

# WORKERS INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

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Political and theoretical journal of Workers International (to Rebuild the 4th International)

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*Namibian fishermen (right), on strike against slave-labour conditions in one of the world's richest fisheries, have appealed for international support.*

*Communities in Britain are flocking to support Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn against an internal coup launched by a majority of the Party's parliamentarians. (Below) John McDonnell MP speaks to a pro-Corbyn rally in east London*



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Political and theoretical journal of  
Workers International to Rebuild  
the 4th International  
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Namibia:Walvis Bay and Luderitz fishermen ask South Africa's NUMSA for:

# 'Solidarity, assistance and advice in our struggle'

**Namibia Seafarers United**

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Walvisbaai

To: NUMSA General Secretary, Comrade Irvin Jim

Date: 6 August 2016

Copy: United Front Secretary

Subject: Request for solidarity

Dear Comrade Jim,

We are an association of Namibian fishers with our contact persons Matheus Lungameni and Justus Kamurongo representing the Steering Committee.

We represent over 4000 fishermen from Walvis Bay and Lüderitz in Namibia who have been on strike against inhuman conditions of work and who have been holding strike assemblies every day during the week in Kuisebmond stadium in Walvis Bay. We are asking you and your trade union for solidarity, assistance and advice in our struggle against the fishing companies (see list below) and also, as it turned out, against the Namibian government who pretended to mediate between the companies and us but failed even to uphold the Labour Act. Please take note of the following summary:

## **Our working and living conditions:**

Our wages have sunk by a factor of ten since the independence of Namibia. Fishers and their families are now forced to live in shacks in other peoples' backyards. Fishers are forced to work 21 hours average a day when on sea, while the Labour Act allows 9 working hours a day at most. Fishers are maimed and killed at work due to this and to non-compliance of companies with minimal standards of safety and medical assistance.

The companies, moved by extraordinary lust for profit, impose these conditions on us though the Namibian fishing industry has been achieving high profits consistently over decades.

Since the 27<sup>th</sup> October 2015, we have been on strike for these demands:

- Stop forced labour!!!
- Stop illegality and violation of the Law and Labour Conventions!
- Proper wages and benefits!
- Cessation of downgrading of labour conditions to slavery!
- Recognition of unions!
- Immediate reinstatement !

## **Current situation of the strike**

We met with the President of Namibia Mr Hage Geingob, and the General Attorney Mr. Sacky Shanghala in November 2015 and produced, at their request, the testimony of Immanuel Petrus, the leader of Metal, Mining, Maritime and Construction Union, an affiliate of Namibia National Labour Organisation (NANLO), about the barbaric conditions in which we are forced to work and live, conditions that must be qualified as forced labour under Namibia's Labour Act. However, we are not believed and the President simply ignored a letter written to him by Michael Munika of the MMMCU on 22 April 2016. We addressed several other petitions to the Ministry of Labour, the Directorate of Maritime Affairs (DMA) and the Ministry of fisheries. All were ignored.

Since the beginning of the strike, the Namibian press has been calling it "illegal" despite knowing that a strike against illegal conditions of work cannot be termed illegal. The strikers were kicked out of the companies illegally, without any written document attesting to the layoff and unqualified scab workforce has been employed in their place to conditions even worse than the ones we have been striking against.

The companies formed a flawed case against the fishermen and brought it to court on 5 December 2015. After several postponements and a betrayal of the workers by their legal representative who did not hand in to court the affidavits of the workers attesting that MMMCU represented them, corrupt judges in the Labour Court of Namibia decided in favour of the companies and condemned the unions trying to assist to bear the costs, on 7 April 2016.

The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, Matthew Shinguadja, appointed himself as a self-styled "facilitator" and produced reports on 29 June 2016 and 22 July 2016, both demonstrating his true role of biased representative of the state and the companies, posing as a neutral mediator.

Comrade, we urge you to take careful cognisance of the detail of our situation and our struggle which we provide in the PDF attachments to this letter.

We ask you for any assistance but especially:

- To accept our Steering Committee as a member of the United Front.
- To make our struggle known to your members, to South African public in general, and internationally.
- To discuss with us and with organisations of the United Front ways to start a campaign to boycott products of Namibian fisheries on the ground of the inhuman, slave conditions of the fishermen.
- To provide us with an alternative to the manifestly inept lawyers of the MMMCSU who has represented us so far.
- To advise us on our further course of action. We have tried to push our demands both through the official, the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW) federation which is affiliated to SWAPO (the government party) and through the newer NANLO. None of them was able to organise solidarity of Namibian and international workers with our plight and with our struggle.

Thank you in advance.

In solidarity,  
yours

**Justus Kamurongo**

on behalf of the Steering Committee.

The Namibian fisheries Steering Committee invites working class and socialist activists to assist in every way in their international campaigns of struggle against the international capitalists and Namibia's capitalist government. View the latest posts at <http://workersinternational.info/2016/08/message-and-publications-from-the-united-fishermen-of-namibia/>



## Parliamentary report to all political parties, relevant instances and the working people of Namibia

The WRP Political Committee resolved in WINDHOEK on Monday 28 March 2016 to provide you with the attached parliamentary report as it is in the interest of the working people of this country to consider the serious implications of the report.

You will note from our disclosures that the National Assembly of Namibia has been shorn off all its dignity and independence and has been usurped by the Speaker and his colleagues for corruption, abuse of power and self-enrichment on an unbelievable scale.

The WRP and the workers who have voted for it will not accept such a state of affairs and we advise that it is in your best interest to join us to restore some semblance of the rule of law and the

jurisdiction of the National Assembly. Please find a copy of a petition to stop Katjavivi's abuse of the National Assembly and to stop the building of the R2,26 billion parliament for corruption and Katjavivi's self-enrichment.

We welcome your response to this communiqué.

Hewat Beukes

Political Secretary.

Nominated Parliamentarian

On behalf of the WRP Political Committee and workers.

## Speaker turns National Assembly into a caricature and takes over all its functions

Workers Revolutionary Party Parliamentary Report 1 April 2016

Over the past year Peter Katjavivi has taken over the National Assembly (NA) and assigned himself executive and administrative powers.

He started off by outlawing the local languages with only English as official.

He ruled that parliamentarians wishing to speak in their mother tongues must make special arrangements. This was done without discussion in the National Assembly.

Next on behalf of the National Assembly he refused to pay the funds of the WRP.

He and the Secretary make decisions on behalf of the National Assembly and transmit them as decisions of the National Assembly.

He refuses to remove Benson Kaapala as parliamentarian on instruction of the WRP and keeps him on the public payroll. This is in disregard of the Constitution, which provides that a members shall vacate their seats "if the political party which nominated them to sit in the National Assembly informs the Speaker that such members are no longer members of such political party."

He bars parliamentarians of opposition parties to speak on such themes as the corrupt building of a new parliament building and motivates its building of the Parliament himself as Speaker. He barred SWANU President Maamberua to speak in this regard and made his own motivation, as the Chairman.

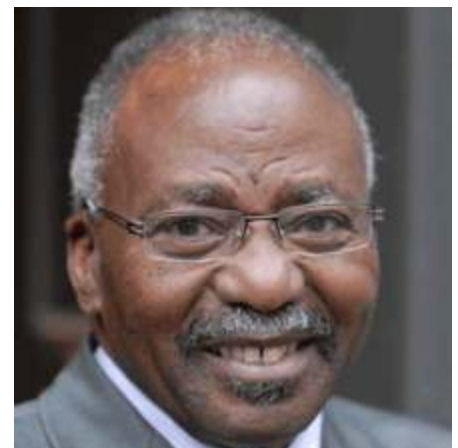
These are budgetary issues which only the NA has to discuss and decide in terms of Article 63.

Despite the provisions of Article 60, "all members of the National Assembly shall regard them-selves as servants of the people of Namibia and desist from any conduct by which they seek im-properly to enrich themselves or alienate themselves from the people." he contrives a parliamentary building of R2,26 billion while he has a building contractor company which is already busy in the Mass Housing Scam which had to be approved by parliament. The mockery is that the R2.26 billion includes the feasibility study which will be done after the approval.

### Working class takes on fight for representation in National Assembly

Workers who have voted for the WRP in the 2014 and 2015 elections have decided to take mass action against their exclusion from Parliament and the denial of their rights to funds.

The attacks against the WRP began before the elections in 2014 when the ECN and the Secretary of the NA started to conspire with parties and individuals to undermine the party's registration. At



Peter Katjavivi

commencement of the NA in March 2015 Peter Katjavivi and his party colleagues tried to block the WRP's maiden speeches articulating the party manifesto such as: "We are using these elections to advance the demands of the working class including the poor peasantry and in particular the stolen pensions, loss of income and losses in general through ... landlessness and homelessness. We will articulate and support the demands of the Herero and Nama people for War reparations.

To block the working class from using parliament to articulate their programme, Katjavivi and his colleagues decided to exclude the WRP from parliament thereby turning it into one gigantic farce. He now tries the Court to sanctify his actions.

## The Speaker of Parliament has no executive powers

In a Statement under Oath to Court in an *ex parte* application of the Workers Revolutionary Party to have its parliamentary funds paid out, Professor Peter H.Katjavivi pictured above claims the following:

*"11.1 The applicant seems to have my functions and duties as Speaker of the National Assembly confused with those of a parliamentarian in the strict sense of the word.*

*11.2 The applicant in the main application that was initially brought ex parte is challenging my powers and functions in terms of the Electoral Act No. 5 of 2014. I am advised that the exercise of those powers constitute executive functions/ administrative action and it is upon this basis that the Government Attorney appears on my behalf."*

He has no Executive and Administrative powers neither under the Constitution nor the Electoral Act nor any other Act.

The following are the totality of the functions of the Speaker in terms of the said Acts:

He shall accept relevant reports from the ECN and the Standing Committees, which he shall table in the National Assembly for discussion

He shall notify relevant instances such as the President and the Judiciary of resolutions taken by the National Assembly

He shall preside over proceedings of the National Assembly according to the rules of procedure in the National Assembly, which the National Assembly has approved. He shall direct the payment to the parties as approved by the ECN

He further attempts to mislead his readers that he has some special power to "*preside and guide proceedings*" while "*parliamentarians are required to actively engage in proceedings within the rules and confines of the house.*" He deftly omits that the rules of proceedings with which he shall conduct proceedings were discussed and approved by the parliamentarians of the National Assembly. He himself shall keep to these rules a fact which he contemptuously disregards.

But Professor Katjavivi takes his take-over of the National Assembly further by litigating as Speaker which is not a legal person and without mandate let alone knowledge of the National Assembly.

The Speaker has no legal standing to litigate. The National Assembly on the whole has no executive powers and for this reason it cannot be taken to court nor can it take anyone to court.

### WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY TO REBUILD THE 4th INTERNATIONAL

## Continuing provocation, invasion and chaos at WRP parliamentary offices at Floor 6, Capital Centre

OPEN LETTER to Ms. Lydia Kandetu, The Secretary, The National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia

8 August 2016, WINDHOEK  
Madam,

We submit the following report to you, because your office handed over the offices in question to us in October 2015 and you are tasked with their administration.

We herewith report to you the above-captioned situation at our offices caused by the Speaker in collaboration with August Maletzky and Mr Salmon Fleer-muys, who is no longer a member of our party of which your office is informed.

In the above regard, the board room is now used on a daily basis by persons not authorized by the party and not members for the sole purpose of utter provocation and trying to offset confrontation. Amongst them is a person from G4 Armed Response who carries a gun, and a person from the Namibia Defense Force (NDF) who threatens to shoot WRP leaders. The rest are persons that have been used by Messrs Maletzky and Katjavivi to attempt to threaten and intimidate WRP leaders. These persons, mostly unemployed it appears, who walk insolently and threateningly into our offices claim to have been authorized by the Speaker to use our offices at will.

These persons taunt our office staff and claim to have been promised by the Speaker and Mr Maletzky the parliamentary funds of the WRP, withheld by the Speaker, to be paid to them.

This provocation and clear assault on our undisturbed occupation of our offices follows on the impoundment of a WRP office by a one Klaus Weichaus who refuses to vacate our office claiming intimate relations with the Speaker. Weichaus was a colleague of the Speaker at the University of Namibia.

The foregoing is followed by the Speaker's use of the police in February this year to attempt to intimidate us. The police elements were former torture and killer elements of Lubango who attempted to enter our offices under the pretext of having been ordered to protect parliamentarians. They attempted to enter a meeting of our Central Committee.

Mr Maletzky called the meeting on Saturday in our offices under the instruction to disregard our office staff. They littered our offices with filth.

It is something for you to consider that the High Court of Namibia has pronounced itself on 16 June 2016 (this year) and confirmed that Mr Maletzky had pub-

lished the following widely using the public media:

1. That Mr. Petrus Damaseb had stolen 3,5 million NAD from the FIFA and the NFA.
2. That Mr Petrus Damaseb was a "matricless cunt".
3. That Mr Petrus Damaseb was a "prostitute".
4. That Mr Petrus Damaseb was a "Fokon Skelm".
5. That the High Court was "headed by a petty criminal", Petrus Damaseb.

Despite the aforesaid abuse of the Court and the earlier appeals we made to the Speaker to protect both parliamentarians and the Court against the obscenities and abuse of Mr Maletzky, he instead finds him an ideal cohort to abuse the WRP and its offices.

We expect from you to immediately restore our undisturbed and peaceful occupation of our offices and to bar these undesirable and dangerous elements from our offices.

*Hewat Beukes*

Political Secretary  
Nominated Member of Parliament

**Petition to the Namibian National Assembly (NA)  
Petisie aan die Nasionale Vergadering (NV)**

**Stop the building! Stop the corruption  
of the Speaker!**

We the undersigned workers and taxpayers reject the Speaker's abuse of the National Assembly to force through the building of a 2,26 billion parliament for 28 members. Ons die ondergetekende werkers en belastingbetalers verwerp die Spreker se misbruik van die NV om die bou van 'n 2,26 biljoen parlement deur te forseer vir 28 lede. He is acting outside the proper procedures and powers of the NA. Hy tree op buite die regte prosedures en magte van die NV. We reject that he is

doing it openly in corruption for his personal enrichment! Ons verwerp dat hy dit doen in korrupsie vir sy persoonlike verryking.

We demand from the NA to stop the building and to refer the need for more space to the Ministry of Finance to refer it to the Ministry of Works for a proper feasible study and costing to be tabled with the National Assembly for approval. Ons eis van die NV om die aanvraag vir meer spasie te verwys na die Ministerie

van Finansies om dit te verwys na die Ministerie van Werke vir 'n behoorlike oplossing met begroting vir voorlegging in die NV vir goedkeuring.

**WE DEMAND THE RULE OF LAW IN THE NA! ONS EIS INSTELLING VAN DIE WET IN DIE NV!**

**Launched by the Workers Revolutionary Party, miners and workers from Otjozondjupa, P.O. Box 3854 Windhoek, Tel: 061-260 647, [jacobusjacob@gmail.com](mailto:jacobusjacob@gmail.com).**



**Workers Revolutionary Party to Rebuild the 4th International**

**P.O. Box 3349 Windhoek Fax: 088641065 Tel: 061-260647 [jacobusjacob@gmail.com](mailto:jacobusjacob@gmail.com)  
Windhoek Branch**

**Open demand**

The Workers Revolutionary Party resolved on 20 July 2016 to start a National and International campaign against the denial of the Party's seats and funds in the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia. It also begins its action against the covert criminal actions of Speaker Katjavivi to undermine the party. The party won two seats in the November 2014, but since then the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) and then Speaker Katjavivi on spuriously manufactured grounds denied the party both its seats and its funds, denying the working class Representation in the National Assembly.  
25 July 2016

**Our Vote is our Own!**

We the Windhoek Branch and its working class members together with the Okahandja Branch resolved on 20 July 2016 in WINDHOEK to demand from the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY to remove Benson Kaapala from the seat he is occupying illegally and against our wishes, the members and voters who voted for the WRP.

Speaker Katjavivi has no right to allocate a representative for the WRP. The WRP is a Registered Party of the working class with the right to appoint its own working class representatives. Six hundred mostly working class members have signed and paid to register the party

which is a free association of persons with the same objectives to fight for political power for the working class.

We, the voters participated in the elections on the basis that Namibia is a democracy with Legal Rights for voters to elect their own representatives and to allow their party leadership to appoint the members of parliament to represent the party and its members and voters.

In both The National, in November 2014, and Local Elections in November 2015, we have voted under the present working class leadership of the WRP, led by comrade Hewat Beukes, who is also our Authorized Representative, whom we elected and registered as such.

The maintenance of Mr. Benson Kaapala, for more than a year, since he was removed by our Party, is open and unspeakable corruption by the Speaker. Mr Kaapala has earned 100s of thousands of Namibian dollars by being kept illegally in our Elected position.

Mr Katjavivi is a SWAPO member. He is not a representative of our Party, nor shall he select and appoint his own representatives in our seats. It is an insult.

The fact that Mr Katjavivi does the unspeakable to keep persons in our seats who are not members of our party and whom we do not want in those seats, points a finger to the whole National Assembly. Mr Katjavivi is only a single

member and cannot decide for the National Assembly. It is in any event not the National Assembly's business to interfere in the appointment of representatives of a registered and elected party.

The National Assembly must take full responsibility as a whole in this scandalous situation in which Mr Katjavivi even uses public money to pay his own selections into our seats.

The National Assembly's silence means that all party representatives in it agree with this mockery of democracy, and the rule of law in this Country.

We demand Benson Kaapala's removal immediately, and we demand the repayment to the Public Fund the moneys illegally paid out to Benson Kaapala over the past year.

We also expect the removal of Mr Salmon Fleermuys from his seat, as he is no longer a member of our Party. The Speaker and all Members of Parliament have been duly informed, in terms of the Electoral Act of 2014.

Signed: Branch Executive,  
*Ben Serogwe, Jan Frans Narib, Isidor Mukuve, Paul Thomas, Alfred Swartz, Sheldon Heenen, Joseph Gomoseb*  
On behalf of Members and Voters

**WE WILL NOT TOLERATE THE  
DEFIANCE OF OUR DEMOCRATIC  
RIGHTS.**

**WE HAVE FOUGHT FOR A  
DEMOCRACY, NOT MR KATJAVIVI  
AND HIS MASTERS' DICTATORSHIP.  
THAT'S WHAT WE ASPIRE TO.**



## **OPEN LETTER: WRP demands our seats and funds**

14 August 2016

*Mr Peter Katjavivi*

The Speaker; The National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia;

All parliamentary parties

Sir,

We submit the demand letters regarding the above from our branches in the Kavango Region. The RUNDU Branch and the youth of Kavango East Region.

We are a registered party The Workers Revolutionary Party with 2 parliamentary seats and funds which you unlawfully refuse to release to the party on instruction from the imperialists and your party SWAPO.

We further note that you have assembled a group of hoodlums to threaten the WRP and the lives of its leaders. We

will not be intimidated, but we hold you responsible. We give you herewith that our members and voters have decided that they will demand from you in person if need be to uphold and respect their rights as voters and therefore to restore our seats and release our funds.

We demand from you to immediately vacate our two seats and to stop the unbelievable corruption to pay two persons parliamentary funds who have been removed from their seats by a parliamentary party.

We will shortly submit the demand letters from our southern and coastal branches.

*Hewat Beukes*

Political Secretary

Nominated Member of Parliament

## **Workers Revolutionary Party to Rebuild the Fourth International RUNDU BRANCH**

### **OPEN DEMAND**

The Workers Revolutionary Party resolved on 20 July 2016 to start a National and International campaign against the denial of the Party's seats and funds in the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia. It also begins its action against the covert criminal actions of Speaker Katjavivi to undermine the party.

The party won two seats in the November 2014 elections, but since then the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) and then Speaker Katjavivi on spuriously

manufactured grounds denied the party both its seats and its funds, denying the working class Representation in the National Assembly.

27 July 2016

Our Vote is our Own!

We the RUNDU Branch of the WRP and its working class members resolved on 27 July 2016 in WINDHOEK to demand from the NATIONAL ASSEMBLY to remove Benson Kaapala from the seat he is occupying illegally and against our wishes, the members and voters who voted for the WRP.

These seats are not Speaker Katjavivi's seats. The funds are not his. He corruptly and criminally pays Benson Kaapala and Salmon Fleermuys with our funds.

On behalf of Members and Voters

**WE WILL NOT TOLERATE THE  
DEFIANCE OF OUR DEMOCRATIC  
RIGHTS.**

**WE HAVE FOUGHT FOR A  
DEMOCRACY, NOT MR. KATJAVIVI  
AND HIS MASTERS' DICTATORSHIP.  
THAT'S WHAT WE ASPIRE TO**

## **Workers' Revolutionary Party (WRP) Youth**

P.O. Box 1982, Rundu, Kavango East Region, 12 August 2016

*Dear: Honourable Peter Katjavivi*

We, the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) of the Kavango East Region in Ndiyona Circuit, have the Open Demand to our respective Comrades Peter Katjavivi.

We would like to request to Comrade Peter Katjavivi about the fund of our two seats that our Party won in the National Assembly in the 2014 election which was confiscated.

We have two seats in Parliament which are currently occupied by Benson Kaapala and Salmon Fleermuys. We are not happy about that due to the fact that they are against our WRP policies and which are against our wishes.

In addition, we request Comrade Peter Katjavivi to remove them in the National Assembly.

As we the members would like to replace the two seats with other members in our Party who will always be there for

us and remain a full member of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

Honourable Peter Katjavivi due to the respect we have for you, we will have a march in a democratic country if you will not remove them in the Parliament, because our vote counts. We will sleep in the Parliament until you will remove those Benson Kaapala and Salman Fleermuys.

We the Youth of Kovankgo East, West and entire WRP members at large, we are not seeing any good they are doing in the Parliament and we want them to go out from the Parliament soon.

We are looking forward to hear from your good office soon,

*Yours faithfully,*

Chairperson of the Youth:

*Mr Likoro Paulus Ndara*

Treasurer: *Dikutji Eugenia*

Secretary: *Muronga Christopher*

**Read  
'Die Werker',  
paper of the WRP  
Namibia**



<http://workersinternational.info/wp-content/uploads/05-Die-Werker-July-2016.pdf>

## Re The President's State of the Nation Address:

# Open letter

To Dr. Hage Geingob, The President of the Republic of Namibia

Windhoek, 6 April 2016

*Mr President,*

The Political Committee of the WRP on behalf of the WRP Central Committee directs this letter to you with regard to your State of the Nation Address in Parliament, yesterday, 5 April 2016.

You revealed your Government's and the Parliament's position as follows: Reparation talks will only be conducted between you and the German Government. "Period". There will be no talk of Nama or Herero, but these talks will be about Namibians as a whole.

You subscribe to a legal definition of Genocide which only come into force after the Second World War. There was no Genocide.

You have received 87% votes of Namibian voters. You represent them and therefore you represent the Namibians in any talks with the Germans.

The Motion of 2006 is SWAPO's. The Parliament is SWAPO's as the majority. The Motion passed in 2006 in Parliament unanimously provides that the two Nations, the Nama and Herero shall represent themselves in talks with the Germans.

### **Mockery**

If regard is had to Article (1) (1) of the Constitution that this will be a republic founded upon the rule of law, then your *ad hoc* disregard of the Motion relegates this Parliament to a mockery: No Rule of Law. "Period!", to quote yourself.

Your use of Imperialist notions of the invalidation of crimes against Humanity by prescriptive technicalities does little to support your boast as the supreme freedom fighter. Nevertheless, your extremely limited use of the law to invalidate crimes against the Namibian Nation is very revealing.

You omit to tell the nation that murder or its commissioning is not prescriptive. You further omit to tell the Nation that the crimes against the Herero and Nama Nations did not end in 1908, but continue until the present day with their deprivation of their land, their cultural and religious sites and their human dignity.

It is a very basic principle that a crime (as does a legal dispute) only ends when all its elements such as their continuing dispossession and effects have been neutralized or ended. But, more seriously, you



**4 October 2011, thousands greeted the return from Germany of the delegation to collect skulls and speak on the issues around Genocide**

omit to tell the Nation what legal standing (*Locus Standi*) means in law.

It means that only a person with a direct legal interest in a matter or grievance has a claim. The two extermination orders against "Namas" and "Hereros" gave ONLY Namas and Hereros legal standing in the WAR Reparations.

### **Misrepresent**

You misrepresent that 87% of Namibians voted for you. It is estimated that less than 20% of eligible voters voted although your Indian EVM's put it at 38%. This means that 70% of eligible voters did not vote for you.

But, this is still not the salient matter: the serious issue is that you misdirect that elections transfer individuals', Nations', and groups' legal right of representation to you. The elections were not about this. This is misconception characteristic of a dictatorship, NOT a democracy.

The right to redress of the mass murder of Namas and Hereros firstly vests in every individual survivor or descendant and only then in the Nations as collectives, not in the Namibian State. You omit that a Nation deals with sectional wrongs by way of solidarity, not by ignoring the reality of the existence of distinctive groups. Perhaps you do not understand this concept.

But, solidarity with the Herero and Nama Nations by all other groups in Namibia and by all oppressed nations in Africa is of the essence in the struggle for Freedom and the struggle against the

recurrence of Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing. Your response is the opposite.

We now come to your castigation of Koevoet and SWATF. You claimed you were fighting for FREEDOM while they had been fighting for South Africa.

You omit to tell the NATION that in 1975 you worked with UNITA and South Africa against the MPLA in Angola. You were then comrades-in-arms with KOEVOET. You jailed and killed the PLAN fighters *en masse* who opposed your collaboration with South Africa and UNITA.

You omit to tell of 1 April 1989 when you sent PLAN fighters into Northern Namibia on false information to be massacred. About the same number of persons died as in Kassinga. In 1989, you came into the country and preferred to be guarded and protected by KOEVOET rather than by PLAN!

Back in Namibia you conferred war veteran status on South African collaborators such as Oupa Indongo and declared him a war hero. Your present parliamentary SWAPO group consists largely of former police informers and SA agents. PLAN veterans who opposed your collaboration with South Africa are being chased away from the Ministry of War Veterans as spies.

Both PLAN and SWATF former soldiers are not asking you for money. They ask money from the Namibian Nation and their own pensions.

Lastly, you state that the Parliament will be built: On BBC Hardtalk hardly two

months ago you said you would not interfere. Parliament is independent. It was democracy. You omit to tell the nation that to build a space of 1000 square metres at the floor price of a luxury 5-star hotel of N\$60,000 would cost N\$60 million. You omit to say that 2,26 billion is theft and again theft.

### Pillars

You for no apparent reason commend the high and supreme courts as the pillars of democracy. You omit to tell the Nation that you appointed Shafimana Ueitele as judge to the High Court while he is under investigation for theft of GIPF pensions. His company which had not paid back millions of GIPF conveniently liquidated. He makes no effort to repay funds of workers' lifesavings. He wages a totally corrupt and roguish regime in court.

You personally appointed Hosea Angola as judge who sit on his own cases. You appointed Supreme Court Judge Dave

Smuts, a money launderer and fraudster, who has defrauded the State by N\$3,6 billion in the SWABOU debacle in 2002. Your Speaker Peter Katjavivi is using the Court at present to contrive a case against the WRP to keep it out of parliament. Complaints of systemic corruption were made to you with no response.

You call this situation pillars of democracy?

You omit to tell the NATION that your Government is not only maintaining but deepening the contract labour system. You omit to tell the NATION that your Government has institutionalized pension theft which is a major cause of impoverishment.

We found the degree of disrespect with which you treated the working people and the issues of concern of oppressed nationalities in Namibia unacceptable. We further found your disrespectful manner in which you bullied persons, misrepresented history with the

law and willfully misrepresented important facts unacceptable. In the above regard, you were to respect and uphold the decorum of the House, but you selected to trample its dignity underfoot.

You failed in your State of the Nation Address to account for the thousands of Namibians missing in exile under your regime.

We notify you that the WRP unreservedly and unconditionally stand by the Herero and Nama Nations in their demand for Restitution and their Sole Right to be represented by themselves or whosoever they may elect to represent themselves in dialogue with the Germans.

We unconditionally support the demands of former soldiers who were conscripted into the SWATF to have their pensions paid out to them and to be accorded War Veteran status!

We support the struggle for workers to stop pension theft!

### Short notes

## Can ethnicity, racism and discrimination keep Namibia together?

By Hewat Beukes Political Secretary of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

It has been said that the sentence: "can ethnicity, racism and discrimination keep Namibia together?" is an oxymoron. An oxymoron is a figure of speech defined as a combination of contradictory or incongruous words (such as *cruel kindness*); *broadly speaking* something (as a concept) that is made up of contradictory or incongruous elements.

To some this appears to be a clear contradiction. "Nonsense!" they say. "How can racists, tribalists or discrimination keep a nation together?"

The reality is that racists in Southern Africa really did insist they could keep nations together as long as they were in control. In South Africa and Namibia a group of tribalists actually do reckon they can keep the nation together.

Therefore, we cannot just shoot the concept down as an oxymoron. We have to delve a bit deeper and examine the validity of these phenomena and their accompanying concepts.

We must however draw a sharp distinction between the options that were open for institutionalised racism in the past, and the options now open for tribal rule.

Racism during the time of the Apartheid regime clearly espoused racial superiority as the reason for its entitlement to rule.

However, alleged tribal superiority, or a precarious claim to have led national

liberation are hardly sufficient to justify, for example, 98% control of lucrative State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) by one tribal group. It simply will not wash. They need another concept, one which appears to be the direct opposite of racial grounds. So they use the metaphysical "one Namibia, one nation" as a political morality, or ideology if you like, to brush off as reactionary any complaints about the unusually high numbers in top posts of one particular group linked by family and tribal ties, and their apparently limitless and unfettered access to whatever financial resources the nation enjoys. (METAPHYSICS – the study of being outside its objective existence.) In fact, in Namibia they hold the entire petit bourgeoisie to ransom with the bogus "One Namibia, One Nation."

Racism, Tribalism or Ethnicity – which all boil down to the same thing whatever you call them - are parasitic both in practice and outlook. Of course such an outlook leaves no room to recognise class.

Ethnic parasitism proceeds in the context of a world system of capitalist parasitism and it therefore tends to break up nations in the most savage manner rather than welding them together, as we can see in the case of Yugoslavia, Burundi and Rwanda, Nigeria (Biafra) and Namibia. Recent world events prove that ethnicity cannot keep multi-national nations together.

However, if one approaches the tribal State from the fact that Namibian society consist of classes, the picture changes drastically. You find that 98% of our society consist of the poor peasantry, the working class and the lower middle classes. These classes are the victims of the tribal regime. On top of the fact that they are already exploited to the bone by what was the colonial ruling classes and the multinationals, they now face total depletion of their lifesavings at the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF), Social Security Commission (SSC), etc.

It now becomes absurd to classify human beings along tribal lines.

Coming back to the metaphysics of the tribalists. They cannot unite the nation because they denounce the existence of distinctive groups. They cannot see the wood for the trees. They will not respect the struggles of groups such as the Herero and Nama against the extermination orders and subsequent genocide.

This struggle together with the struggle against contract labour and the fight against pension theft are of the two most pressing issues to restore sanity in this ravaged nation of ours.

But, this struggle for a united nation can only be led by the working class led by the Workers Revolutionary Party. It cannot be led by classes or sections of classes which have a parasitic relation to the working people of Namibia.



# Disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration of Namibia's ex-combatants

By Hewat Beukes

## Introduction

The struggle for what is today known as Namibia started in 1884 with the advent of German colonialism. At first it started with the southern peoples, the Nama, Baster, Damara, the Herero and the Bushman where the Germans had immediately seized land. The groups initiating the struggle against the German were first the Nama followed by the Herero. The Baster later followed.

These struggles against the Germans culminated in the extermination wars against first the Nama and Herero in 1904-8 and thereafter the Baster in 1915.

In 1919 the League of Nations ceded the administration of the 'territory' including Ovambo and Kavango lands with the 'Caprivizipfel' to South Africa. Having been driven out of South Africa by ever expanding colonial annexation and land expropriation, the Khoisan in specific the Rehoboth Basters were the first to resist. Since 1919 they filed petitions to the League of Nations to object against South African colonialism. In 1923 an uprising of the Herero and Baster was looming in Rehoboth, but the town was encircled by South African troops with machine guns and canons. The Baster and Herero were disarmed, the Herero banished from Rehoboth and more than 40 'ringleaders' of the Baster were to die by firing squad. A last minute intervention by the League of Nations staved off the execution.

By then the Herero had lost virtually all their land and the Baster 2 thirds of their land.

The resistance continued on the political level with frequent petitions to first the League of Nations and then its successor in 1945, the United Nations Organisation (UNO). Civil resistance was continued by the nationalities led informally by Hosea Kutako of the Herero. He would later commission Baster, Herero, Ovambo emissaries to the UN to argue the case for Namibia and present the demands for in particular the land and self-determination of the nations of Namibia.

In the meanwhile a new evil had arisen under South African colonialism. Contract



*The Baster Council in the 1920s*

labour. In 1943 as a measure to institutionalise slave labour from the populous northern areas of Ovambo and Kavango lands, the South West Africa Native Labour Association (SWANLA) was established by the South African Administration. It brought young men from the north under conditions tying them to specific employers (owners/hirers) in the south in particular the mines, but also to the farms. Farmers and even small businesses of all races and tribes in the south used the facilities of this slave system.

Farms became killing fields for many of these young workers.

Together with skilled and semi-skilled labour from the south they built the Namibian infra-structure and untold profits and wealth for the mining bosses, commercial business and a fledgling industry including fishing.

The toll on them was horrendous. Besides the horror on farms, fathers and youngsters were broken from the families in humiliation and deprivation. It was the most complete system of deprivation and dehumanisation.

By 1960, the following social-economic and political demands and expectations, expressly and implied, led in the national demand for self-determination:

1. An end to contract labour and proper wages and labour conditions;
2. An end to restriction of movement and pass laws;
3. A restoration of landed property of the Herero, Nama, Damara and Bushman;
4. The right to self-determination of all nationalities in the territory now known as Namibia, including the independence of the Caprivi.

In 1959 there was the Old Location Uprising. SWANU leaders such as Kauwetu played distinctive roles in directing the masses led by Damara and Herero women.

The sixties saw SWAPO initiating a token guerrilla war on the insistence of the AOU. This was not a serious attempt as illustrated by the fact that the Commander-in-Chief Sam Nujoma and his second-in-command Lukas Pohamba from Lusaka visited the South African Army and Intelligence at the international airport in

Windhoek from where they went to Pretoria after which they returned to Zambia.

### **Representation**

By 1970 the nation was politically represented by tribal chiefs, SWAPO was an Ovambo tribal organisation, SWANU a nationalist organisation supported by workers and lower middle class elements. Workers were embroiled in labour struggles in particular the contract labourers but by 1978, there was a fully-fledged national workers movement led by the Rössing miners articulating broad workers' demands.

In 1971/2 contract labour staged a national General Strike which ignited the whole of the Southern African sub-region and led to 4000 youth fleeing in its aftermath to Zambia following persecution and torture by northern tribal authorities.

In 1970, in an attempt at a United Front, the National Convention was convened on 13 November 1970 in Rehoboth by the tribal chiefs, the Volksparty, SWAPO and SWANU. In response thereto the UN declared SWAPO the Sole and Authentic Representative of the Namibian Nation.

This was a clear renunciation of the Right to Self-Determination of the Namibian People.

Again, in 1975 after the declaration of the Namibia National Convention as the successor of the National convention the UN reiterated the status of SWAPO.

But, already a crucial incident had occurred earlier in 1974. Chief Clemens Kapuuo commissioned by the NC visited Europe and the United Nations to argue the case for independence for Namibia. While in Europe he sought the assistance of Peter Katjavivi the West European Representative of the SWAPO. While hosting the Chief and his delegation, Katjavivi blocked his access to African, European and Caribbean Governments by slandering the Chief as a South African agent. The Chief met closed door upon closed door and was informed of SWAPO's Sole and Authentic Representation status.

This broke up the National Convention. The Chief returned and joined the South African initiative to ostensibly lead Namibia to self-determination through what would become the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance in 1976.

This opened the door to forced conscription of Namibians into the Territorial Army.

There would have been no successful forced conscription if it was not for this particular event offset by SWAPO's Sole and Authentic Representative status.

The malice of this act by the UN and the imperialists is seen in the fact that at the time they conferred Sole Representative

status on SWAPO, PLAN and SPYL were in political struggle on the following issues:

5. SWAPO was in alliance with UNITA and South Africa against MPLA.

6. The SWAPO leaders were selling provisions (clothes, food, medicines, weapons) donated for the guerrilla war stored in massive warehouses as wholesalers while PLAN fighters were dying in the camps of hunger, went barefeet and many were without weapons.

7. SWAPO had no political programme.

8. SWAPO was not the representative of the Namibian peoples.

The foreign missions and the United Nations in Zambia were aware of the full extent as the SWAPO leadership's inability to be the Government of Namibia.

### **SWATF, PLAN and the agreements for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration**

It is within the above historical background which the question of the SWATF and PLAN must be viewed.

With the clear denial by the UN and the imperialists of the Namibian peoples' right to choose their own representatives, tribal chiefs saw their only way out of a prospect of dominance by a tribal force itself as accepting the prospect of at least limited self-rule by the colonial power.

A result was forced conscription which saw teenagers and young men forced into the army most against their will, some out of joblessness, and a few out of choice. They were from the working class and poor peasantry.

The war itself was a low intensity war. More SWAPO members were killed by the SWAPO leadership and the SWAPO leadership in collaboration with South African than died in the war. The war reached some degree of seriousness only because of the commitment of fighters who thought they were fighting a just cause. Those who excelled were killed, because the war was not meant to be serious.

(Cassinga in 1978 and 1 April 1990 alone caused an estimated 1500-2000 deaths.) Thousands more were killed and thousands were not accounted for.

Nevertheless, this 'war' is the stuff from which the SWAPO leadership manufacture enduring myths: the war (meaning they as freedomfighters) brought independence. SWAPO was not part of the negotiations, in any event, not a decisive participant: The terms of independence were determined by the 5-Western Powers and negotiated with the Soviet Union, and South Africa. The period 1976-89 had seen a giant working class rise in South Africa in solidarity with the Namibian working class who were fighting pitched battles and brought the South African economy to its

knees. By 1989 4 million workers could down tools at any one time.

South Africa could no longer rule under Apartheid and it found in the SWAPO leadership the tool to continue its rule.

Thus, since 1982 they worked out the conditions under which Namibia would become independent. SWAPO as a condition to be allowed to rule Namibia agreed to every condition guaranteeing the continued rule of the colonial ruling classes.

The issue of the SWATF and its demobilisation and reintegration were merely technical issues.

These modalities were contained in the 1982 and subsequent agreements and in terms of the Labour conventions of Namibia. Severance pay, pension and insurance had to be paid out. Jobs had to be created, preferably by integration into a Namibian Army.

SWAPO reneged on these terms immediately upon taking over government.

The reason why they did so and why they could so were twofold:

9. The need to enrich themselves as quickly as possible, and,

10. The lack of leadership amongst the demobilised soldiers.

11. The lack of good faith from the side of the brokers of the agreements.

A black irony started to emerge. The issue of PLAN and SWATF were treated as a moral dichotomy: the one was a freedom-fighter and the other a murderer.

However, most PLAN fighters and former SPYL members were barred from benefits as slandered as spies.

Today, both groups remain on the edge denied income and work.

The criteria for conciliation, benefits and the coveted War Hero status took contradictory forms: Aupa Indongo a billionaire and known collaborator with South Africa has been anointed as War Hero with street names in Windhoek, police spies and former collaborators are SWAPO parliamentarians: Elton Hoff, a demobilised SWATF is Supreme Court Judge, etcetera, etcetera.

The problem which the soldiers and the PLAN face is that they have no clear programme to counteract the denial of the SWAPO leadership on the following:

12. No effective counter-propaganda;

13. No effective action plan;

14. No clear set of demands.

Our position is clear as contained in our manifesto. We support the soldiers not only for compensation but as a section of the working class of this country which is being exploited and oppressed. We will continue to propagate their position as part of our overall programme for the working class to take political power.

# 'Brexit' vote a symptom of stagnation

By Bob Archer

Britain's referendum vote late in June to leave the European Union was a sign of economic and social stagnation and decay.

It is now clearer than it ever was that the world needs to be united economically and socially. Profound inequalities of wealth and power across the globe are expressed in the political anarchy, war and civil war raging across wide areas and the veritable armies of migrants displaced by war, civil unrest, ethnic and religious strife, poverty and brutal dictatorships.

Instead of unifying the world and spreading the benefits of social progress, capitalist globalisation accentuates inequalities and creates gross differences between winners and losers. This kind of globalisation replicates and intensifies class divisions and exploitation everywhere.

Imperialist powers manoeuvre and compete for political and commercial dominance. Behind an ever more threadbare façade of democracy, the big monopoly groups which run them operate the real levers of power. While they constantly intensify the degree to which production is integrated across the globe, they at the same time embody the domination of a few great powers over a mass of smaller and weaker states held in backwardness and poverty.

## The bourgeoisie and Europe

The bourgeoisie has been exposed as completely unable to overcome the historic division of Europe into distinct and competing nations, a division which is today as reactionary as it is destructive.

The hodge-podge of national arrangements within which capitalism developed historically are a deep-rooted obstacle to really integrating the continent. The efforts to create and sustain a continent-wide currency, the euro, similarly collides with the lack of any real progress in social and political unification.

Where no European state exists which can manage the social relations which underpin any currency by adopting and carrying out binding policies across the whole continent, the currency is a botched creation hanging in mid-air.

Or as Britain's "Daily Telegraph" put it: "At root was a failure to grasp the elemental point that currency unions with



*The referendum vote and its consequences makes it more rather than less urgent to make international working class solidarity a concrete reality*

no treasury or political union to back them up are inherently vulnerable to debt crises. States facing a shock no longer have sovereign tools to defend themselves. Devaluation risk is switched into bankruptcy risk." (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2016/07/28/imf-admits-disastrous-love-affair-with-euro-apologises-for-the-i/>)

Among and between the separate nations there are further distinctions of power and wealth, differences which capitalist Europe has institutionalised into countries that "have" and those that "have not".

Such differences are fostered by the capitalist system, with its entwined financial and government structures, to cheapen labour and shore up profits.

The British referendum vote makes it even more likely that the EU will break up either into its component parts or competing rival blocs of states.

The referendum vote and its consequences makes it more rather than less urgent to make international working class solidarity a concrete reality.

It means that socialists must redouble efforts to develop solidarity in action across the continent.

While British politics were still reeling from the referendum vote to leave, workers in France have been in a prolonged struggle to prevent a new labour code from being imposed by a socialist

government which removes many rights at work.

Mass demonstrations in Germany against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership have gravely undermined attempts to impose this "Partnership".

The Greece Solidarity Campaign (GSC) in the UK is planning further work to support the Solidarity for All initiative in Greece with its Solidarity clinics and other welfare activities. Greek (and other) volunteers also provide vital support to refugees trapped in Greece who are organising themselves to procure the simplest basic requirements of life. GSC and others are hoping to set up solidarity links joining communities and groups in the UK with those in Greece, for example between schools.

The best basis for international solidarity is a determined fight at every level and in every country for the rights of working people in every country.

The developments in France, the resistance by the Portuguese working class to public spending cuts and attacks on wages and pensions, and the growth of PODEMOS in Spain show that there are the beginnings of a recovery of struggle by the working class across the continent, hampered still by the political collapse and degeneration and discrediting of traditional socialist and communist political parties.

Britain:

# Labour Party and the recovery of working-class struggle

By Bob Archer

Probably the strongest recovery of fighting spirit and fighting consciousness has centred on the election of Jeremy Corbyn as the leader of the UK Labour Party in July 2015.

Thousands of new supporters rallied to Corbyn and the Labour Party last spring after the Party's disastrous showing in the General Election led to a party leadership contest. He was elected leader with the broadest popular mandate of any political leader of any UK political party.

Some of the issues involved in the Corbyn surge were underlined when the Chilcot enquiry finally reported what everybody knows: that although the then Prime Minister Tony Blair assured the House of Commons that the Saddam Hussein government in Iraq had weapons of mass destruction capable of being deployed within 45 minutes, this turned out not to be the case; and that Tony Blair had already promised that the UK would support a US attack on Iraq whatever happened.

The movement around Corbyn was deliberately framed as a move to resist the whole agenda which capitalism has followed since the days of Regan and Thatcher in the early 1980s. As such it had to be grasped as an attack on the establishment, the political, social and economic "powers that be". It was always inevitable that this establishment would strike back. The attack came when the ruling class in Britain was at its weakest, as the Referendum vote imposed a sudden profound change of course. And it was the entrenched right-wing among the Labour Party's members of parliament who struck back viciously against Corbyn.

In July 2016 the Party's parliamentary fraction (the Parliamentary Labour Party - PLP) passed a motion of no confidence in the leader moved by figures on the far right of the party. There was a carefully orchestrated series of resignations from the shadow cabinet and a nasty whispering campaign that although they "agreed" with Jeremy's policies the man "was incompetent" and failed to "work" with them.

All the main media enthusiastically joined in the campaign to rubbish Corbyn and his supporters.

Much of this talk was exposed as bald-erdash when the PLP's challenger to Corbyn was finally unveiled. Owen Smith MP has tried to re-position himself as a left-wing radical without possessing the slightest relevant credentials. This former lobbyist for Pfizer, "the world's largest research-based pharmaceutical company", claims to have undergone a Damascene conversion. The scales have fallen from his eyes, apparently, and he now understands that the sustained pressure, to which he contributed, to privatise the National Health Service (NHS) and other public goods is a bad thing which must be stopped.

Of course only an embittered cynic would doubt the sincerity of his conversion.

The coup leaders meanwhile have indulged in increasingly hysterical claims that Corbyn is "bullying" them (passive aggression is a familiar tactic on the part of Labour's professional politicians).

## "Brexit" and the Referendum

Claims of Corbyn's supposed "incompetence" centred on his conduct during the Referendum campaign. He criss-crossed the country speaking at meetings and rallies in favour of a "remain" vote, but carefully avoided standing alongside Tory "remain" speakers or joining in their hyperbolic praise for the very defects of the European Union which were most obvious to the voters.

Right-wing Labourites such as Alan Johnson and Neil Kinnock did campaign alongside Cameron, Osborn, Christine Lagarde of the IMF and the rest. For all their media ballyhoo, they completely failed to engage with traditional Labour voters.

There is embarrassing television footage of Kinnock stomping his home turf in South Wales hoping to persuade ex-miners and ex-steelworkers and their sons and daughters to vote to "remain", and meeting with clear and sustained rejection.

Referendums are treacherous because they bundle up a whole series of discontents and tensions into one question which monopolises and distorts the debate. While powerful elements in the British bourgeoisie have managed to some extent to integrate into European capital-

ism, sections of the ruling class in the UK have decided to get out of the European Union because any commercial advantage it brings them is balanced by irksome regulations to do with workers' and social rights, uniformity of standards and environmental protection. This is what lay behind the massive media campaign to whip up a "leave" vote.

Indeed, study of the balance of trade between European Union states reveals that the UK was regularly coming out the loser. (For a revealing look of the real relationships within the EU, see B. Nagy: *The Future the Bourgeoisie Wants: Back to Mass Poverty!* (Socialist Studies Pamphlet ISBN 978 0 9564319 2 9).

Parts of the left concentrated on the way the European Union has developed from the "bosses club" of the European Coal and Steel Community and has consistently helped to wipe out entire industries and great swathes of agriculture across the continent. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and its bloc of satellite states, the EU has increasingly applied the Washington Consensus, especially in the Maastricht Treaty and the establishment of the common currency, the Euro.

All capitalists in Europe (as elsewhere) have enthusiastically bought into these neo-liberal economic and social "market-driven" policies. The bourgeoisie encountered tenacious resistance at a national level to their implementation, which involves the destruction of social gains and working-class rights, the closure and de-localisation of industry and all the rest of it, so they have left it to the EU institutions to do much of the heavy lifting.

(It must be mentioned that the resistance has not always been confined to the national level. The International Dockworkers' Council and its European section have challenged the EU attempts to privatise the continent's ports and deregulate dock labour with considerable success at a continent-wide level).

Large numbers of working-class people whose industries have been closed and whose job security has been destroyed over the years, and their children who have never known job security with trade union protection and decent wages, accepted the caricature of the EU as the main enemy.

Large areas of the Midlands and the North of England are industrial graveyards. Nothing is left of past prosperity except acres of bare concrete factory floor with the occasional smoke-stack poking up and odd-shaped hills where the spoil-heaps of former coal mines have been cursorily “landscaped”.

While the population in such areas continued to vote Labour throughout, the Labour Party largely ended its close relationship with the manual working class during the Blair years from the mid-1990s onwards. The voice of the working class was stifled in the Party. Workers did not feel welcome at party branch meetings and branch organisation tended to wither away on big working class estates. Along with the sale of council houses, class solidarity atrophied.

Such working class areas never stopped struggling to protect themselves and their way of life, but nevertheless lacked a socialist political focus and started to turn inwards.

The way the EU reacted to the collapse of the Soviet Union compounded the problems. From the Baltic to the former Yugoslavia, countries whose economies had developed within Comecon and been linked with the former Soviet Union were suddenly in limbo, cut off from trading partners and saddled with ageing smoke-stack industries and primitive infrastructures. Industry after industry simply closed down.

Capitalism did not have the resources or the desire to revive and re-organise these economies on a modern footing. In many cases the local Stalinist bureaucracy mutated into Mafia gangs who simply seized and milked state assets. The best the bourgeoisie could offer was to arrange for these states to “accede” to the EU and for their people to enjoy the dubious benefit of being allowed to emigrate to work in the West.

Eastern Europe joined the states of southern Europe as reservoirs of cheap migrant labour without (except for a thin strip along the Adriatic coast) the compensation of tourist industry income.

And the millions who did head west to Germany, France and the UK have become the scapegoats, in the minds of many, for the lack of job opportunities, the growth of insecure, marginal jobs and living accommodation and the competition for housing, health care and education.

All these evils are directly caused by capitalism. It is the bourgeoisie who arrange life so as to undermine job security, keep down wages and cut funding to public services. But the sites where the bourgeoisie arrange these things are often invisible to working people, while the Polish family who have just moved into a



***Unions like the National Union of Teachers have worked hard to re-work their relationship with the public***

street in a working-class area stick out like a sore thumb.

A massive element in the “leave” vote was a feeling in the working class that too many migrants were entering the UK. This was carefully and systematically fostered by the mass media, who carefully picked out and emphasised reports of “migrants” stealing “British” jobs, exploiting the welfare system, behaving badly and generally making life difficult.

The media also skilfully exacerbated cultural cleavages. As British religious institutions decline, mosques and charismatic Christian churches have thrived. Complaints have been stoked up about how formerly industrial neighbourhoods have “changed”. Public houses serving alcohol have closed and been replaced by buildings catering for “foreign” religions. National symbols such as the flag of St. George and members of the Royal family are dusted off and flaunted in an obsequious and at the same time often threatening manner.

With the help of the “Daily Mail”, “The Sun” and the “Daily Express”, the UK Independence Party and the right-wing of the Conservative Party developed and fostered a mood of right-wing nationalism in England.

While it is currently “middle-class” elements such as teachers and doctors who are taking the initiative in the struggle to defend working class gains such as the NHS and progressive state education against attempts to tailor these public goods to fit in with the interests of the bourgeoisie, the traditional blue-collar working class in Britain is “on the back

foot” and has in part fallen more deeply than is usual under the influence of the ruling class.

The new Conservative government under Theresa May carefully appeals to the prejudices fostered in this section of the working class.

To a considerable extent, too, the trade unions have lost their hold on the big working-class populations in the old industrial areas, as relatively secure employment in mass work-forces had simply disappeared. The more progressive unions (Unite, PCS civil servants, Fire Brigades Union, National Union of Teachers) have taken serious steps to re-engineer their relationship with the public. Unite has established community branches. The National Union of Teachers has worked to place the defence of state education and forward-looking pedagogies and structures in the heart of the community, mobilising parents against the neo-liberal agenda of privatisation and “Victorian” values.

It is these unions which provide the best hope of preserving the working-class character of the movement in an age of social fragmentation and complexity.

There are real dangers that the working class could separate into three groups: the old blue-collar working class; the newer spectrum of educated but insecure workers; and the wide variety of migrant newcomers from hugely diverse points of origin.

#### **Momentum**

The surge of support for Jeremy Corbyn has not yet taken on a homogeneous organised form. Its components are

mixed and are typically new to party politics. After all, people now in their 30s were barely born during the last big industrial struggle in the UK – the great miners' strike of 1984-1985, and yet members of this younger generation are keenly involved in the movement. They are joined by an older generation of political and trade union activists and those who have stuck it out in, but increasingly now outside, far-left political groups ever since. These groups have had a marginal purchase mainly among present and former students. They have many fewer current than former members (who in fact provide a major reservoir of Momentum activists). Most of these groups have hardened into political sects.

The working class in Europe has undergone over thirty years of defeats, setbacks and consistent, calculated attrition. Mass work-forces with overtly identical interests and cultures and living in cohesive working class communities have been broken up and the bits that could not be uprooted and scattered have been left to fester.

Trade union activists have had to recalculate their methods of organisation. For decades after 1945, militancy and solidarity were enough to wrest concessions from the employers and their state. This has had to be re-thought as changing patterns of employment and a legal crack-down on trade union rights at work expose militant shop-floor trade unionists to black-listing and victimisation. These laws particularly target the key solidarity struggles which forge working class unity.

What is true at work is also true in the community. Twenty years ago, working class mothers in east London still regularly revolted over school place and nursery provision. Lobbying councillors, invading town halls, joining with council workers facing redundancy and generally organising together to make a noise were a component of working class life. Much of the "politics" of the Blair years consisted of dismantling such communities and putting decision-making beyond their reach.

The Corbyn surge, like the growth of Syriza in Greece or PODEMOS in Spain is a movement in its initial stages. On the one hand is the enormous political confusion inevitable in a mass movement crystallising as it were directly out of the existing social elements responding to the shock of the economic crisis. On the other hand the movement is re-inventing its organisational methods from scratch in a continuation of the experience of the Indignados in Spain and the Squares in Greece. It has to be said, also, that they operate half inside and half beyond the existing Labour Party with its ward meetings, standing

orders and structures, and that Labour Party meetings in many areas are, if not quite middle-class, at least populated by members of the salariat.

The task for Momentum is quite daunting, and on top of that the movement has been hampered by sectarian groups and outright opportunists who exploit it for their own ends.

The key thing is that Momentum is an attempt to test right through to the end the conviction, which most of its activists hold so deeply it is scarcely necessary to enunciate it, that capitalism can be rescued by the application of the correct policy measures and by the efforts of democratic forces.

The PLP challengers are deliberately not emphasising criticisms of Corbyn's policies. Their "no-confidence" vote is based on Corbyn's "refusal" to work with them and alleged poor leadership qualities. Meanwhile Labour's local structures have all been put on hold until the leadership election is over. This means the discussion in Momentum over the leadership challenge in tends to be dominated by tactical considerations, and also getting to grips with the complexities of Labour's structures.

However, it is important to recall the policies Corbyn has put forward and how he plans to implement them.

After the "Leave" vote in the Referendum, Corbyn wrote (<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jul/08/jeremy-corbyn-labour-negotiations-europe-tories-exploit-cheap-labour>):

"We must respect the democratic decision of the British people - and negotiate a new relationship with the EU: one that protects jobs, living standards and workers' rights - and also ensure that we have the freedom to reshape a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy for all our people ..."

"The starting point has to be the red lines laid out by Labour's shadow chancellor, John McDonnell: including the maintenance of existing employment and social rights, freedom of trade with Europe, and protection of residency rights for both EU citizens in Britain and British citizens in Europe ..."

"During the referendum campaign we argued for an end to EU-enforced liberalisation and privatisation of public services - and freedom for public enterprise and public investment, now restricted by EU treaties ... Labour [i.e. actually Corbyn and supporters!] also campaigned for tougher regulation of the jobs market and of the exploitation of migrant labour to undercut pay and conditions, as the best way to protect jobs and living standards in the EU.

"The same goes for Britain outside the EU. If freedom of movement means the freedom to exploit cheap labour in a race

to the bottom, it will never be accepted in any future relationship with Europe. **But the reality is that we have allies in that cause across Europe, as on many other issues that will be at the heart of the negotiations ahead.**

"Those negotiations cannot be left to a Tory government that does not speak for the country.

"That is why I am meeting fellow European socialist leaders in Paris this week to discuss the refugee crisis and Europe's future after Britain's vote to leave. The increasing momentum to reform the EU will strengthen the Labour case".

And Corbyn's campaign HQ has published a blog posting: "£500 billion investment: No Community Left Behind" ([http://www.jeremyforlabour.com/national\\_investment\\_bank](http://www.jeremyforlabour.com/national_investment_bank)). Noting that "We live in an increasingly unequal society. Earnings for most people have fallen over the last decade and too many of the jobs available are insecure and poorly-paid", it proposes "a national investment bank, following the best practice of countries like Germany's KfW Bank, to deliver investment in infrastructure, develop expertise and draw in additional funding. With £100bn as capital, provided by government, the National Investment Bank will leverage this up to £250bn if funding ready to deliver economic transformation across the country".

Pointing out that "... over half of all public investment in England goes to London", the posting promises: "On the backbone of the National Investment Bank, we'll establish regional development banks ... focussed on their areas and with a clear mandate to deliver the patient, long-term investment to small businesses and smaller-scale investment projects.

It continues: "Labour will intervene to support core industries, and to sustain the new, clean sectors of the future like renewables and progress in remanufacturing ... Labour will create one million decent, secure jobs by the end of its first term."

This is all based on the observation that "Government investment today is the cheapest it has been for generations". Indeed, the owners of big money are lending \$11.5tn to governments and effectively paying for the privilege.

The logic can seem persuasive. However, we have to assume that the owners of \$11.5 tn or more will have their own opinions about how the money should be spent and the means to make those opinions felt.

Negotiations on that score will be arenas of class struggle which we are convinced will themselves be great educators of the masses.

Ctd from back cover:

## ‘... and in economic news ...’

### ‘Economy was slowing down even before the Referendum’

*Guardian 18 July 2016:* “Brexit: time to try alternatives to failed policies” by Larry Elliot.

“Let’s be clear. The economy is fragile. It was slowing down even before the referendum date was fixed and it is ill-prepared for the shock of Brexit. The UK has a budget deficit of 4% of GDP, a balance of payments deficit of 7% of GDP and the worst recent productivity record of any G7 country bar Italy.”

Elliot warned that investors will be “cautious” – “they mothball plans and the

GDP weakens”. Inflation will hit consumer spending as the pound sterling falls. On the other hand “exports become cheaper, which will help boost output, albeit not by all that much, unless global demand recovers from its current depressed level. A slowdown, therefore, seems inevitable”.

So why did people vote for Brexit when it was going to bring this? Elliot explains:

“A speech given last week by Andy Haldane, the chief economist at the Bank [of England], helps to explain why so many people were unmoved by George Osborn’s

argument that the UK would be voting for a DIY recession if the country voted for Brexit.

“On a visit to Nottingham, Haldane said, **he was struck by the fact that for many people, the recession that followed the financial crisis of 2008 had never ended.**

**“When he talked about economic recovery, he was stopped in his tracks by a ‘forest of furrowed brows’. The message was simple: there had been no recovery.”**

## RBS: ‘This is not a banking crisis ... we’ve got plenty of money to lend’

*Guardian 18 July 2016:* The share price of RBS bank fell on the morning after Brexit, but unlike the 2008 crisis, “[CEO Ross] McEwan said ... ‘we had deposits coming to us because people realised we were a strong bank ... this is not a banking crisis ... We’ve got plenty of liquidity. We’re open for business. We’ve got plenty of money to lend.”

McEwan insists: “We’ve got a plan that’s working because we’ve restructured the business exactly as we said we would. We have a core business here that still makes quarter on quarter £1bn of pre-tax profits”. The bank has been restructured and has “cut costs, sold off riskier assets, and accelerated the pull-back to 13 countries from the 54 countries where Fred Goodwin [the man in charge pre 2008 and bankruptcy] had planted flags.” UK and Ireland now provide 90% of profits, compared with 50% “pre-crisis”.

McEwan makes this sound very much like a bloodied retreat from global business and a concentration on sucking value out of the citizens at home via “retail banking”. The report continues: “But while the bank may be stronger than it was pre-2008, losses have hit £50bn and the prospects of a full-year profit for 2006 seem slim. RBS’s share price was at 185p on Friday, below the 502p at which taxpayers break even on their stake. Hopes of a return to

the private sector have receded.” (During the 2008 liquidity crisis, the Labour government took RBS into public ownership to save it from bankruptcy. Since then governments have been awaiting an opportunity to recoup the bail-out cost by selling its shares back on the stock market.)

McEwan worries: “What’s concerning investors is the interest rate(s) being lower for longer; what will that do to your earnings? If there is slowdown, what will that do to loan impairment? Will you need to get more capital longer term?”

Meanwhile the US government has been after RBS for anything up to £13bn “relating to the sale of mortgage bonds before 2008”!

A few days after this report appeared, the publication of the results of “stress tests” on European banks placed RBS third from the bottom for risk.

EU competition rules mean RBS has to divest (sell off) branches. RBS is solving this by transferring branches to the Williams and Glynn brand. “For the next half of his plan, McEwan is focussed on making the bank no. 1 for customer service” (i.e. looking to squeeze as much as possible out the individual customers, a very common tactic in a big bank in crisis.).

Finally, a “regulatory report” that “small business customers were pushed to the brink so RBS could make greater profits” is still to be published!

### Marxist Considerations on the Crisis:

Part 1  
by Balazs Nagy

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## '... and in economic news ...'

### Why investors buy negative yield bonds

On 1 July this year, according to the *Financial Times*, \$11.7tn (eleven and a half trillion dollars!) was tied up in bonds which to all appearances have a negative yield, i.e. the bond holders are paying the issuer to look after their money.

Just to be clear, a bond is promise to pay back a loan of a specified amount of money (its face value) at a specified rate of interest by a specified date.

Bonds are typically issued either by governments or by businesses.

Bonds can be traded well before the due date when they will be redeemed (i.e. the money advanced must be paid back), and the daily fluctuations in prices up and down around the face value is important to people who spend their lives trading them.

They can make a good deal of money in doing so, even when the bond is paying a negative rate of interest. There is a basic point about present-day

capitalism in this: capital worth the equivalent of nearly \$12tn cannot currently find a useful field for investment in productive industries.

We are always told that the purpose of finance capital is to direct investment as efficiently as possible into production so that economies can grow.

This is not working. The \$12tn reflects the excess, the amount of capital that cannot be actually invested profitably. It is a little over one seventh of total world gross domestic product (GDP).

Meanwhile, millions of people around the world are living (and dying!) in poverty, their lives blighted, their hopes unfulfilled and their aspirations frustrated.

Back on 12 April 2016, the *Financial Times* explained: "Global equity [stocks and shares] markets have been rocked by economic fears so far in 2016. Not only might these fears consolidate the view that growth will slow further and push bond

prices higher – they may also encourage investors with some flexibility to move their allocations away from risky assets and towards havens, reasoning that a small loss will constitute 'over-performance' if other asset classes take double-digit losses".

This demand for a safe haven meets up with government initiatives to "encourage lending by cutting borrowing costs, with the ultimate aim of boosting economic growth".

Then with "Quantitative Easing" ("QE"), central banks buy back bonds at the market rate which governments issued at face value.

Bond dealers can make a fair living out of this, but it does nothing to bring about profitable opportunities to invest in creating jobs and providing useful work.

All this tends to prove what Karl Marx identified as the fundamental problem of capitalism – the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

### Younger generation 'fared significantly worse than parents'

*Guardian 18 July 2016*: "Millennials may be first to earn less than previous generation". "Britain's current young generation earned £8,000 less during their 20s than their predecessors and are at risk of being the first group of workers in modern times to see their lifetime earning fall, according to new research.

"A report by the Resolution Foundation highlighting the UK's growing inter-generational divide showed that millennials, who are aged between 15 and 35, fared significantly worse than their parents in generation X during their first years of employment".

(Interesting that the simple words "workers" and "employment" replace all the obfuscation about class in official statistics in recent years.)

"...the deep recession of 2008-9 and the subsequent slow recovery were only partly responsible for the pay penalty suffered by millennials, with earnings for young people being squeezed even before the start of the financial crisis."

"The Resolution Foundation said that a pessimistic scenario could emerge if the short-term economic outlook worsened as a result of Brexit, the weak productivity outlook predicted by the Office for Budget Responsibility earlier this year persisted, and if pay growth continued to fall behind productivity gains, as it has done for much of the last two decades".

Then of course there is all the tosh about "intergenerational inequality" in order to muddy any clear objective look at the fact that the economy is stagnating and starting to regress.

Bourgeois politicians will try to use the "divide" to split pensioners from their grandchildren.

But an unprejudiced look at the situation makes it clear that the problem lies in the capitalist economy itself.

Today's pensioners worked hard and did everything that was asked of them. It is the capitalist system which robs the young generation of hope.

### IMF warning for Italy

(IMF Press Release 16/392, July 12 2016.)

Despite frantic government efforts and cheap prices of import commodities, the Italian economy grew by a measly 0.8% in 2015.

IMF Executive Directors "noted that the recovery is likely to be modest against the backdrop of an unsettled external environment, structural rigidities, strained bank balance sheets, and high public debt. They, therefore, urged the authorities to fully implement and deepen the reforms to further strengthen near-term growth..."

"They called for pressing ahead with ambitious product and service market reforms, including a strengthened Annual Competition Law, modernising the wage-bargaining system to align wages with productivity at the firm level, and implementing public administration reforms decisively, including to lower the cost of doing business..."

The old mantra of the Washington Consensus is repeated here: attack workers' right and wages and dismantle the framework in which they are guaranteed, while freeing the hands of the bourgeoisie to impose its will in every sphere. That's the "way forward" which has brought us to this crisis point.