



APDUSA VIEWS

FEBRUARY 1985

THE SUPER BUNGLERS

1. INTRODUCTION:

South Africa is presently in the grips of a severe economic crisis. The price of gold has dropped to about 300 dollars an oz.; the Rand has shrunk to about half the value of the United States dollar thereby increasing the price of goods bought from overseas; the price of petrol has been increased by 40% and the rate of inflation in South Africa is 4 to 5 times the inflationary rate of its main trading partners. Some 3 million workers are out of employment and it is predicted that if the present trends continue the number of unemployed will reach staggering proportions by the end of the year.

2. HARDEST HIT:

As is the case always in an economic crisis, the poor are hit the hardest. As if unemployment and the drought were not curses enough, the prices of all basic goods and services will rocket. Already bus fares have been increased; train fares for third class compartments have shot up by 30%. People have now to pay more for paraffin which is used to provide warmth, light and heat for cooking. Soon the price of bread, mealie-meal, milk and all other basic commodities will follow suit.

It is clear that those who have usurped the right to govern this country do not have a shred of humanity left in them. While voting themselves obscenely high salaries, they have no compunction in manipulating prices in such a way that the burden of the economic crisis falls most heavily on the poorest sections of the people.

For the poor life has always been one long nightmare of grinding poverty. Now it will be worse-increased hunger and colder nights. The first casualties will be the young and the old and the sick. Death will be working overtime in reaping its grim harvest.

3. THE CULPRITS:

It is wrong to place blame for this state of affairs on this or that Minister, no matter how odious that individual may have been. No Minister takes important decisions on his own. There is the Cabinet and the Government Caucus.

There is the Economic Advisory Council comprising "experts" from the White Establishment. On the informal level there is constant consultation between the "captains of industry" and the Government. And there is the semisecret "Business Bond".

Therefore if blame is to be attached, then let it be evenly apportioned among the entire ruling class, the main components of which are the Government, the Opposition parties, the mine and factory owners, the big farmers and the "experts".

4. CAUSES OF CRISIS:

In general, economic crises are inherent in all capitalist economies where production is undertaken for profit and not for use. There are BUSINESS CYCLES of Booms, followed by Recessions, then Recovery and again Booms. In extreme cases Recessions lead to Depressions e.g. the Great Depression of 1929.

In South Africa the Business Cycle is made worse by the crippling cost of APARTHEID. To enforce and uphold apartheid cost this country R2700 million every year. Add to this the enormous cost of the military establishment whose primary function is to defend the apartheid system.

According to 1982/3 Budget, the people of South Africa have had to pay R8 million A DAY for the Defence Force.

It is apartheid which gives the average White a standard of living second to none in the world. Where colour and not merit counts, corruption becomes ingrained in the values of the ruling class. The rulers are not shy about dipping their hands in the public till. Theft of large sums of money by persons in high office takes place with sickening regularity. People like Escom's "Dr" Rademeyer represent no more than the tip of the iceberg.

Those billions of rands thrown down the bottomless pits of apartheid have been earned by the sweat and labour of the workers and landless peasants. No economy can bear the strains of such wastage without giving way to cracks.

5. THE SUPER BUNGLERS:

Corruption and parasitism go hand in hand with incompetence and bungling. Human relations in South Africa have been fouled up by the racist philosophy. Diplomatic bungling has earned South Africa the title of "The Polecat". In spite of all the favourable factors-high degree of industrialization, abundance of precious and strategic minerals, a highly developed agricultural sector-the economy has been thoroughly mismanaged.

Only Super Bunglers could have achieved this feat.

6. THE MOMENT OF TRUTH:

The present crisis has once again highlighted two important truths:-

(a) The ruling class is UNFIT to rule the country.

(b) Nothing short of a complete overhaul of the present system will be required to solve the basic problems facing the people.

7. CONCLUSION:

A crisis is a moment of truth and one of its important consequence is that major contradictions in society become sharper. Faced with starvation and seeing no respite in sight the people will be receptive to fundamental solutions to escape from their plight. Therefore it is essential to drive home the only solution available to them. viz. the full franchise in a single parliament. The full franchise means POLITICAL POWER- the power to control their own destiny; the power to decide how the wealth which THEY produce must be distributed and it means the power to sweep the Super Bunglers on to the dust heap of history.

A SONG

When the house of a great one collapses
Many little ones are slain
Those who had no share in the good fortunes of the mighty
Often have a share in their misfortunes
The plunging wagon Drags the sweating oxen with it
Into the abyss.

- Bertolt Brecht.

Published by:

AFRICAN PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC UNION OF S.A. (NATAL)
Unity Movement
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