from the beginning supported the Indonesian military in the rape of East Timor. Having had prior warning of the planned policy of genocide of the Indonesian military forces against the people of East Timor once the referendum had been announced, it could have thwarted their plans by a few simple measures, such as stopping arms supplies to them and withholding IMF funds from the bankrupt Indonesian state. Instead, rather than risk its lucrative investments and interests in Indonesia being jeopardised by the toppling of the regime there by a popular uprising, it did nothing to prevent the army from almost depopulating East Timor and ruining the country. With the world's attention focused on the UNO peacekeeping force, imperialism must not be allowed to escape exposure and universal condemnation for its role in aiding and abetting the Indonesian military in the dastardly crimes they have committed against the people of East Timor. ●

POVERTY IN AMERICA

President Bill Clinton visited the most downtrodden regions where, according to official statistics, 35 million Americans exist in poverty. Maybe this was his prelude to the 2000 election campaign. Even if this was the case, impoverished Americans, including those side-stepped by Clinton, once more heard the real motives underlying slick Billy's lip-service to their suffering.

The Democratic Party, who defeated the Republican Party in the last two elections, manages the government on behalf of capitalists, forcing working class Americans into ruins. The richest country on the globe keeps on breaking the world record for inequality. The gap between rich and poor is widening. Wages of the working class have been falling for decades, forcing people to slave at two jobs to make ends meet. Budget surpluses now handed out to the

creditors of the state, debt repayments to finance capitalists, means further cuts in welfare.

Welfare recipients are pushed into a "welfare-to-work" program. This scheme depresses the wages and living standards of all workers. Moreover, it also aims at dealing knockout blows to the trade unions, stifled by bureaucratic scandals.

Professor Steven Davis, from the University of Chicago, estimated that for decades 10-12% of jobs vanished in the manufacturing industry alone. This has now become an irreversible pattern. In New York City, where Clinton did not touch down during his tour, the number of children born in poverty jumped from 36% in 1990 to 52.2% in 1997.

Under the cover of aiding a fraction of impoverished Americans, Clinton champions

the interests of big corporations. This flows directly from his so-called anti-poverty measures. Firstly, he told the poor in this rich country to desire "living conditions" prevailing in "emerging market countries". Secondly, bankers, traders and industrialists are offered all sorts of government help to "invest" in these "regions bypassed by the goldilocks economy". But the third world, from Brazil to Indonesia, only got increasing misery from neo-liberalism. Capitalism dumped 40% of the world in the deepest recession. Billions of dollars in tax credits and government debt guarantees will end up enriching those causing poverty in America. America's working class can only raise their living standards through the overthrow of capitalism and bringing the wealth and political system under workers control. ●

BRETTONWOODS TWINS' YEARLY MEETINGS

The yearly meetings of the Brettonwoods twins - the IMF and World Bank, held during September in Washington DC, plotted to restore the credibility of neo-liberalism. Fund and Bank spokesmen ruled the economic meltdown ancient history, yet it haunted their deliberations. Recession is widening throughout Latin America. Their report card on Asia, including Japan, states: "The basic risks remains!" Living standards of working people in all "emerging" and industrialised economies are in steep decline, sparking uprisings against the

anti-worker policies that their governments enforce. Besides this key threat hanging over the Fund-Bank joint sessions, imperialism's henchmen also focused on blaming each other for causing the recession, clearing their name from the money-laundering scam uncovered in Russia and rewarding the Western investors for poor country debt defaults. Naturally, deepening weaknesses in the foundations of world capitalism, now provoking wild swings in global financial markets transmitted its shock waves into these meetings. The sharp devaluation of the dollar

against the yen killed wishes of "global synchronised growth", so popular at the June 1999 Cologne summit of the G7. Will America's bubble economy deflate slowly or implode with a crash?

As we were going to the press, the Brettonwoods twins concluded their 1999 meeting with declarations on poverty and debt relief. Nevertheless, their bookkeeping tricks involving gold reserves for debt reduction is another step further away from 100% unconditional scrapping of third world debt. ●

BREAKING UP SOUTH-KOREAN BUSINESS COMBINES

Under the squeeze of the \$57 billion IMF-bailout agreement of 1997, South Korea's President is pushing ahead with the break-up of the monopolies, known as cheabols. Capitalist combines like Daewoo, Samsung, and Hyundai, indebted to financiers in Europe, America and Japan are now bankrupt. How did these conglomerates amass debt, in some cases more than 400% of their equity capital? Where do workers stand in this fall-out between bad-debtors and greedy-creditors?

Today's bankrupt cheabols could only heap up that debt with the blessing of their lenders. Credit rating agencies, in the not too distant past, gave South Korea top-notch ratings. Even the IMF and World Bank flashed the green light for loan funds to pour into that region. Creditor banks rushed in to lend recklessly to the cheabols. Credit was overextended to these corrupt conglomerates because they offered high profits and public sector debt repayment guarantees. Western investors therefore played a key role in feeding the pressures breaking out in recession. Moreover, low wages and high productivity, cheered on by financial speculation, could only end in

a world market glut. They speeded-up the laws of motion of the market economy. Generalised overproduction and falling profit rates sent the stock and currency exchanges, and corporations into a free-fall. Workers at the bottom rung of Korean society came off worse. (New York Times, 12/4/97)

Yesterday's lenders to South Korean cheabols today label these businesses as polecats. During the good times corporate corruption, bad debts and bankruptcies were overlooked. When the economic crisis hits every capitalist wants to dump his losses on someone else. Imperialist financiers intensified their blustering and arm-twisting to have the "sour" loans repaid. Sometimes they favour government bailout other times, the break-up of business empires. In most cases however they prefer a combination of the two tactics for maximum return. In Mexico, 5 years after the tequila-crisis, the government is saddled with debt resulting from bailing out bankrupt private banks. This "nationalisation of debt" added over \$60 billion to the government debt burden. Finance capital is stripping and bleeding Mexican state

coffers. (Financial Times, 22/7/99) A lifeline to capital has at its opposite end a noose around labour. The break-up of Daewoo, Samsung and Hyundai boils down to this: their creditors confiscate sub-divisions of their business and auction it to the highest bidder. (The Economist, 8/21/99). What, in the first place, is the combined debt of all big corporate creditors and debtors to society?

The South Korean President wants this bailout and break-up exercise to benefit small-and-medium enterprises. Some large trade unions back this evil plan. (Far Eastern Economic Review 8/26/99 & The Economist 4/9/99) This is not in the interest of the working class. It is a dangerous trap. Let it be noted that third world capitalists are more dependent on the imperialist bourgeoisie in their symbiosis. Whenever the working class lined up behind and supported one layer of the bourgeoisie against another, they were betrayed. Only one conclusion flows from this historical fact: **Working people need their own political program and organisation to fight for their liberation.** ●

When you have finished reading this APDUSAN pass it on to a friend!

MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY TO THE 1999 SOCIALIST ACTION (USA) YOUTH CONVENTION

The APDUSA was invited to participate in the Youth Convention of Socialist Action (USA) which was held in San Francisco during August this year. Our message of solidarity to the convention (printed below) was very warmly received.

Comrades

We thank you for inviting a representative of our organisation to participate in your deliberations. We of the APDUSA declare our fullest solidarity with you in the objective of your convention, which can be nothing less than making a concrete contribution to the task of building a socialist international leadership of the working class - a leadership that indeed befits its historic role.

The collapse of the bastions of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its reactionary ideology left many of us believing that the revolutionary mobilisation of the working masses could now proceed apace, untrammelled by this dead hand of the past. Subsequent events have served to remind us forcibly that the processes of history are far from being that simple. Today, bourgeois ideologues revel in the imagined defeat of revolutionary socialism and preach that the pinnacle of human historic endeavour is to be reached in a mightier system of globalised capitalism, based on the imperialist neo-liberal agenda. Without a strong revolutionary leadership, the labouring masses across the globe are compelled to contemplate their future in this promised world, with all the meagre optimism and resolution that they can muster. The ranks of the advanced socialist forces remain divided, befuddled by ideas that fail to answer the needs of the revolutionary struggle. But the forces of history are inexorable and there are yet those who are committed to the only way of progress, and that is the correct application of the tools of scientific socialism that were developed by those great revolutionaries who strode the stage of struggle before us.

Here in South Africa we have a militant working class that wrestles uncomfortably in the ideological maw of social reformism and class collaboration. In perpetrating this fraud the leadership of the ruling party - the African National Congress is ably assisted by a bureaucratic trade union leadership that is amply rewarded for its traitorous role. While the dehumanising ideology of white supremacy, as represented in its extreme form by fascistic Afrikaner nationalism, has been defeated, the great socio-economic divide remains in tact. Racial issues

still cloud the underlying class relationships. We are now witness to new efforts to distort the truth in a grotesque debate between the petit-bourgeois white liberals and their black nationalist counterparts. Accusations of "old" racism and counter-accusations of "new", reverse racism abound. Ultimately, we are asked to believe that it is the racist attitudes of those in positions of responsibility, that is responsible for the failure of "the process of democratic transformation".

The recent election results demonstrate that, despite their unrewarding and disillusioning experiences of the past five years, the masses still retain a basic faith in the new bourgeois democratic dispensation and its ability to deliver to them that which they sacrificed and fought for so bitterly in the past. This situation leaves an organisation such as ours, as well as others who seek to base themselves on the revolutionary socialist objective, facing an arduous and uphill struggle. But we count both our setbacks and our victories. We are driven by the understanding that the ongoing struggle in South Africa, as it is in any other country, cannot be fought and won in isolation. Our struggle has gained a signal victory in the destruction of those harsh strictures of the past that were designed to enforce its isolation from the international revolutionary movement. We seize the opportunity to join hands with you on this occasion, as a step forward in the task of building new links across the broken divide.

The demand for international solidarity and principled unity must be answered. As we now strive to establish the correct path forward, we are bound not only to analyse the present relationship of forces in the world revolution, on both the national and international planes, but also those historic processes that have brought them to this juncture. It is a collective effort that also requires the shared experiences of the labouring masses in their struggles across the world. If your conference succeeds in this endeavour in but a small measure, it shall nonetheless represent an irreversible gain in the struggle for human liberation. We have every reason to wish you the greatest success in your deliberations.

**FORWARD TO SOCIALISM!
LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONAL!**

Letters

SUPPORTING THE BAUMANN'S WORKERS

Comrade Editor

In Cape Town the bosses of the rich Anglo-Vaal group of companies decided to close the Baumann's biscuit factory. The reason: they could make better profits if they transferred production to other cities. Just like that! For the sake of profit hundreds of workers must lose their livelihood and thousands of members of their families must suffer.

The workers have joined the Oil, Chemical, General and Allied Workers Union (OCGAWU) and are fighting this dastardly and self-interested decision of the Baumann's bosses. Two weapons they are attempting to use are a case in the labour court for proper retrenchment packages and a boycott of Baumann's and Baker's biscuits. We must support them with all our strength.

I must say this closure is a crime against the poor and working masses. This factory could be converted to one that produces healthier biscuits than the unhealthy, sugary stuff these capitalists make their profits from. If the state pays these workers, the biscuits they make can be given or sold at cost price to the poor. It can help end the crisis of hunger and malnutrition that is killing the children of Cape Town and South Africa at large. How much will this

cost the state? Far less than the billions that are wasted on army equipment.

I think a major demand of a campaign in support of the Baumann's workers should be that the state must take over the factory and pay the workers to produce healthy food for the poor.

Ronald Wesso

'MARKETING' APDUSA

Comrades

In a recent conversation with a shopsteward of NEHAWU, I was struck by the genuine interest of the comrade when he saw the range of issues that "THE APDUSAN" covered. He then posed the question as to how the organisation goes about marketing itself. A little dumbstruck at first, I told him that we have an office where more literature is available.

I subsequently realised that the question was perhaps not as trivial or elementary as originally thought. APDUSA does have a problem in terms of how it presents itself to the public. With the cries for political leadership in the struggle presently becoming louder and louder, APDUSA should start considering and executing all or at least some of the options open to it in terms of raising its public profile. Its message is being awaited out there.

APDUSA Member

From the Constitutional Guidelines of the APDUSA

"The millions of workers and peasants have nothing to look forward to but continued suffering under the ravages of oppression and economic exploitation. In the face of this bleak future they find that they have no means to exercise any control over these new political leaders who have been voted into power and government of the nation.

There is now no time to rest on the gains of the past, in the hope that they are enough to solve the problems of the nation. The new social, political and legal institutions which entrench and protect this unjust state of affairs are the immediate obstacles which block the path of progress towards a fundamental solution to the problems of the nation, whereby all members of our society shall be enabled to contribute freely in the creation of wealth and to equally and justly share the fruits of their labour. The removal of these obstacles is the first task confronting the people in their ongoing struggle for liberation. But the struggle to remove these obstacles must go hand in hand with the task of laying the foundations of a new and just society, a society which truly serves the interests of the labouring masses who produce the wealth of the nation with their labour, a society in which people can exercise the democratic right of control over their own destiny in every sense and not just by making a cross on a piece of paper once every five years."

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The interests of the workers and landless peasants are paramount!

It is the aim of The APDUSAN to publicise the efforts of the long-suffering workers and peasants and to unite with them in struggles for a better life and equality. If you are involved in a struggle you believe others should know about, please write to us at the address below.

**IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE MORE
INFORMATION ABOUT THE APDUSA
AND IF YOU WISH TO BE PLACED ON
OUR MAILING LIST FOR PAMPHLETS,
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