

# The BULLETIN

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## EDITORIAL : ZAIRE - VICTIM OF IMPERIALIST PLUNDER

**T**he military tyrant Mobutu Sese Seko, who had ruled and exploited Zaire for more than thirty years, was driven out of office in May, 1997. Another military boss, Laurent Kabila, was installed as president of the Independent Democratic Republic of Congo - their new name for Zaire. Ever since the country was declared 'independent' in 1960, Zaire has been plundered by imperialist-capitalist companies to such an extent that its 47 million people are among the poorest in the world. For the past year Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki had been trying to secure 'peace' in Zaire. They sought to get Mobutu and his opponents to agree to a truce and to form a joint governing body to rule Zaire. Kabila's take-over was relatively 'peaceful'. This was claimed as a victory for the South African government's influence and a triumph for the tactics of 'peaceful negotiated settlements'. But in whose interests?

### Mobutu Out - Oppression Stays

The spread of warfare was limited up to the time of the take-over. Kamila entered the capital Kinshasa with little opposition at the start. But the struggle in Zaire-Congo is by no means over. The masses are rid of Mobutu. But they are not rid of the neo-colonial oppression and exploitation; they suffered extreme poverty, mis-

ery and lack of any relief from some of the worst living conditions in Africa.

### Revolt Spreads To French Congo

In June, opposition to the Kabila regime began to spread from the capital, Kinshasa. On Zaire-Congo's western border an uprising began in (French) Congo's capital Brazzaville, as opposition to the French-supported Congolese president

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grew. Mandela and Mbeki had in fact been carrying out a job on behalf of America, France, Britain, Belgium and South African capitalists who had been exploiting the great mineral wealth of the country. Copper, cobalt, iron, zinc and diamonds formed the bulk of Zaire's wealth. Vegetable oil, got for next-to-nothing from poor peasants, was sent to Europe's food and chemical factories for processing. Imperialist policy has been to get colonial people to fight things out among themselves. They send their own troops into foreign countries only if they need to crush popular revolts that may threaten the grip of capitalist exploiters on these countries. Mobutu was of no further use to them; they were happy to see what Mandela and Mbeki could do with Kabila and his supporters. But they also provided an escape route for Mobutu, even offering him asylum in South Africa if he wanted it.

#### **Mobutu's Massive Thefts**

From 1965-1995 Mobutu stole no less than fifty billion rand from the Zairean people! Around him, hundreds of stooges also grabbed millions; some have even invested their ill-gotten gains in South Africa. Zaire's 47 million people have an average income of about R540 a year. But the country's foreign debt amounts to more than R1500 for each man, woman and child in the country. Millions had no income at all. Unemployment is even worse than that in South Africa. Urban and rural slums dot the whole country. Divided into no fewer than 250 'tribes',

the people were exploited by chiefs, priests and foreign plantation owners. From the time that the Belgian Royal Family 'owned' the country revolts against the system were brutally crushed. Belgium grew rich at the expense of the people of Zaire.

#### **Patrice Lumumba is 'Bumped Off'**

The neo-colony Zaire, was set up in 1960. Its president, Patrice Lumumba, sought to unify the people and to cut links with foreign exploiters. He was 'bumped off' in an air crash, as was Samora Machel of Mozambique twenty years later. With the help of the USA's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) Mobutu took over in 1965. He was the main collaborator of the French and American agents in Zaire. Foreign mining companies from America, Canada, Belgium, France and South Africa's Anglo American Corporation, de Beers and the SA Railways backed Mobutu and jointly exploited the mining operation in the country. Revolts of workers against slave-like existence and starvation wages were put down violently.

In all these years the economy was managed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Foreign settlers built up racist organisations to protect their interests. Among poor Zaireans they enjoyed a high standard of living. This they shared with their stooges while the masses were crowded into shanty-towns outside the cities.

#### **Huge Profits vs Massive Poverty**

Metal and diamond deposits brought

huge profits to the mining companies. This more than paid for the machinery and luxury needs of the settlers. Zaire always exported more than it imported. But its debts to foreign and local banks piled up. The country was never developed industrially; peasant farming was in a state of breakdown.

Kabila organised the opposition to Mobutu, who was hated by the masses. Kabila was thus able to attract much mass support. After the bloody slaughter in Rwanda-Burundi millions of Hutu people fled to Zaire, hoping to find refuge there. Kabila's support came mainly from the warlords, the Tutsi rulers of Rwanda-Burundi and from Museveni, president of Uganda. These allies of Kabila and the Tutsi supporters in Eastern Zaire were among the factions that caused harrowing killings, famine and sickness among the Hutu refugees. BBC reports from UNO peace-workers in the region reflect a position of Kabila's forces now embarking on whole-scale killing of Hutu refugees "as revenge for their past slaughter of Tutsis".

#### **The Hyenas and Vultures Descend on Zaire**

Both Kabila and Museveni were among the persons who attended talks with Mandela, Pahad & Co. in South Africa. Kabila refused to make any agreements with Mobutu. Mobutu had to go, said Kabila, who also played tough with Clinton and the USA, who tried to force Kabila to hold elections at once. Kabila refused to do so. De Beers and Anglo American were among the business hye-

nas who moved in even before Mobutu was out, to make sure of their mining rights in Zaire. Up to mid-June Kabila refused to make a deal with them. American, Canadian and French business hyenas and vultures scrambled over bleeding Zaire to clinch their deals. So far (mid-June) Kabila has held off, more so since France and America were Mobutu's main backers. Millions of battle-scarred, starving Zaireans are trying to pull their lives together. Runaway inflation has made the currency (the zaire) worthless. The Mandela-Mbeki 'peace' plan has, in one sense opened up the way for the safe reexploitation of Zaire's wealth.

#### **A 'Palace Revolution'**

Mass opposition to the Mobutu regime has been the base on which the Zairean 'Democratic Liberation Front' led by Kabila have relied for their take-over. Kabila & Co. are not a revolutionary force. If they fail to root out Mobutu's clique and simply continue where the robber-general left off Zaire would have undergone a sad 'palace revolution' - replacing one set of imperialism's collaborator with another. Zaire-Congo is surrounded by no fewer than nine other countries. The imperialist powers want 'peace' in the region to be able to exploit its great mineral wealth for immense profits. Mandela-Mbeki-Pahad are interested in stability there partly to cut off the flow of refugees southwards. This would make South Africa's refugee and squatter problems even more serious.

But Mandela and Mbeki acted mainly for



the USA, France and other industrial-mining giants. Kabila freed Zaire of Mobutu. But the Zairean Democratic Liberation Front under his leadership has not freed the Congolese people of the burden of national oppression, foreign domi-

nation and the evils of capitalist exploitation. Until imperialism is driven out of Africa there will be neither peace nor democracy in Zaire or any other African state.

## BACKGROUND TO THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS

**T**he International Monetary Fund, World Bank and General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (replaced in 1995 by the World Trade Organisation) are over 50 years old. Between them during the last twenty years they have succeeded in imposing neo-liberal policies on virtually the entire world. This in turn has resulted in a progressive lowering of the living standards of the majority of the world's population. There is massive unemployment; income distribution has become much more unequal; and working-class and poor people's incomes have fallen considerably. The richest 20 percent of the world's inhabitants receive at least 150 times more each year than the poorest 20 percent. The great majority of the world's population - 3.5 billion people - share only 5.6 percent of global income among them. In the "Third World", 1.3 billion people live on less than R3 a day, which puts them below the absolute poverty line.

Opinion seems to be convinced that the North (developed industrialised countries) gives aid to the South (developing countries) but despite the perceived large sums spent on bilateral and multilateral aid, the flow of capital from the South towards the industrial Northern countries is greater than the flow of capital from the industrial countries to the developing countries. The transfer is no accident. It is the result of a coherent set of decisions and part of a system of global relationships. The system has different names: neo-colonialism, imperialism, neo-liberalism, "new world order". But the reality that these various phrases

describe is the same: a reprehensible exploitation of human beings and natural resources.

### How Wealth Flows from the South to the North

(1) *Debt Repayment.* Debt repayment has become a permanent mechanism for transferring wealth from the peoples of the South to the dominant classes of the North. The commercial banks of the North, flush with surplus funds, offer enormous loans to the "Third World", which go to finance expanded state bureaucracies and enterprises as well as innumerable uneconomic projects, and

accompanied by the sweetener of kick-backs. Many Southern countries have fallen into the quagmire of external debt (eternal debt) which they have been unable to service.

The World Bank and IMF, coordinating the policies of the commercial banks, step in when countries are on the edge of default and offer the carrot of rescheduling with new loans, provided the countries accept the stick of "*structural adjustment*". Structural Adjustment Programmes, generally drawn up jointly by the IMF and World Bank, nearly always impose the same set of measures, such as currency devaluation, higher interest rates, import liberalisation, lower real wages, higher prices of basic goods and services, privatisation of State enterprises, drastic slimming down of public services through budget cuts and massive layoffs of workers. Fundamentally, indebted countries surrender their macro-economic policymaking to the World Bank and the IMF, reduce domestic consumption and production for local use, and expand production for export whilst liberalising imports. All these elements are manifesting themselves in a visible way in present South Africa. This has resulted in a sharp drop in living standards and a corresponding increase in the rate of poverty.

The expanded output of exports does not bring in adequate foreign exchange to resolve the debt crisis, partly because of the simultaneous increase in export commodities in the South. This leads to over-

supply and a crash in commodity prices, thus compounding the financial problem. In fact, prices of the South's exports have fallen relative to the prices of its imports. The North's loans to the South thus find their way immediately back to the North by way of trade deficits.

The total foreign debt of developing countries was \$567 billion in 1980; \$1086 billion in 1986; and \$1419 billion in 1992. In twelve years the total debt went up 250 percent. In the same period, interest payments amounted to \$771 billion, and principal payments \$891 billion. Total payments from the South over this twelve-year period amounted to \$1662 billion: **three times** what they owed in 1980. This arises from the fact that in order for the South to repay debts (at interest rates determined by the North) it is forced to take out new loans. In other words it is clear that the South has paid back over and over again what it owed. At the cost of untold suffering, the impact on nutrition, health, education, social services and incomes in debt-ridden countries has been sharply aggravated. Africa's average income has fallen to 1960s levels whilst Latin America's per capita income has dropped to the levels of 1980 or earlier.

There are numerous examples of "Third-World" countries that have been caught in this imperialist-instigated debt trap. To name but a few - Mexico, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Zaire, Morocco, Tanzania and, indeed,

South Africa. It is worthwhile studying these cases so that one has a clearer vision of how this conspiracy is affecting the greater part of humanity.

## (2) *Deteriorating Terms of Trade*

The North will do everything in its power not only to preserve the existing economic order but also to turn the clock back towards the era of direct colonialism. The main multilateral vehicle for this is the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The North shows little interest in reaching agreement on issues of great concern to the South, such as giving Southern products greater access to Northern markets. Instead it is focusing on eliminating existing restrictions or obligations imposed by governments of Southern countries on foreign companies, on the grounds that these are against *'free trade'*. It proposes that the services sector be liberalised to the extent that all GATT members must allow foreign service enterprises (in sectors such as banking, insurance, finance, professional services, media and culture) to set up base in their countries, and must give them *'national treatment'* the same as to local companies. Countries failing to do so could be subjected to retaliation not only against their services enterprises but also in relation to their export products. Such a threat of *'cross-sectoral retaliation'* would be discipline powerful enough to ensure compliance.

In another negotiating area, trade-related

investment measures (TRIMs), the North is proposing that the South be required to accept all applying foreign companies, and that current conditions for entry (such as limits to equity ownership, requirements for use of local materials or for level of exports) be abolished on the grounds that they are counter to *'free trade'*. As in the case of services, a country failing to follow the TRIMs agreement could be subjected not only to retaliation from other countries but also to cross-sectoral retaliation. This of course would put Southern countries in an almost inescapable bind.

The services and TRIMs proposals of the North spell a return to direct economic colonisation, where the North countries are given the right to trade with and invest in any country of their choice, with governments having little or no power to restrict their behaviour or impose obligations on them. It can also be predicted that in most South countries the local enterprises will be unable to withstand the challenge or onslaught of the North and the extent of foreign control and ownership of "Third-World" economies will significantly increase.

The indiscriminate adherence to a blanket *'free trade'* principle has done a great deal of harm to the South, as the colonial experience has shown. It does not take an expert to predict that when a strong party insists that a weaker party subject itself to the *'free flow of goods and*

*services, trade and investment'*, the weak party will grow even weaker whilst the majority of benefits accrue to the strong. Free trade is not necessarily fair; indeed it is usually unfair, unless both partners are of equal strength and gain mutually. To hold that free trade or free markets are beneficial to all is to take a merely ideological position, and not to state a self-evident truth.

Indeed, in another controversial area of GATT, trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs), the North is going counter to liberalisation and *'free trade'* by proposing that the South introduce or adopt strict patent and other related laws that would give strong protection to Northern companies or individuals, which own 99% of the world's existing patents. The Northern proposals would grant them monopoly rights over technology, thus enabling them to collect high rentier income (royalties).

This would curb the diffusion of technology or knowledge and thus prevent technological development in the South. This protectionism runs counter to the liberalisation the North advocates in the TRIMs and services negotiations, thus exposing the double standards in the Northern approach: liberalisation when it suits us, protectionism too if that suits us; the real underlying principle is pure self-interest.

Many Southern countries are against any accord on the new issues of services, investment and intellectual property be-

ing located in GATT or linked to the GATT system of regulations. They are particularly against the threat of the North making use of cross-retaliatory measures to discipline the South to fall in line. They are also opposed to moves by some Northern countries to expand the mandate and powers of GATT into a world trading organisation that would make it a world policeman on trade, investment and intellectual property issues within a GATT-style framework that would be detrimental to Southern interests.

Through the Uruguay round of GATT talks, industrialized countries prised open the economies of the South for the benefit of their companies. In essence, the North became a *'world economic policeman'* to enforce new rules that maximise the unimpeded operations of transnational corporations. The principle of *'free trade'*, that is, the absence of state interference and intervention or controls, was sought to apply internationally by the industrialized countries with the intention of penetrating the economies of Southern countries more effectively. This allows transnational companies to have sweeping rights not only to export to "Third-World" countries, but also to invest and set up base in these countries. This *'freedom'* is granted not only in manufacturing and agriculture but, as stated earlier, also in the service sectors. Behind the pseudo-scientific arguments about *"free trade"* is the stark and simple fact that the

industrial countries used GATT to enable them to greatly expand their monopoly powers over all possible areas and levels of the world economy and national economies. This also means that multinationals will penetrate sectors and areas in which at present locally-owned small and medium-sized firms predominate.

In January 1995, a new institution was established to supervise the new order. Appropriately referred to as "The Son of GATT" this new body, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), was to remedy those defects existing in the GATT agreements but, more important, to fine-tune aspects that result in further economic dominance by the countries in the North. The WTO sought, for example, to enlarge its domain so that it covered both investment and competition. The argument put forth was that if governments tolerate monopolies - or even run them themselves - they would discriminate against foreigners investing in their countries. One other aspect of the WTO's objective was to resist what was considered a looming hazard. Some countries in the South wanted to include labour and environmental standards in the trade rules, giving them the right to punish offenders with trade sanctions. One can draw one's own conclusion about whom this resistance is supposed to benefit - the rich capitalist North who have little regard for man or his environment in the poor South.

### Conclusion

The prevailing world order reflects the balance of power in the world. It was chiefly the United States that elaborated and introduced the present rules. And it is only the rich countries that have in a real sense participated in and influenced discussions about changes.

Multinational corporations have strengthened their predominance in both production and markets, controlling 70% of the world's trade and 75% of direct foreign investment. The largest multinationals have revenues higher than many countries' gross national products.

Political policy from the North has been carried out in the name of four main objectives: liberalisation (free movement of capital, opening of national markets to international competition); privatisation (of public companies and services); deregulation (of labour relations, and undermining social safeguards) and competition.

The major principle governing the North's relations with the South has been its competition interest in being assured of access to and control over the supplies of natural resources and raw materials, at prices and terms of trade mainly determined by the North for its commercial benefit. In return, it is also concerned that the South be open to importing the goods, investments and services of Northern institutions. And, worried about the increasingly intense rivalry

within the North itself, the North as a group is also determined to prevent too many new entrants into its club, by adopting protectionist measures, whether in relation to industrial goods from the South or to intellectual property rights regimes.

Throughout the developing world there is a consistent pattern: the IMF-World Bank reform package constitutes a coherent programme for economic and social collapse. Poverty has increased and per capita incomes dropped, with misery rising in most parts of the South. The "panaceas" being imposed, '*structural adjustment*' cum '*privatisation*' and '*free markets*' constitute an attempt to revert to a more direct form of economic colonisation while the Uruguay Round and liberalisation to the world market are the external aspects of the return to an international and national laissez-faire economic order - that is, the North alone should be free to do as it pleases in its trade and other relations with the South countries.

Trade and markets are not free in this system. The South is ever more dependent. The economic-related multilateral institutions, - the World Bank, IMF, GATT and the WTO must be assessed in the light of their respective roles in facilitating the process by which most "Third-World" countries become further trapped in economic dependence and misery.

In summary, under the banner of '*free*

*market*', '*free trade*', '*deregulation*', '*privatization*' and '*liberalisation*' the ideology encompassed in GATT calls for maximising the freedoms and resources to be given to companies to operate, whilst minimising the role of governments either to participate in economic activity or to regulate the behaviour and effects of the companies. What the South should be fighting for is fair trade not free trade. What it needs is an international economic order that recognises and caters to its development needs - the need to produce so as to satisfy the basic and human requirements of its people; the need for greater social equity, and ecologically harmonious forms of development.

The Northern economic model and its variants, transmitted to the South through '*development*', have given rise to the environment crisis. A very large part of this crisis was generated in the post-Second World War period, when the multilateral (and bilateral) development-related agencies were established. From an ecological perspective we recognise, in retrospect, that the chemical-dependent modern agricultural systems pushed onto the South (by the World Bank, among others) were fundamentally flawed; that the destruction of forests and fishery resources (again with technical and financial aid provided by development agencies) have both ecological and long-term economic negative effects; and that the modern systems of transportation, building and construction and industry (made possible at least partly

by aid and wrong advice) are wasteful of energy and other resources, and manifest a high-level lifestyle which, given ecological awareness, will rapidly be widely seen to be both disastrous and obsolete.

A long-term plan to reduce economic inequities and to resolve ecological problems is the only viable way to enable humanity and earth to survive peacefully

and harmoniously. But the long term must begin now, especially since the problems of poverty and ecology are both acute and need immediate action. Progressive forces in the world must unite, guard against multi-nationals, the G-7 governments and their tools and above all find solutions for a new social order in this world.

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## THE QUESTION OF ENTITLEMENT

**W**hen leading public and political figures like Desmond Tutu and Tokyo Sexwale and leaders of the South African Civic Association (SANCO) appeal to residents in townships to pay rents, housing loans and service charges for electricity, water and refuse removals they urge people not to adopt a feeling of ENTITLEMENT: "I deserve this. I am entitled to it". Tutu and company adapt the words of J F Kennedy for the South African situation: ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for the new, democratic South Africa. The appeal is directed at people who are just managing to survive in an environment of low wages, unemployment and increasing costs.

Tutu, Sexwale and company should rather direct their appeal for people to rid themselves of feelings of entitlement to all those in Government - central, provincial and local, in parastatals and public authorities who use every device to enrich themselves at the expense of taxpayers. They should also direct their appeal against entitlement at those who are exploiting the space created by "affirmative action" and "black empowerment" to build financial empires and become multi-millionaires while the residents in townships struggle to survive and millions live in shacks.

What feeling other than entitlement leads to the following actions?

The Deputy Speaker in Parliament obtains her driver's licence through the influence of the Mpumalanga member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Safety and Security. She claims she did not have the time to stand in queues and follow the normal procedures that all other citizens have to follow to obtain licences. She feels that

the time spent on her parliamentary duties entitled her to use a route that would get her a licence in the shortest possible time.

The very Mpumalanga MEC for Safety and Security involved in the above incident runs up huge travel and accommodation expenses. This worthy MEC insists there is nothing wrong with using State funds to live as he is entitled to because of his political office.

A *Sunday Times* report (May 18 1997) says that the MEC admitted booking himself into luxury hotels in Johannesburg in spite of living in one of its suburbs. He also used helicopters paid for by the Provincial Government to attend relatives' funerals in rural areas (townships) at a cost of R29 000,00.

The Chief Executive Officer, the co-chairman and some Councillors of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) manipulate the IBA budget, visa card and other credit facilities for their personal gain and to enjoy the good life. Feelings

of entitlement are taken to new highs or lows by the IBA officials.

These three cases are an extremely small proportion of the number of instances where persons who have been elected or appointed to public office - where their salaries and perks are paid from taxpayers' funds - have exploited or manipulated finances to enrich themselves. In the majority of cases the path that led to

fraud and corruption started from the feeling of entitlement.

The number of cases of fraud committed during the three short years after 1994 are horrendous. It is difficult to keep count but each new case confirms the public perception that the government is incapable of eradicating crime and corruption.

### OLYMPIC BID HOAX

**T**wo recent developments suggest that the members of the Cape Town 2004 Olympic Bid Company are no longer completely confident that Cape Town will get the majority of votes needed to host the 2004 Olympic games.

The utterly bizarre "marriage" between Cape Flats gangsters and the Community Olympic Liaison Company with the approval of the Cape Town Olympic Bid Company (BIDCO) shows that in their desperation they will stoop to any means to get votes. Rather than increasing Cape Town's chances as an Olympic city their exercise of setting thieves to deal with other thieves will surely expose the city to International ridicule. The fact that Brian Williams the former Trade Union Activist brokered the "marriage" makes the episode even more bizarre.

For those who oppose the bid this exercise is proof that, rather than spend money on eradicating crime, business interests in BIDCO are prepared to have dealings with criminals. The gangsters have already exploited their support for the Cape Town 2004 Olympics by visiting schools, thereby raising their profiles with impressionable youth. If the incidence of crime in the centre of Cape Town does decline, who will be able to claim the credit for it - the police or the criminals?

And have the goons on the Bid Company not asked themselves why the gangsters are so eager for Cape Town to host the games? Just as businessmen are anticipating new avenues for profit so the gangsters also are anticipating new avenues for smuggling in and selling their merchandise. So businessmen and gangsters have a common interest - profit.

Secondly, the reasons for the establishment of a Committee of Cabinet Ministers with the brief of influencing International Olympic Committee (IOC) voting members to

vote for Cape Town are open to speculation.

Does a committee of such high-profile political figures imply that the Cape town 2004 Olympic Bid Company (BIDCO), even with the help of the National Olympic Committee of South Africa (NOCOSA), is not capable of winning sufficient votes for Cape Town? Is this another act of desperation?

What does the establishment of the Cabinet Committee say about what Government hopes to get out of Cape Town's hosting the Olympic Games? In 1994 the Government of National Unity was convinced that billions of rands would flow into South Africa in investments, foreign aid, foreign purchase of shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and tourism. Has this not happened? And is the hope now being placed in the 2004 Olympics? Will the billions of rands now flow into South Africa through increased tourism?

Or is the Government looking for a super event that will once more focus the eyes of all South Africans and of the world on South Africa just as the Rugby World Cup Competition did? Sport has now become

the opiate of the people. If Cape Town becomes the Olympic city in September 1997 then for the next, at least, seven years to 2004 South Africans will forget about their problems and talk only about THE GAMES. Is this the hope of Government?

And then one last whispered speculation, and it's not a maybe. Do some sharp thinkers in the Western Cape African National Congress not perhaps see getting the games for Cape Town through a Cabinet Committee of mainly ANC members together with the weight of President Mandela and Vice President Thabo Mbeki as the secret weapon to win the Western Cape in the 1999 elections? If the Cabinet Committee, together with the group of members of Parliament, together with the President and Deputy President - all mainly ANC - can bring the games to Cape Town the victory can be turned into Voters in 1999. Is this another act of desperation? Who knows? We can all only speculate.

*\* In a mass opinion poll conducted by the Cape Community Newspapers 76.67% of the community voted AGAINST holding the Games in Cape Town in 2004.*

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## AILMENTS IN HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**D**uring the struggle against the apartheid regime people demanded proper health care and social services for all. In the run-up to the "democratic" elections in April 1994 the ANC promised the masses all those things which would give rise to better health for all, namely: a free, accessible and adequate health-care system; proper social security for the needy; jobs and houses for all and other essential factors such as safe drinking water and sewage disposal. These are some of the things that the masses fought for and for which many died.

Now let us look at the reality. Has the new "democratic" government and the 9 new provincial governments fulfilled these promises?

Free health care was introduced amidst a great fanfare. And with this went the government's commitment to primary health care (PHC). Under the pretext of building up PHC beds staff and money have been taken away from the large, tertiary hospitals - a process begun before 1994 but carried on with considerable enthusiasm by the new government. In addition, other hospitals have been closed as sacrifices to PHC. But is this the answer to the health problems of the people?

### Primary Health Care - Panacea for all ills?

The authorities have decided that primary health care (PHC) should be made available to all. With this we have no quarrel. But let us consider the following facts:

1. Primary health care starts with food, piped water, sanitation, shelter and employment. Without these primary health

care will not succeed in improving health, even with the best will in the world. All indications are that the Reconstruction and Development Programme is that in name only. The government has neither the will nor the wherewithal to improve living conditions and standards.

2. The national health budget as a proportion of total government expenditure is being effectively reduced year by year. Further reductions in the budgets of the large, tertiary care centres are expected over the next 5 years to pay for primary health care. In the words of one administrator: "The move is towards strengthening primary health care and shifting emphasis away from specialised curative hospital-based care".

3. There is a strong belief that primary health care will reduce the need for secondary and tertiary health services. Dr S Kariem, secretary ANC Health Department, Western Cape Region puts his party's position thus: "By increasing expenditure at a primary level [and reducing] the incidence of diseases which

cause complications, the secondary and tertiary levels of care that our centres of excellence are world-renowned for will not be required" (*Argus*, 10.11.95). This is the height of naïveté. It is a fallacy designed to deliberately mislead the people. One of the major tasks of PHC is to identify those patients in cities and rural areas who require secondary and tertiary level treatment. Extending health services and making them accessible to people who have not had the benefit of them in the past must uncover greater numbers of patients who require secondary and tertiary care. More, not fewer, patients will therefore be channelled into the health system with a proportionate increase in the numbers requiring more sophisticated care.

Extending PHC to all is, as we have already stated, a praiseworthy undertaking. But this should not be allowed to happen at the expense of the secondary and tertiary structures that already exist in South Africa. Why sacrifice on the altar of PHC academic institutions which are among the best in the world? In reality, however, PHC is being used as a pretext to starve the entire health and social system of funds. It is politically expedient for the government to build community health centres as symbols of what the new political order has done for people. These are visible institutions which, even if they are understaffed and functioning inadequately, can be used by the politicians to win votes in the 1999 elections.

Horrible stories of long queues with the sick and aged being turned away from primary, secondary and tertiary hospitals; poor and often non-existent ambulance services and one terminally ill person dying in a wheel-barrow have made the news over the past year or two. These are the direct result of the government's cutting expenditure to these essential institutions of the poor and needy. Moreover, as the cost of living climbs day by day and survival becomes more and more difficult, Minister Fraser-Moleketi has deemed it necessary to reduce the grant for needy children from a meagre R135 to a paltry R75 per month! She has resisted all petitions and demonstrations against this Act by desperate mothers and has stated defiantly that she will go ahead. It is easy for her to speak - she receives about R40 000 every month from the gravy train, while her husband, Minister of Finance in the Gauteng legislature, gets gravy to the tune of approximately R30 000 per month excluding perks!

THE ENTIRE HEALTH SYSTEM IS BEING STARVED OF FUNDS, STAFF AND EQUIPMENT. SOCIAL SERVICES AND EDUCATION LIKEWISE ARE AFFECTED BY MASSIVE CUTS IN SPENDING. WHY IS THIS SO?

What we are witnessing is a general assault on the living standards of the poor. This includes depriving them of proper health care, social services and education. This is part of a policy of the big imperialist countries like the USA, the EEC countries and Japan for creating a "new world



order" in which every country has to submit to this iron control. This is achieved through threats of economic sanctions and withholding or withdrawing financial aid and loans and other forms of assistance. When this fails to bring "renegade" countries into line trade blockades are imposed such as the one used against Cuba. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) are the main instruments used by imperialism. These agencies wield tremendous economic and, therefore, political power. They have devised a special policy for "Third-World" countries called the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) which is an anti-social programme designed to keep poor nations under the heel of the big industrial cartels. The ESAP consists of a number of parts all of them created to increase exploitation of the victim nation, thus increasing suffering and hardship among its people. One of the elements of ESAP is to reduce all social services to the poor and to make people PAY for adequate health care and education. Services to the poor are being broken down while the wealthy can still get first-class health services at one of the many private clinics and hospitals that are being allowed to mushroom all over the country. Those who can afford it receive the best and to hell with the rest! Sadly, it appears that the poor are being fobbed off with a poor "PHC" service while also being deprived of adequate secondary and tertiary care.

### **Private Medicine**

The wealthy continue to be treated at private hospitals by specialists using the best equipment money can buy. Patients are seen quickly and do not have to endure the indignities and dangers of long queues and overcrowded waiting rooms.

### ***Who Pays for Private Medicine in South Africa?***

The taxpayer does. The poor have to pay large amounts of Value Added Tax (VAT) on many essential purchases as well as transport, municipal and other services. The taxpayer pays for private hospitals through the huge subsidies with which the government supports medical aid schemes, and with the huge tax rebates given to these institutions on all "expenditure", including salaries, equipment, motor cars, furniture and so forth.

### ***What is the Government Doing about the Private Doctor?***

With the massive contribution that the government (on behalf of the people of South Africa) makes to private health services it should be in its power to rationalise or nationalise this sector. But what have the authorities done? NOTHING! Nothing to stop the proliferation of private hospitals; nothing to stop the duplication of facilities; nothing to stop the spiralling costs of these private health services even though tremendous pressure is being placed on the medical aid funds as a result. While the authorities have been closing public hospitals and reducing staff and equipment in centres where the poor are being treated, it is doing nothing

at all to curtail services to the rich. Those who can afford it will be able to buy the best medical services while the poor will have to be satisfied with third-rate facilities and health care. The wealthy command a same-day service but the poor must wait. Their time and health, it would appear, are not important.

### **Can the Cubans Solve the Problem?**

We have great respect for the Cuban health and social systems and we have no doubt that their medical graduates are well trained. But is importing hundreds of them to work in understaffed areas really the answer? Have any steps been taken to provide incentives for doctors (and engineers, architects, teachers, technologists, plumbers, bricklayers etc. etc?) to work in the rural areas? Medical graduates in South Africa are faced with a debt of between R70 000 and R90 000 by the time they qualify. They have difficulty repaying this sum on a junior doctor's salary in South Africa. Many leave for countries like Britain where they earn sufficient to pay back these loans. Some return, others do not. Why not write off or reduce the debts of those prepared to spend, say, 2 years in the rural areas? Importing Cuban doctors is merely dealing with the symptoms and not the cause of the problem. Why are university fees so high? The sons and daughters of the working classes are excluded from tertiary education on this basis alone. What are the responsibilities of the government in this regard? These questions need to be resolved as part of a coherent plan for health in South Africa.

Why not do away with the huge bureaucracies that purport to govern this country? Cabinet ministers are paid more in South Africa than in many, more wealthy, European countries. There are more members of government than in almost any other country of similar population size. The rulers receive huge salaries, motor cars, houses and a host of other perks too numerous to list. They continue to pay pensions to the oppressors of the past who live in luxury off the fat of the land (and the poor majority). Not satisfied, they have extended the gravy train by co-opting "tribal leaders" and numerous local authorities. We must ask ourselves who are more important to the people of South Africa: these bureaucrats who do not say a word in Parliament (when they take the trouble to attend, which by all accounts appears to be rarely) and who perform no useful social function, OR health workers treating, investigating or operating on a poor patient in a hospital? There is no doubt in our minds who is the more socially valuable. WHY NOT REDUCE THE NUMBER OF CARRIAGES AND THE AMOUNT OF GRAVY ON THE TRAIN AND REDIRECT THESE FUNDS INTO HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION AND HOUSING? WHY NOT REFUSE TO PAY OFF THE DEBTS OF THE APARTHEID GOVERNMENT AND USE THESE VAST SUMS OF MONEY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF THE POOR?

### **Conclusion**

Finally, it must be said that for as long as the government permits food prices to



increase beyond the reach of the poor worker and unemployed, deficiency diseases will remain with us. For as long as the majority of the population is without piped water and proper sewage disposal and live in overcrowded hovels, infectious diseases will be with us. For as long as the government lacks the political power and will to nationalise the entire health system and to deploy resources from both the public and the private sectors, including manpower, to those areas where they are most needed, the gaps between rich and poor and urban and rural will grow ever wider. For as long as the government attempts to solve its economic problems by reducing the number of health workers and teachers in a country with a rapidly growing popula-

tion, diseases caused by incompetence, ignorance and superstition will flourish.

To quote from an excellent letter to the Editor of *The Argus* (12.10.95) by Dr John Roos:

"And while children and old folk are turned away from bankrupt hospitals, billions of rands earmarked for unfulfilled RDP promises lie dormant, all in the name of social upliftment. Once all of our health care toys lie finally broken, there is little doubt that the honourable minister (of Health) and colleagues will continue to satisfy their own health care needs in the luxury of private hospitals, and while being tube fed gravy, will look to United Nations aid packages to provide 'affordable and accessible' primary health care to the 'liberated' masses."

#### **"UNITY" SPORT HAS KILLED PEOPLE'S SPORT DARK DEALINGS INSIDE 'UNITY' CAMP**

**The South African Council on Sport (SACOS) held a meeting in Cape Town on Saturday 3 May 1997. About 30 persons attended, representing Tennis, Swimming, Rugby, Volleyball, Soccer, Malmesbury Council on Sport and Western Province Council on sport. The full Executive Committee was also present. The Agenda comprised a range of topics from the 2004 Olympic Bid to School Sport. An item arising out of the Chairman's opening address was discussed at some length. Its scope and implications went beyond sport and it should be of interest to members of the Movement in particular.**

Extensive media reports have appeared concerning great dissatisfaction in the various "united" codes of sport. Ex-SACOS codes, now members of white-controlled sports bodies, have diverse grievances which reflect their disillusionment with a sports system which they trustingly believed would lead to a new, fair and inclusive deal for disadvantaged sportspersons in South Africa. The old SACOS officials and administrators who acted as the chief agents for white-dominated sport have created their own comfort zones in various sports structures. They now hold highly-paid positions with lucrative perks.

Their erstwhile, still disadvantaged, members complain that they have been deserted and little or nothing is being done to guard their interests and uplift them.

There has been an alarming deterioration particularly in rural sport. Thousands of once-active sportspersons all over the country now form part of the spectator hordes who make it possible for the sport stars to earn fabulous amounts of money. School sport is flourishing in the schools for the privileged class while it is virtually dead in schools which were provided with regular sport under the leadership of members of SAPSSA and SASSSA in the townships. These two bodies, it should be mentioned, were destroyed in order to make way for USSASA because they believed in genuine non-racial sport, not for the new elites but for the children of the workers. In rugby the disgruntled group set up a structure to voice their dissatisfaction. They have stated, among other things: "Racism still exists particularly in player selection and there is a lack of genuine development programmes and financial support in the disadvantaged areas". Development of the under-privileged was one of the most important pre-conditions attached to unity.

How naïve to have believed that those who were responsible for a structured denial of human rights would now, miraculously, be transformed into caring individuals concerned about the disadvantaged and under-privileged! It should also be noted that a radical change in the sports structures is not on the agenda of

the "rebels". They are reformists busy rearranging the furniture in the same house and bringing in well-padded easy chairs for their own use.

What happened next was predictable. The "rebel" leader handed over to Steve Tshwete Minister of Sport a dossier of irregularities he had compiled while he was holding the high position of Vice President in the Transvaal Rugby Union of Dr Luyt. Tshwete accepted it with alacrity and decided there and then to appoint a commission to "investigate" SARFU. The rebel leader did not bother to establish whether he and the Minister had the same Agenda. Then those who had literally and figuratively been bought over by SARFU spontaneously(?) decided, as ex-SARFU members, to react. They closed ranks and declared their loyalty to SARFU and found the rebels guilty of "divisive actions" and said they "supported the structures in place". Next, the NSC sent a letter to their members forbidding them to attend the rebels' meeting. They called them "mischief-makers" and proclaimed that the NSC were the architects of unity and would like to do all (sic) possible to sustain unity in the sports federations". The Border Rugby Union then joined in, ironically claiming to represent the "disadvantaged rugby people of Border". They called the rebel leader "a power-drunk opportunist" (the pot and the kettle?) and said that the rebels' meeting was "irresponsible and against the unity for which we fought" For good measure the rebels were termed "renegades".



It is hoped that the events outlined above will give members some food for thought. SACOS officially opposed the unity process. Its affiliates and their ordinary members, by virtue of their autonomy in a co-ordinating structure, trustingly decided to engage in "unity" talks, encouraged by the information that political negotiations were imminent and would lead, purportedly, to the birth of a new democratic South Africa: a South Africa in which there would be sports provision for the benefit of ALL. Did they not realise that they were participants in a process to betray the struggle for true non-racial sport? Collaboration started at this point. As events have unfolded it has become clear that collaboration or partnership is not a single act but the start of a process. It is followed by cooption (Concise Oxford: elect to committee, etc. by votes of existing members: its old but, in this case, apt meaning) This refers, specifically, to the officials and administrators mentioned above who were elected in all haste onto committees.

Then we have assimilation (to make like, the same as) when you identify with the aims and objectives of the body and become indistinguishable from the old officials (ref. the pigs in 'Animal Farm' who afterwards were not different from the cruel farmers that they replaced). Finally we have appropriation (take, own, take over) when you now make the organisation, procedures, etc. your own. The parties mentioned in the preceding paragraph are vehement, even venomous and savage, in defending the Rugby Union and other sports federations which they have now made their own. The Luyts are sitting with their arms folded while the new elites defend their organisations. The president of the NSC is also senior vice president of the SARFU. Lily-white South African teams are now referred to as **our** boys and "**we** really played well today". In the place of 'sports' we can read "economics or economic policy" or "education" etc. legacies which also now "owned" by the ex-liberation force.



**ABANTU BEBANYE ABOSOZE BOYISWE!**  
**ABANTU BEMUNYE ABASOZE BEHLULWE!**

**A PEOPLE UNITED WILL NEVER BE  
 DEFEATED!**

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