

# Namibia: WRP election successes

*Workers Revolutionary Party to Rebuild the Fourth International is a member of the Workers International for the Rebuilding of the Fourth International.*

*Its leadership emanated from the liberation struggle of Namibia and were part of the socialists in the SWAPO Youth League, which in 1976 unsuccessfully challenged the SWAPO Leadership for all-encompassing corruption and imperialist collaboration due to imperialist intervention.*

*In 1984 we started building our party clandestinely and stood in the forefront of the struggle against the terror campaign and mass killings of SWAPO members by the SWAPO leadership in exile in Angola and Zambia.*

*In 1988 our party called out the mass protests of 4 May 1988 against South Africa just prior to independence obtained in 1989.*

*Since 1990 we have fought on all fronts on issues wracking the working class and the colonial status quo maintained by the colonial ruling classes through a caretaker boss-boy SWAPO regime.*

*We dealt with trade union issues, the homeless, the landless and workers who were in struggle over the past 24 years.*

*We participated in elections to articulate a workers programme and self-determination for national groups.*

*We did not stand in the 2009 elections due to our work with mass workers groups such as the TCL miners whose pensions were stolen, teachers who were being pauperized, fuel workers who were being brutalized, the Truth and Justice Committee seeking historical restitution of history and the landless*

whom the regime sought to bulldoze after they had taken their land by themselves.

We took part in the 28 November 2014 general elections, incorporating former soldiers of South Africa who were forcefully conscripted during the colonial era and whose pensions were stolen by the SWAPO regime, and won two seats in the National Assembly to the consternation of the bourgeoisie.

The media speculate on how a party which has not made one rally or campaigned could obtain such a high number of votes and for that matter a communist party.

Our votes varied between 1.5 and 2% over this vast country (1,600 km north to south, from central Namibia to north west 1,600 km, east to west 800 km.)

Our votes came mostly from organized groups and from supporters of our work over 24 years.

(We plan to produce a fuller report on the Namibian election campaign and results in the next issue of Workers' International Press – Editor)

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**Urgent appeal for assistance**  
**from the Workers**  
**Revolutionary Party of**

# Namibia.



## **WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY TO REBUILD THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

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**14 December 2014**

### **INTERNATIONAL APPEAL**

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*Our votes came mostly from organized groups and from supporters of our work over 24 years.*

*Unlike the bourgeois parties we immediately establish contact with our voters and supporters to organize and to consult.*

*The Workers International supported us financially with their support crucial to our success over this vast country.*

*We now face a problem with a shortage of funds for follow-up work which is crucial for consolidation. We herewith appeal internationally for further support of at least one-thousand British pounds to sustain our work.*

*We further need to put out our own paper "The Worker"*

*nationally to counteract the incessant attacks by the bourgeois media which seeks to portray us as unrealistic and misrepresent us.*

*We need to bring our true history to the regions through our branches and we are now in a position to take the next step to join the United Front with the NUMSA in South Africa.*

*At the moment there is no way in which we can meet the costs for this work ourselves until we have established proper organization.*

*You can donate to the following bank directly:*

- *Bank of Scotland*
- *Miss Eva-Panduleni Beukes*
- *Sort: 80-45-13*
- *Account No: 10164363*

*or send cheques made out to EP Beukes to P0 Box 68375, London E7 7DT*

*Hewat Beukes,*

*Leader.*

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## **ELECTION MANIFESTO FOR NAMIBIA 2014**

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061-260647 [jacobusjosob@gmail.com](mailto:jacobusjosob@gmail.com)**

## **Introduction**

We are using the 2014 elections to propagate the following enlightenment for the working people of this country:

On 13 November 1970, the Namibian nation called together the National Convention at Rehoboth where national groups were represented by their respective leaders including the SWANU and SWAPO. It was to be a united front for the liberation of Namibia from South Africa. In January 1971 the UNO declared – SWAPO a tribal organization – the Sole and Authentic Representative of the Namibian People, thereby rendering void the right to self-determination of the Namibian People.

The UNO subsequently revoked the representative status of the leaders of the different national groups and thus opened the way for the South African sponsored Turnhalle Conference in 1975 and the Conscription Act in 1977.

We the present leaders of the WRP – then leaders of the Youth League – with others led the Anti-Conscription movement, which was opposed by the SWAPO leadership in exile.

The Anti-Conscription movement led to mutiny within the SWATF and soldiers who escaped fled into exile to Angola and Zambia where they were forced to confess to being spies and all of them were killed.

In 1982 the “Five Western Powers” with South Africa and the UNO agreed to so-called National Reconciliation in which the South African sponsored parties would reconcile to leave the colonial economic situation as is.

SWAPO willingly reconciled with the colonial ruling classes, but seized N\$36 million of the SWATF/KOEVOET pension. These soldiers were demobilized and immediately became victim of Labour Hire and dire exploitation as part of the lower working classes.

*The SWAPO leaders now use their phony liberation status to refuse to give back the stolen pensions.*

*The SWATF/KOEVOET represent in every respect the plight of the working classes of Namibia.*

*For this reason, we the WRP have integrated this group of soldiers to give them the respectable political home which they deserve.*

***Our election campaign is based on the following:***

- 1. We, the WRP, go to Parliament to speak over the heads of the bourgeois parliament, to the masses of the people. We have no regard for the Namibian Parliament as it is an institution of capitalism and in a backward country like this it takes absurd forms in which it is a mere rubber stamp for legislation and decisions of the big corporations and the banks. We cannot speak of taking over parliament as the elections have already been rigged with inaccessible electronic voting machines made in India.*
- 2. We are using these elections to advance the demands of the working class including the poor peasantry and in particular the demands of the SWATF/KOEVOET families and relatives, in relation to stolen pensions, loss of income and losses in general through economic sanctions, marginalization, victimization and discrimination, landlessness and homelessness.*
- 3. We will articulate and support the demands of the Herero and Nama people for War reparations for Genocide (1904-8) from the German State.*
- 4. We will put forward the seizure of our Natural Resources to enable us to fund the upliftment of the working class and poor peasantry in general and the neglected SWATF/KOEVOET soldiers in particular.*

5. We will put forward the immediate cessation of the wanton sale of our natural resources through Exploration Licenses (EPL's) with seizure of it without compensation, to enable us to fund the upliftment of the working class and poor peasantry.
6. The demands of the SWATF/KOEVOET will also highlight the demands of the working class in general.
7. We will further advance the demand for basic needs of the working class families to be provided and subsidized by the government on the first tier level (Municipalities), housing, water and electricity, public transport, clinics, kindergartens, sport and recreation facilities, etc to be brought to the people.
8. We will advance taxation for excesses and demand **living** wages tied to the rate of inflation (and not minimum wages).
9. We will demand land to the landless and subsidies for the upliftment of the poor peasantry.
10. We commit ourselves to rebuild the 4th International with the world's working classes, the subregional working classes of Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia and in particular South Africa with which we share a common political history.

**Hewat Beukes**

Authorised Representative.

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**In Response to the SA**



# Metalworkers union's "Movement for Socialism" proposal

*HEWAT BEUKES, a leader of Workers International, previously a member of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) Youth League and now in opposition to the Namibian SWAPO government, interviewed TANGENI NUUKUAWO, a leader of the 1971-72 general strike and also formerly a member of the SWAPO Youth League. This is an extract from the book ["Movement for Socialism"](#)*

*In the first chapter of "Trade Union Struggles for Freedom in South Africa" (page 43 in this book) there is a reference to the 1971-72 general strike in Namibia (then South West Africa) being a prelude to the strike wave in Durban in 1973. The Namibian strike also profoundly affected the freedom movement when 4,000 youth joined the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) in exile.*

*The South West African Native Labour Association (SWANLA) was formed in 1943 by the South Africa colonial government for the purpose of herding workers from the north of Namibia to work in the mines in the south.*

*Under the so-called contract system, workers were gathered together in Ondangua and then driven down to Grootfontein where their assigned bosses would collect them. The compulsory contract was for 18 months. Over time the entire commercial, small industrial, mining and agricultural sectors would be fed by contract labour.*

*Tangeni experienced this himself and remembers his father who was a labourer in Walvis Bay. He was employed on compulsory 18-month contracts, during which time he could not come home*

and his wife was not allowed to visit him. Tangeni obtained a permit to visit his father in the compound, but for only one hour at lunchtime.

The beds were concrete slabs protruding from the wall, one on top of the other. Rooms were small for two to four occupants, but during the return of seasonal workers these were overcrowded. The food was the same day after day for 18 months; lunch consisted of porridge with either meat or fish relish, and breakfast consisted of brown bread with jam.

It was slave conditions, performing back-breaking labour without sitting down for more than eight hours a day. Workers developed back problems and illnesses arising from the unsanitary conditions. If you became sick you lost your job.

Many Angolans were contracted. They were much cheaper than the Namibians. Mostly illiterate, they suffered even worse abuse and exploitation. Many lost their lives due to being killed on farms with no relatives to enquire and question their whereabouts. They were slaughtered.

The inhuman conditions built up frustration and resentment to breaking point amongst the vast number of workers housed in large compounds especially in the urban areas, and in 1971 the anger boiled over into a general strike which started on 13 December 1971 and ended on 20 January 1972.

The organisation was underground with the leaders explaining to the workers concentrated in the compounds that their situation could only be changed through political struggle. They needed to overthrow the system. They demanded amongst others:

- the right to free movement;
- better wages and better conditions of work;
- the pass book to be replaced by an I.D.;
- the right to negotiate for pay and to choose their own employers.

However, finally the only change brought about by the strike was the shortening to six months of the compulsory period before returning home to see their families.

Nevertheless the strike had a heavy impact on the economy. Production went down in mines and fishing, also farms were unattended. Most important, it gave way to political organisation and awareness. The colonial regime transported many workers back to the north, but they returned as organised workers, and as a token of defiance and freedom they cut a large section of the border fence between Namibia and Angola.

Before the strike, political organisation was loose. The SWAPO Youth League consisted of unstructured individuals. The Strike gave structure and organisation both to the workers and the Youth League. In 1973 there were school boycotts in the north and organisation of national resistance against the Bantustan policy enforced by the Odendaal Plan of 1964 which put homeland "second tier" authorities in place for the various national groups.

These boycotts and resistance were met by harsh repression by the colonial regime and the homeland authorities. In the north youth and workers were tied to trees and flogged with palm branches. This led to an exodus of four thousand youth in 1974 to join the SWAPO in exile in Zambia; when the Anti-Apartheid Committee interviewed the youth in Lusaka they mostly wanted to hear about the strike

No wonder! The Namibian General Strike defied the largest colonial military force in Africa – one soldier for every 12 Namibians – and shocked not only the colonial administration for its determination and death defiance but the South African regime itself.

It was a big thing internationally. South African contract workers in mines and industry suffered the same conditions as those who took strike action in Namibia, and so the mood spread. A strike of 300 PUTCO workers in the Transvaal against low wages was followed by the wave of strikes which exploded in Durban in 1973. Our general strike had an impact in South Africa, and the development of workers' struggles in South Africa had an impact on us.

In Namibia the general strike led to a restive period of

labour resistance and political organisation culminating in the 1978 Rössing Strike which involved thousands of miners at the Rössing uranium mine and other mines and which saw the formulation of a broad set of demands including trade union demands. This level of development was influenced by the trade union struggles in South Africa.

Today it is particularly important that the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) has broken with the ANC. Even when we joined SWAPO in exile in Zambia in 1974 we were already conscious of the corruption and political poverty of the SWAPO leaders and SWAPO in government has proved this to be true! We knew when we organised the general strike that workers' conditions could only be changed through political struggle. Workers here are faced with the same task as workers in South Africa – to start a Movement for Socialism.

NUMSA is the biggest affiliate of the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), but COSATU is in President Zuma's pocket and the ANC can't even implement the Freedom Charter! I thought the general secretary of the ANC was a communist, but then I listened to his statements on relations between the ANC and the unions and realised that the ANC seeks to seriously weaken the workers' situation, and so I agree 100% with NUMSA's decision to work towards a new independent workers' party for socialism.

***It is now our job to educate and organise!***