

Croatia: Programmatic Principles of the Workers' Front

See also the Invitation to a conference in Zagreb

1. **The Workers' Front** is a political organization of workers, unemployed, retirees and students, fighting for a radical change of political and economic relations for the benefit of all oppressed and those who live off their work, for realisation of their social demands, and for protection and extension of their rights.

Unlike the existing parliamentary parties in Croatia, including those which in a populist and opportunist way occasionally appeal to workers, the Workers' Front does not aim to establish itself as a traditional political party. Our goal is not to get integrated in the institutions of the system and secure parliamentary seats, salaries and pensions through petty politicking or to advocate only surface reforms, make different coalitions and compromise with those who are responsible for the current situation in the country.

The goal of the Workers' Front is to bring about a radical change of the society we live in through a political struggle, both on economic and political levels. Therefore, participation in elections would only be one of the means to achieve our goals. In order to be able to accomplish this, we must build an organization rooted in workplaces and connected with everyday social struggle of the disenfranchised.

Unlike the existing political parties, our organization will be truly democratic within itself but act in a disciplined and effective manner. We strive for an organization of activists who would continuously be engaged in trade union, women's

rights and students' movement, as well as in the struggle for the rights of all oppressed social groups.

We strive to be a political voice of the social movement which would gather into its ranks 99% of the exploited people in capitalism, and finally, to be an organization that would fight for an essential change of the social order and for transfer of the totality of political power from the hands of the political elite, large capital and banks to the hands of the people.

2. Capitalism and the so-called "free market" are directed against workers and the majority in society and inevitably lead to their exploitation and poverty, both in Croatia and on a global scale. They form an unstable system which exists in the periods between two global crises and in each one of them hundreds of thousands of workers are thrown into the streets, their lives being destroyed, all in order to save the profits of the richest few.

The accumulation of profits on the backs of workers, unemployed, students and pensioners and against the interests of the majority, is the motivating drive of those that rule society, while everything else like employment, food security, housing issues, etc., is just a by-product of the profit economy which may get only partially realized, but never to the full extent and never for society as a whole.

A fundamental characteristic of capitalism is the irreconcilable difference between the two basic classes: capitalists, holding monopoly over the means of production, such as banks, companies, factories, chain stores, hotels etc., and making profit through the work of others, and workers, i.e. all those who rent their labour to survive.

This antagonism cannot be resolved in any other way but by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and its

political system, which represents the ultimate goal of the Workers' Front, achievable only on a broader scale.

In Croatia, the newly made capitalists, or *tycoons*, assisted by their political allies, i.e. parliamentary parties, have destroyed most of industry, which is a natural consequence of the drive for private profit, rather than the interests of the entire society, and sold everything that took decades and many generations of workers to create.

The representatives of large capital and the powers that be keep cynically saying to the poor, "you have to work harder and give up more" trying to sell them the twisted logic that they will be better off with lower salaries and fewer rights.

The Workers' Front will uncompromisingly confront that kind of logic and system. We want the exploiters and political elite to know that "the time has come for you to pay". Our principles are that everyone deserves a job that pays a decent wage; the burden of the economic crisis needs to be shifted from the backs of the poor onto the backs of the richest; democracy needs to stop being an empty phrase used by capital to hide its dictatorship and become social reality through which working people can realize their interests; all privatizations and sales of state assets need to be stopped immediately while all basic resources of public interest should be nationalized; implementation of workers' control over the entire industry.

Since the aforementioned is in severe conflict with the principles of the capitalist system, as well as with the interests of the ruling class and political elite, the realization of these goals is possible only with the abolition of capitalism.

3. **Although recently founded**, the Workers' Front does not start from scratch. The rich history that inspires and teaches us is a hundred-year-old history of the

international trade union and workers' political movement. It is precisely the persistent and devoted struggle of workers organized into trade unions and parties during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that won us the political and material rights we still enjoy today but which have been increasingly under attack, including an eight-hour day, universal suffrage and social protection.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is only the trade union and political struggle of workers that can, as a first step, counter neoliberalism and bring new victories to those who live off their wages alone, and then make possible the realization of a new society in which the currently oppressed working class, together with allied groups, will take power.

In accordance with the aforementioned, the Workers' Front will strive for the workers' movement to return to its revolutionary roots and reintroduce it openly into politics. Populist politics and political trade-offs will be confronted with a clear workers' social program, and preposterous appeals to the common sense and mercy of the ruling class will be replaced with activism, struggle and pressure from below.

Furthermore, the Workers' Front will try to help the development of true and revolutionary trade unionism and support trade union activities while integrating the WF members into them to create the synthesis of political and trade union activism.

We will strive for reforms of current trade unions as well as for transfer of as much influence as possible to the mass of trade union members and their democratization, for the rejection of the current bureaucratic rigidity and accommodationist politics now carried out by the leadership of the biggest labour unions, so they can become one of the most important tools in the workers' struggle.

4. **The rule of big capital** has long outgrown national borders. The complete domination of corporations and banks, uniformity of neoliberal measures implemented within Europe and beyond, and the most powerful nations in the world that pursue imperial politics and continuously launch military campaigns in order to preserve their interests, influence processes in each country, including Croatia.

It is impossible to fight for the rights of workers, students, unemployed, retirees and other oppressed groups only within the borders of one country.

Therefore, the Workers' Front bases its views and activities on full solidarity with all workers and social struggles in the Balkans, Europe and the world, supporting and trying to actively participate in the global movement of dissatisfaction with capitalism and undemocratic systems, including the capitalist parliamentary system whose rise we have witnessed all over the world, from the USA to Spain and Greece to the Arab world. Furthermore, the Workers' Front believes in the need for unity of all workers and all oppressed people in the struggle against the dictatorship of big capital, which is why it most vehemently opposes all the ideologies and movements (nationalism, chauvinism, racism, homophobia, fascism, clericalism, etc.) that want to divide the oppressed, keep them alienated and turn them against one another.

All the oppressed share the same interests, which can only be realized in unity and solidarity with others. The Workers' Front supports the creation of a strong and coordinated European workers' movement and close connections between all the oppressed in the world. Consequently, the Workers' Front solidarises with all nationally oppressed peoples whose lands are occupied and their language and cultural rights denied.

5. **Above all short term goals**, the fundamental goal of the Workers' Front which determines its activities is the

abolition of the capitalist economic and political system and the institution of social ownership over the means of production, built on principles of workers' management of economy and the political power of the working classes, using democratic decision-making to address all questions of direct interest to people across the board – at the level of the workplace, organization, neighborhood, city, and finally, the whole country.