

WORKERS INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

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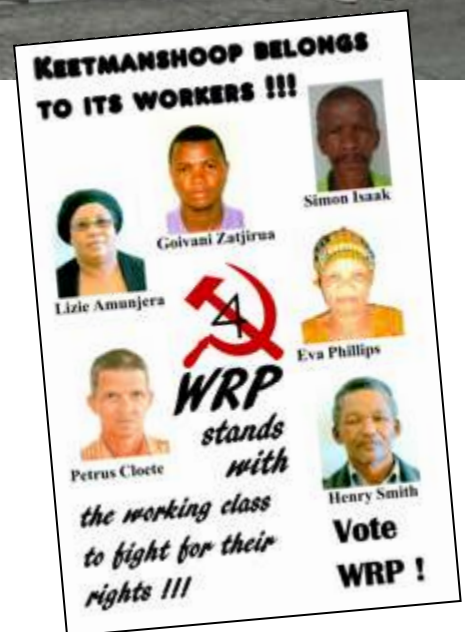
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Growing strength of WRP Namibia!

After a highly successful Second Congress, WRP (N) CC members visited the Parliament building and media outlets in Windhoek (above) to protest underhand attempts to nullify the Party's electoral successes. The WRP is standing candidates in 5 municipal areas in the forthcoming local elections. (The election poster for Keetmanhoop is on the right).



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Political and theoretical journal of
Workers International to Rebuild
the 4th International
PO Box 68375,
London E7 7DT, UK
workersinternational.info
Email:
info@workersinternational.info

Namibia:

WRP Second Congress

Windhoek, 1 - 4 October, 2015

The 2nd congress of the WRP of Namibia, section of the Workers International to rebuild the Fourth International, was held in Windhoek on 1-4 Oct 2015. It was attended by 125 delegates representing every area and drawn from a very broad spectrum of national groups in the country. The congress gave the WRP, as its political programme until the next congress, the Unified Demand of 2013 which was produced in discussions with a number of groups. The WRP will continue to develop and refine the Programme in the course of struggle. Members are currently engaged in organising local branches of the Party and standing candidates wherever possible in the municipal elections. We reproduce below the Political Report to the Congress delivered by HEWAT BEUKES and the basic documents of the Congress.

Political report to the Congress

(This report was delivered in an abridged form at the Congress)

I must inform the Congress of the following foundational issue of our party's political perspective and programme:

We start out from the fact that only a worker produces value. Machines are dead labour. This we will deal with very extensively in the theoretical studies in the party.

We will however give our full attention to the political programme of the party, the draft of which is not complete in that two central aspects are absent: Southern Africa, centring on South Africa, and the international world, specifically Europe.

In the months leading up to the congress we discussed a DISCUSSION PAPER FOR THE WRP CONGRESS OF 1-3 October 2015. This was first drafted in 2013 by various organisations. This programme is now a programme for the WRP to discuss, develop and present to the Congress for adoption.

Most of the groups who had discussed the programme were separate but are now part of the WRP, such as the Southern Peoples Allegiance and the Truth and Justice Committee.

The WRP is an Internationalist party belonging to the Workers International, an international party.

Developments since 1990 and the WRP.

The concrete elements of the WRP national political programme were necessary because of the following developments:

- The collapse of the trade union movement as the basic organisations of

the working class started in 1990 with independence when the bourgeois nationalist leadership scrambled for parliamentary seats and to steal as much as possible as quickly as possible through privatisation of nationalised property and national resources generally.

- The process of the bourgeoisie subjecting the workers movement, in particular the union movement, to bourgeois nationalism was well underway before independence.

- By 1996 the mining bosses and financial transnationals started to steal pension funds through fraudulent concepts such as "surplus funds" and "contribution holidays". They stole the whole pension of the TCL workers (copper miners) in 1996. The South West Africa Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) leaders laid into the Government Institutions Pension Fund of which about R20 billion is listed as stolen. The full extent of the theft is unknown. Rössing Uranium (Rio Tinto Zinc) and fishing companies followed suit but were halted a while by the protests of the miners.

- Homeless struggles started in 1999 with homeless families fighting running battles with the Windhoek Municipality. Land struggles of the landless have flared up sporadically since 1992. We have been involved in struggles alongside Augheigas peasants, TCL workers in 1996-8, the homeless around 2000, in Caprivi in 2008 linked with TCL for pensions, with the landless in the south



HEWAT BEUKES

- We supported industrial actions by teachers and fuel workers
- Since 1992 a decline in labour rights started. In 1992 the Labour Act which was the pinnacle of the protection of labour rights was promulgated. Since then this protection has declined through corruption in courts and the employment by the SWAPO State of corporate lawyers themselves members of the Namibian Employers Association to rewrite legislation. Peter Koep, a corporate lawyer, and Theo Frank, an advocate regularly acting as judge in the High Court, changed fundamental concepts to destroy labour rights. In the 2008 Labour Act, which displaced the one of 1992, they changed the contractual concept of wages as a right to an "interest". This meant that the employer could at any time declare a dispute of "interest" over the wages agreed in the

employment contract. This could lead to a lockout of individual workers who refused to agree to a reduction in salary.

The WRP therefore met with the said groups in 2013 to discuss a way out of the abyss.

The WRP was asked to prepare a draft programme (printed on p.4).

In 2009 the WRP assisted the Communist Party (CP) to stand in the national elections on its registration. The WRP itself could not stand. The CP however reneged on the agreements to raise the pension theft, the homeless, and manifold issues on which the working class was in pitched struggle against banks, insurance companies, in factories and mines. The WRP terminated the electoral agreement on 10 January 2010.

In March 2013 the CP claimed that it had agreed with 27,000 former South West African Territorial soldiers to join together to participate in the 2014 elections to fight for their pension which was stolen by the SWAPO regime after 1990.

It invited the WRP to meetings with purported leaders of the soldiers where it was agreed that the WRP would assist with theoretical classes in Marxist theory. This never materialised.

In March 2014 Attie Beukes requested the WRP to "take over" the CP due to his failing health. He dangled the purported 27,000 membership for the purpose. The WRP declined to do this without discussion and insisted on the following terms (25 and 26 August 2014. See *The basis of our discussions*, p. 5)

However, it became apparent that the CP was using mischief to wrest the WRP registration with the Electoral Commission and was discussing in bad faith.

The WRP terminated discussions, writing to the CP:

"Irreconcilable points

1. *Your electoral agreements with the former soldiers we cannot take over. We are informed in this regard that the written agreement is to allow the soldiers to get into parliament to agitate for their stolen pensions. This agreement puts an apolitical burden on the party. The party is not a utility. It is an instrument of struggle for class rule. It combines with worker leaders in struggle to take partial and individual demands to a combined programme for power as the only means of success. (In the process there may be partial victories). This requires a deep-going and deadly serious theoretical engagement of workers' leaders to understand the struggle for socialism, in particular, the struggle for power.*

Serious dilemmas face the CP if it cannot deliver on parochial and immediate expectations.

2. *The deferring of the classes to introduce the soldiers to communism is not acceptable to us. The reason given that they are hungry and that their immediate needs take precedence now is a serious misunderstanding of the issue. The immediacy of classes and discussions on theory is that amongst others it is the question of the only way to fight and win. It is not an academic exercise. It is not reading groups as understood by the petit bourgeoisie.*

Moreover, these soldiers must understand that forced conscription in Namibia only became possible after the imperialists through the UNO criminally interfered and denounced national groups' leaders as representative and recognised the SWAPO leadership – a tribal monstrosity – as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people. Youths were forced into the army.

These former youths are today a section of the lower working class as security guards facing the brunt of labour hire. They earn around R1000 with 12 hour shifts per day. They have more than enough reason to be the most devoted communists.

It is an immediate necessity that they understand their situation through communist theory.

3. *We cannot participate in a predetermined election. We have acquired books on electronic elections with biometric fingerprinting identification, the system which is purportedly being used by this regime.*

Nothing has been verified and accredited. In the voter registration there were thousands of duplications already. They incredibly even admitted it.

The stated main purpose of electronic registration and voting is to preclude the possibility of duplication. This system failed in this already!

We objected to this two months ago. The ECN has not responded.

We need a full-scale campaign against this predetermined fraud.

Your position that we should fight this while taking part in the election is not acceptable to us.

4. *Tactics are conditioned by our principles. They are not conceived on the basis of a blank-cheque or laissez-faire policy.*

The only way in which we can take responsibility for the CP is that you clarify and agree on the above issues with the CP members in particular the former soldiers and to agree that we start a national campaign against this sham election process."

Elections 2014

A day before close of nominations of candidates for the National Assembly a former soldier, Willem Beukes,

approached the WRP to plead for participation in the election through a Communist Party-WRP alliance. At this juncture it was clear that there were no 27,000 members as the CP could not register.

Beukes was aware of the discussions with Attie. As he had also read the *Communist Manifesto* and Balazs Nagy's book *Marxist Considerations on the Crisis* on the 2008 financial crisis, we agreed that we could participate in the elections on the WRP programme. The only reason that the WRP would participate in elections was to keep up the morale of the workers who were former soldiers. They had to be informed however that no seats should be expected, given the expected fraud of the elections.

A Manifesto was drawn up jointly with a group of soldiers which they themselves presented to the press (see *2014 Election Manifesto*, p.6).

We won 2 seats but from the word go the SWAPO State disrupted the WRP's presence in parliament: It initially refused to swear in its candidates and the conceded, it refused to pay the parliamentary funds of 1.9 million rands to the party.

I now propose the adoption of the Draft Unified Programme as the national political programme of the WRP. In the run-up to this Congress the draft was discussed and accepted in all the regions at all branches.

This draft must also include the programme for the unions developed by Cde. Mirek with the miners (see p. 4.)

(The Congress adopted the Unified Programme.)

Post-script: The preparation for the local and regional elections on 27 November 2015 has seen fantastic developments: 11 branches have organised themselves with their own bank accounts. Despite the fact that only 5 are participating in elections, the rest are energetically organising and involving themselves in the struggle of workers. Branches have taken up, for example, the illegal retrenchments (sackings) by the South African Shoprite chain of stores.

The leadership has taken a straight and forthright discussion on the question of building a party standing on its own two feet and not too depend on funds from elsewhere. A strong resolution was taken.

While there is enormous difficulty, the branches participating are doing it on own resources. Only Okahandja is just not able to do so and must be assisted by Windhoek.

The area where we will need to raise funds from elsewhere is for propaganda both here and in South Africa.

**Hewat Beukes,
October 2015**

Draft Programme. Our programme will be entitled:

Unified Programme of the Namibian Working People

To take political power



The newly-elected WRP Central Committee

Our objective is to consolidate and strengthen the socialist movement in this country through a Unified Demand of the nation engendering the following two tasks:

1. Rebuilding the working class's basic organisations, the trade unions and civic organisations, and,

2. Consolidating and strengthening the socialist movement in this country through rallying the working people around a Unified Demand of the nation.

The Unified Demand comprises the transitional demands of the working class, individual demands of the various national groupings (peasants) and the general demands of the nation. These constituent (individual) demands will be more significant, more empowering and all-embracing as they will be different facets of the same National Demand. They will be unifying and not distinctive, as separate demands tend to be.

Organisation of the Socialist Social Movement (SSM)

It was resolved in a meeting in February 2013 by Workers International members, the Forum of the Future, the NAMRIGHTS and individuals to call on the various working class groups we are working with and other groups fighting on individual issues to unite in a social movement. The necessity to form it as and call it socialist was unanimously agreed.

The groups we are working with are:

- The former Goldfields South Africa (TCL) miners and mineworkers;
- Members of the teachers' strike committee.
- The Southern Peoples Allegiance.
- Women and youth groups.

- The Mbaroma Camp Committee.
- Housing and homeless groups.
- Poor peasants in the struggle for reparations and land.
- Fundamental rights groups.

The leadership of this movement will initially be comprised of representatives of each group in a national committee. This committee will begin the centralisation of the movement by propagating and organising around the Unified Demand and Programme. The leadership is formed on the principle that the working class leadership is independent and leads the poor peasantry and articulates the land and national issues in correspondence with working class interest.

It will assist the poor peasantry to organise independently and to develop appropriate demands wherever they endeavour to do so such as in the current land struggles, land seizures and demands.

The Unified Demand

The following demands amongst others constitute a summary of demands informing the propaganda and organisational work of the SSM.

1. In General it is true that the capitalists seek to load off their intensifying woes and their falling profits onto the working class these days by labour rental and waning benefits and wages. However, in Namibia profits are maximised by the legacy of apartheid and by a new servile caste of officials which sell for example US\$80 billion worth of mineral reserves for a million dollar kick-back or give it away free through their courts to international firms. It is guessed that fishing companies make 800% profit. Banks run uncontrolled scams such as housing loan schemes.

Companies, banks and mines do not go bust in Namibia. Rio Tinto Zinc declared in 1980 that it had long-term uranium contracts until 2025 and it would not be affected by periodic slumps in demand as were others. Since independence it periodically threatens to close shop due to unrealistic workers' demands and the world economic situation.

The national government does not know nor endeavour to know the extent of the extraction of mineral reserves and fish and the GNP and GDP.

Thus, the SSM demands a public inquiry into the natural and national resources of the country and the opening of books of all mines, corporations and business in general.

2. Nationalisation of oil and gas.

3. The working class seeks immediate measures for full employment with a living wage. Such a programme of allocating quotas of employment to the various branches of industry and commerce to fill, public works, re-nationalisation of rail and road transport services, postal services for expansion of employment and work security, and collective and co-operative farming, shall be financed through levies on large scale mining and industry.

4. The derogation of labour rights through a corruption and derogation of labour supervisory state mechanism through the changes in labour legislation and employment of semi-literates shall be reversed by the establishment of workers councils in each town and city.

5. Education will be reviewed to remove it from the control from Cambridge and to put it under national

Unified Programme of the Namibian Working People

(continued from page 4)

control through the various communities.

6. The SSM encourages and assists workers to organise to remove their trade union functionaries who are stifling each struggle and assisting the derogation of rights and conditions by the capitalists. The trade union experience at Marikana should caution against short-cuts of forming new unions instead of fighting for the expulsion of corrupt and reactionary leaderships. However in mergers with the state and the old unions such as at Marikana the only way may be to substitute the union for new organisations.

National question and the Contract Labour System

The SSM spearheads the conceptualisation and formalisation of demands of national groups/nations into a comprehensive coherent demand for national self-determination and in the process uniting the working class. (Recent experience has amply illustrated that the peasant leadership comprised by the tribal chiefs is unable to formulate consequential demands and create appropriate strategies in their demands and struggles for land and reparations against the incumbent regime directed and assisted by the German Government.)

7. SSM supports unconditionally the demand for War Reparations by the Herero and Nama groups. However, it puts forward a more comprehensive demand centring on the land and properties (corporeal [movable and immovable], and incorporeal) within Namibia which had been expropriated or engendered and on which untold wealth continues to be produced with the labour of the expropriated. Moreover, our demand is not for War Reparations alone, but for restitution of property

expropriated by Imperial Germany from 1884 to 1915. It forms a significant part of the land issue and is based on the demand for socialisation of land without compensation. The demand serves further as a propaganda tool to focus on Germany's imperialist role and relations in Namibia to maintain colonial bondage and to shackle all and any development tending towards the material and social emancipation and development of the Namibian nation. With it, it tends to publicly highlight imperialist relations generally as it has already achieved with sections of both the Namibian and German peoples.

8. A similar demand against South African Colonialism as the above by national groups in particular the Nama, the San, the Damara and the Baster.

9. A demand for restitution of the abuse under the Contract Labour System which has displaced whole communities from especially Ovamboland and Kavangoland to southern Namibia where independence released the administration from the responsibility of provision of proper shelter, food, healthcare and employment. The compounds had been imploded and the masses of contract labour ejected into cities of squatter camps where they are left to their own devices for survival, and where they continue to serve the objectives of the Contract Labour System, but without its liabilities and responsibilities. Farm labourers both contractual and traditional are ejected from commercial farms where the latter had for generations created the wealth on these farms and had served the landlords with kith and kin in production, maintaining and serving the households. The vast majority are unemployed. The demand for provision of permanent proper shelter, free food,

healthcare and permanent employment issues against the selfsame mines, corporate commercial and industrial concerns, commercial farms or their successors and the State. Failure to meet the demand must be met with confiscation, compensation and socialisation.

10. The demand for return of Namibian remains from Germany killed during the wars of extermination and shipped to Germany is extended to the Angolan, Zambian and Tanzanian States and the SWAPO for the remains of Namibians killed by themselves and by the SWAPO leadership in exile until 1990.

11. The institution of a public inquiry into the period of 1962 to 1990 into the abuse and extermination of political fighters and refugees for a full report on the circumstances and causes of the treacherous period in the life of the Namibian nation.

12. A demand to the same instances for accounting of the unaccounted missing persons. This is a continuing crime against the Namibian nation whose resolution is intimately linked to the struggle against the obscenities and abuses of the imperialists and the abuses of their surrogates.

13. The high profile international publication and propaganda around the last four demands are absolutely necessary as part of a concerted effort to preclude the revisiting of the continual, extreme and punctuated tragedies perpetrated on a resistant people by imperialism.

Most of the above demands are at least partially articulated as single issues by particular groups.

Through the Unified Demand and Programme we will unify the nation.

The basis of our discussions and possible agreement with the CP

The principles the WRP put forward in discussions on 25-26 August 2014

- Lenin's Imperialism and Trotsky's Permanent Revolution the foundation of our political position and programme;
- The draft unified programme as the basis on which we organise a conference of the various workers and union groups, and national groups (without 'kulaks').

- On the basis of class independence and on the history of the working class's struggles in Namibia we seek to take part in NUMSA's international initiatives.
- Immediate discussions with soldiers on a formal commitment to working class solidarity and no tribalist division of the working class, with the

understanding that the working class unconditionally support the demands of the oppressed national groups to self-determination.

- A full understanding of the danger of misconstruing the tribal roguery of the imperialist-installed Ovambo caretaker bureaucracy, and to recognise the Ovambo section of the class as an

indispensable part of the revolutionary struggle.

- Rejection of the petit bourgeois mystification and childishness that denies the existence of distinctive national groups.
- Understanding that the essence of our struggle is to unite the class both nationally and internationally.
- Our struggles to draw lessons from the class's history. Such resurrection of our history will build the bridge to fuse with the history of the world's working classes as elucidated by Trotsky. This is a central element in the rebuilding of the Fourth International.
- We seek to support a socialist movement in South Africa which will draw on the actual working class and

socialist history of South Africa and which can give meaning to the call of NUMSA for the building of a socialist party in South Africa able to inspire the working class and able to seize power.

- We are already agreed that a struggle against the fraudulent election in the offing must immediately be launched. We will not take part in an obviously fraudulent process. We take cognisance that in at least two elections SWAPO has in reality lost: 1989 and 2009 due to massive fraud. The WRP has already begun the struggle and continues with it to reject the obviously fraudulent electronic process.
- We as communists reject any form of submission to the bourgeois nationalist

state and to become its ideological mouthpiece.

- We fight theoretical forms of opportunism as they manifest themselves in Southern Africa amongst others by either focussing on imperialism without its social-political base, the bourgeois nationalists, or to concentrate on the bourgeois nationalist depravity outside its imperialist framework.
- This time we will not allow any movement to assail the actual history of Southern Africa again nor to manipulate the social movement for imperialism's objectives as the liberal bourgeoisie, the Stalinists, the Anti-Apartheid movement and the petit bourgeoisie in general did in this preceding period.

WRP OF Namibia

Election Manifesto 2014

Introduction

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

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

The UNO subsequently renounced the representative status of the leaders of the different national groups and thus opened the way for the South African sponsored Turnhalle Conference in 1975 and the Conscriptio Act in 1977. We, the present leaders of the WRP – then leaders of the SWAPO Youth League – with others led the Anti-Conscription movement, which was opposed by the SWAPO leadership in exile.

The Anti-Conscription movement led to mutiny within the South West Africa Territorial Force (SWATF). Soldiers who escaped fled into exile to Angola and Zambia, where they were forced to confess to being spies and all of them were killed.

In 1982 the "Five Western Powers" with South Africa and the UNO agreed to so-called National Reconciliation in which the SWAPO and South African sponsored

parties would reconcile to leave the colonial economic situation as is.

SWAPO was not just willingly reconciled with the colonial ruling classes; it became the white corporate ruling classes' boss-boy. But it also seized N\$36 million of the SWATF/KOEVOET pension. These soldiers were demobilized and immediately became victims of Labour Hire and dire exploitation as part of the lower working classes.

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

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

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

Our election campaign is based on the following:

1. We, the WRP, go to Parliament to speak over the heads of the Bourgeois parliament, to the masses of the people. We have no regard for the Namibian Parliament as it is an institution of capitalism and in a backward country like this it takes absurd forms in which it is a mere rubber stamp for legislation and decisions of the big corporations and the banks. We cannot speak of taking over parliament as the elections have already been rigged with inaccessible electronic voting machines made in India.
2. We are using these elections to advance the demands of the working class including the poor peasantry and in particular the demands of the SWATF/KOEVOET families and relatives, in relation to stolen pen-

sions, loss of income and losses in general through economic sanctions, marginalization, victimization and discrimination, landlessness and homelessness.

3. We will articulate and support the demands of the Herero and Nama people for War reparations for Genocide (1904-8) from the German State.

4. We will put forward the seizure of our Natural Resources to enable us to fund the upliftment of the working class and poor peasantry in general and the neglected SWATF/KOEVOET soldiers in particular.

5. We will put forward the immediate cessation of the wanton sale of our natural resources through Exploration Licenses (EPL's) with seizure of it without compensation, to enable us to fund the upliftment of the working class and poor peasantry.

6. The demands of the SWATF/KOEVOET will also highlight the demands of the working class in general.

7. We will further advance the demand for basic needs of the working class families to be provided and subsidized by the government on the first tier level (Municipalities), housing, water and electricity, public transport, clinics, kindergartens, sport and recreation facilities, etc to be brought to the people.

8. We will demand living wages tied to the rate of inflation (and not minimum wages).

9. We will demand land to the landless and subsidies for the upliftment of the poor peasantry.

We commit ourselves to rebuild the 4th International with the world's working classes, the sub-regional working classes of Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia and in particular South Africa with whom we share a common political history.

Enough is Enough!

Mine-workers who are members of the Workers Revolutionary Party of Namibia propose the following elements as a contribution to the WRP programme:

1. Our present situation

Twenty-five years after independence, a majority of workers in Namibia live in conditions of absolute poverty and lack of basic workers' rights. Miners are among the poorest. Most are constantly in search of work. Only short term contracts are available. There is no job security. For years, the search for work has sent miners to far-off regions, while their families stay in townships composed of makeshift shelters. Miners' salaries do not sustain them or their families.

We have lost all confidence in "poverty eradication programmes". The government makes these and other empty promises only to deceive us. For decades it has been in fact actively implementing all measures requested by their imperialist masters in order to constantly aggravate the conditions of our exploitation, as well as those of all other sectors of the working class and of other oppressed classes.

Miners extract enormous riches from the soil of our country. But most of those riches are appropriated by rich investors from abroad. The remainder, mere crumbs, feeds a small class of Namibian capitalists who act as local agents of these investors. These crumbs feed especially the utterly corrupt top layer of the SWAPO party which manage the capitalist Namibian state as a machine by means of which their imperialist masters organise the systematic robbery of the enormous resources of our country.

2. Namibia is neither democratic, nor independent

It is with this purpose that the SWAPO regime was installed by imperialism in 1989. Imperialism gave that regime the form of a political democracy but, like in other African countries, that form has long revealed itself as a pretence. Masses of poor people have no land and no money to build houses for themselves. Most of the land is still in the hands of a few very rich, mostly white landowners who exploit a dependent labour force. National and ethnic groups are oppressed. Corruption pervades all sectors of public life. Elections bring impossibly high results for the ruling party.

Democracy is still a goal for our country. To achieve it, we must get rid of the SWAPO rule. The SWAPO regime and its international masters themselves have made sure that even replacing that party by

another is impossible without a political revolution led by the working class, allied with all other oppressed classes.

But the working class cannot stop at replacing one ruling party by another. Neither can it just tackle the democratic tasks which, in developed countries, were solved decades and even centuries ago, and leave it at that. There will be no democracy without getting rid of the economical dependence of our country on the several imperialist powers in the USA, Europe and Asia which exploit it. That is only possible if our revolution does not stop at introducing democracy and becomes a socialist revolution with an international character.

3. We fight for world socialism

We workers now say: Enough is enough!

It is time for the working class to recognise the root of the evil. That root is the capitalist-imperialist system itself. It is this system that maintains our country in economic and political dependence. That system is rotting. It cannot be corrected. We workers must uproot it and replace it by international socialism.

For that we must unite the working classes of the whole of southern Africa. Therefore we welcome the decision of our brothers and sisters organised in the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa to build a new workers party. That decision is the beginning of an international process which has yet to develop and reach not just southern Africa, but the imperialist countries of Europe, America and Asia as well. It is as part of that process that we decided to build the Workers Revolutionary Party of Namibia.

Capitalism-imperialism maintains our countries in underdevelopment and dependence. We must get rid of it as a world system. To that end the working class must uproot it both in dependent countries like Namibia and in imperialist countries. We must build a world party, an International which leads the struggle for socialism all over the world. That Fourth International was already founded decades ago. We need to rebuild it and therefore we build the Workers Revolutionary Party of Namibia as a section of Workers International to rebuild the Fourth International with our comrades in England and other countries.

4. Transitional demands

All the demands in the old international Programme of the Fourth International which is the programme of Workers International are still valid. We make them our own and will work to adapt them to the

particular conditions of southern Africa and Namibia.

We are well aware that the WRP at this moment represents only a minority of mine workers and also only minorities among other sectors of the working class. We need to win the majority. Moreover, our class needs to learn how to overthrow and extirpate capitalism from the experience of its own struggles, starting with the most elementary demands to survive by resisting exploitation and culminating with our class taking power. The current and ever worsening conditions of exploitation threaten the very existence of the working class, not just the mine workers. So most of these demands are not specific to the mining sector.

4.1. Living wage and employment

Our first demand is that workers and their families can live by their wages. To this end we demand a minimum wage that affords a decent living standard. This living wage must be adjusted to the rising level of prices. The whole scale of wages above the minimum wage must be adjusted accordingly. We do not trust the state to determine the real cost of living. Workers' unions and other workers organisation must determine the cost of living based on the real needs of workers' families.

Second, we demand the right to employment. According to official statistics, more than 28 percent of the Namibian work force are unemployed. Over half of the youth (51%) are unemployed. These numbers are growing and anyway, they are official lies. They underestimate the true rates by far. They leave out persons who have given up looking for work and try to survive through the "informal economy". Even admitting that false premise, they are very probably falsified.

The right to work is the only serious right of workers in a society based on the exploitation of wage labour. Yet this right is denied to at least one worker in three and one young worker of two. We demand that the available work be divided among the whole labour force. The weekly working ours must diminish accordingly, without loss of wage.

The capitalists will tell us that these demands cannot be satisfied because that would bankrupt them. They will say the same thing about all other demands in this programme.

We answer that these demands do not form a maximum programme. On the contrary, they represent the minimum that we must achieve in order to prevent the working class and the youth from descending further

into the hell on earth of beggary and slavery and create a future for our youth. A regime that cannot satisfy these demands deserves to die.

4.2. Convert all temporary work contracts to permanent ones

Workers with temporary contracts, usually for three months, are regularly kicked out at the end of their contract. Since they can be replaced so easily, they have become almost defenceless. For years, mining companies have offered no permanent work contracts at all. Due to this change, a growing part of the working class, especially the youth, has already lost the conquests previously won in decades of struggle, like medical and housing allowances and pensions. They are condemned to a life with no job security, a lifelong uncertainty about how they and their families will live next month.

We demand an immediate conversion of temporary contracts to permanent ones with all the benefits. This demand also concerns the whole of the working class.

4.3. A law forbidding temporary work contracts

All experience of the working class in the world has shown that contract conditions must be regulated by law. Negotiations between a powerful group of capitalists, mostly foreign capitalists, and individual workers or even a group of workers at a particular mine are enormously biased in favour of the capitalists.

The old regime of apartheid existed mainly to guarantee the super-exploitation of the black labour-force by means of the system of contract labour. Apartheid is gone but the SWAPO regime, like the ANC regime in South Africa, have in fact reintroduced contract labour with its inevitable social consequences: terrible poverty, migrant labour, destruction of workers' families, criminality. This social reality has produced a new, undeclared apartheid both social and racial. Just these facts suffice to condemn without appeal the ruling parties and the classes they represent. We must get rid of them.

As a first step we demand the complete reversal of the barbaric labour relations reintroduced by them. A law which allows only permanent work contracts with full benefits is the first step that we demand.

4.4. Expropriation under workers' control of mines which lay off workers

Mining companies come to Namibia when they hope to extract a profit from us workers. As soon as the conditions of exploitation or the conditions of realisation of profit on the world market become less favourable to them, they get rid of workers unceremoniously. At Purity Manganese they told workers to go home for an unpaid holiday of a few days. When workers returned, the company was gone, its owners

had left the country with the money and other assets, having cheated workers of months of pay and of lay-off compensations.

Mine owners will always look for ways to cheat workers. We demand that bankrupt mine owners be automatically expropriated, all their assets including their Exclusive Prospecting Licences and bank accounts confiscated by the state and that the state fully and automatically take over their obligations towards the workers, including their pensions. We demand that the owners be arrested and investigated. Many of them are fraudsters, and must be punished.

We have however no confidence in the corrupt SWAPO state which colludes with these criminals regularly and which created the conditions favourable for their operation. We demand full control of these expropriations, of the investigation and of the management of state enterprises. The controllers must be elected workers' representatives organised in workers councils with the help of our unions.

4.5. Pensions

The pension fund of the mine workers who had worked at Tsumeb Corporation Limited were stolen by banks with the help of the SWAPO government and Namibian courts.

We support the demand of the Committee of TCL workers for the return of their pensions.

Former SWATF soldiers, former PLAN fighters and several other groups of workers were equally robbed of their pensions. We demand the return of all those funds to their rightful owners.

We demand an investigation of how all these funds were stolen and punishment of the thieves. For decades, we have been asking the SWAPO state, its judicial system and its government to investigate and to return the funds. But obviously it is like asking a thief to investigate himself. Enough is enough! Workers organisations, above all our unions, must now stop ignoring the plight of old mine workers and other workers condemned to terrible poverty after a lifetime of hard work, and take action.

4.6. Exclusive Prospecting Licences (EPLs)

If a group of workers at a particular mine decides to take over their mine from its bankrupt owners and exploit it as a cooperative, we support them and demand that the EPL be transferred to the cooperative without compensation for the original buyers of the licence. We demand that the state provides the machinery in this case.

But the problem must be tackled at an earlier stage, at the moment when EPLs are granted to private investors. These investors, coming mostly from imperialist countries or working with foreign investors in joint ventures, take advantage of an opaque system of granting these licences, in order to secure them for peanuts. The SWAPO

deciders are either bribed or simply slavishly submissive. As a result, the immense wealth of natural resources of Namibia are given away without profiting to the people of Namibia which continues to live in poverty.

The whole process of granting EPLs must become transparent, especially to the working class. The only way to achieve this is through workers' control. Representatives of unions and other workers' organisations must be part of each and every decision about an EPL with a right to veto EPLs that violate workers' rights or amount to robbing the Namibian people of its riches. Our representatives must report fully and faithfully to the working class about all conditions being negotiated.

4.7. Expropriation of mining companies, other big capitalists and banks

Ultimately we cannot limit the demand of expropriation to such capitalists as go bankrupt, prove corrupt and criminal. That would condemn the working class to be always trying to patch up an old rusting pot which develops ever new holes. It is not just individual capitalists who go bankrupt or steal. It is the whole capitalist system that has failed to provide conditions for human life. Leading capitalists and their politicians admit openly this bankruptcy and base the right of survival of their rotten system solely on the supposed lack of an alternative.

But the working class can and must provide an alternative to this system.

We demand the expropriation of all key industries. These are industries which are decisive for the whole economy. All key industries in private hands must become state enterprises without compensation of their previous owners.

The mining industry has the first place among them. It extracts the main resources of Namibia, its minerals and ores, and trades them on the world imperialist market. Once extracted and sold, these riches are gone, never to be replaced. Since the product of mining does not belong to the Namibian people, our people is getting ever poorer.

Industries that were privatised under the pressure of imperialist international institutions like the International Monetary Fund must be re-nationalised. The dismemberment, selling out and outright theft of national assets such as Transnamib must be stopped and reversed.

But the Namibian state itself is a capitalist state run mainly in the interest of foreign imperialist powers. There is no reason why workers should trust this state. We demand that all state enterprises be placed under the democratic control of workers through their unions and other organisations. By controlling the state sector, workers will learn to manage and plan production on a large scale. This will prepare them for the socialist transformation of the economy.



TCL workers campaigning for their stolen pensions

4.8. Workers' and peasants' government

Political change is required to implement any of these demands of the mine workers, of any other sector of the working class or of the other oppressed classes in Namibian society. There is no way living and working conditions for workers, peasants and other poor people can fundamentally improve with the SWAPO government staying in place. The balance-sheet of this corrupt party after twenty five years in power proves this without any doubt.

We build our Workers Revolutionary Party to take power, satisfy all the demands of our class and of other oppressed classes and nations of Namibia, and make the fundamental changes outlined in this programme.

The only government capable of doing so is a government of workers and peasants. Our party will never be part of a government that is not the expression of the alliance of these two classes under the leadership of workers.

But even such a government will not be able to implement the demands of the working class and its allies and also keep the capitalist state, its bureaucratic, military and police apparatus. The capitalist state will sabotage each and every measure of a workers' government in favour of the oppressed, especially measures destined to end the rule of capitalists by expropriating them, and to start building socialism.

Therefore we must replace that state by a new one, based on councils of workers and poor peasants. A true workers government is only possible as the executive organ of a new, workers state.

5. The working class must take back its unions

The working class needs its trade unions in order to defend its everyday, immediate interests. The foundation of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia during the liberation struggle and the foundation of the National

Union of Namibian Workers were great achievements of the working class of our country.

Besides defending everyday interests of workers under capitalist exploitation, unions must also set themselves the goal of complete liberation of the working class from exploitation. But they cannot have a complete political programme to achieve that goal.

For that, the working class needs its political party, independent of all other classes and their parties. The workers party has the same interests as all other workers. It belongs to the working class. The party is different from the rest of the class only in that it has a scientific analysis of the world capitalist society, its past and future, and the place of the working class in it. This allows the party to have a programme guiding the working class towards socialist revolution. We are building the WRP as that party.

All members of the WRP are also members of the unions. WRP members who are mine workers are members of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia. As members of the MUN we ask our union to fight for the demands in this programme. For instance, it is in the everyday and immediate interest of mine workers that the contract labour system in the mines be abolished and all temporary contracts be converted into permanent ones.

However, even such elementary demands are political, if only because they require a change in the legislation. A workers party which will put forward workers' demands against the capitalist government, inside and outside parliament, is needed. Without a workers party, unions cannot defend even the immediate, most elementary interests of workers properly.

But the leadership of MUN, of many other unions and of the whole confederation NUNW do not fight for our interests. Instead, they have been collaborating closely with the bosses. When there is a

dispute, these so called "unionists" first go drink coffee with the bosses and only then talk to the concerned workers to calm them. Some even report workers' activists, members of MUN, to the boss! Also, the MUN leadership has invested members' money in capitalist enterprises with no benefit for the workers.

The leaderships of the MUN and the NUNW collaborate not only with the owners of individual mines or other enterprises. They also collaborate with the government of the capitalists. The MUN and the NUNW are affiliated to SWAPO. But SWAPO has proved all along its history that it is not a party representing the interests of the working class. It has governed our country for 25 years and the enormous majority of its people still live in terrible poverty and exploitation. SWAPO is the party of the capitalists, foreign and Namibian.

We have the following programme for our union, the MUN:

- Stop collaborating with the bosses.
- Defend exclusively workers' interests.
- Account for the money paid in by workers.
- Take all the measures necessary, including a solidarity strike, to recover the stolen pensions of TCL workers.
- Take solidarity action with workers laid off and robbed by their bosses.
- Adopt the demands in this programme.
- Disaffiliate from SWAPO and start building the workers party.

Only a totally renewed MUN will be able to fulfil this programme. The MUN must belong to its members again. Its leadership must be replaced by one acting according to this programme and responsible only to workers.

We call on all workers' activists, members of the MUN : Enough is enough. Let us take over the MUN !

Namibia Municipal Elections: Our programme is entitled

the Unified Demand of the poor peasants and working class

in the Local Authority of Keetmanshoop (one of five localities in which WRP Namibia is standing)

The factual background of this manifesto

Keetmanshoop is the “Capital” of the South located in one of the three wealthiest regions in Namibia: Its economy includes mining (diamond and zinc), it has massive uranium, gas and oil, and tantalite reserves, fishing including lobster fishing, tourism, and prime meat production. Together with Central Namibia it holds the richest historical heritage and legacy of life-and-death struggles against British, German and South African colonialism and imperialism.

It is a Mecca of Tourism generating billions of dollars through its natural and historical sites.

But, the brutal contradiction remains: amongst this untold wealth the working class and poor peasantry suffer untold squalor and poverty.

Since independence in 1990 social-economic conditions have progressively deteriorated: homelessness and landlessness have become the order of the day; unemployment has risen from an estimated 15% in 1990 to more than 60% today; permanent employment and benefits such as pensions are being replaced by labour hire, three monthly contracts with no benefits, and hire and fire.

Keetmanshoop has seen 5 town councils elected since independence. They have done nothing to improve conditions. Instead they caused a severe increase in problems: infra-structure and services deteriorated under them; corruption is their day-to-day operation: with the other local authorities in Namibia they create worthless activities such as workshops and festivals around the country and outside the country to increase their ‘Subsistence & Travel’ (‘SNT’) allowances running into obscene amounts. Their entire parasitic activity is to clean out municipal coffers. They eat into the capital. They do not develop any aspect of the town, but cause it to decay. They suppress the peoples’ right to land and services exactly because they need to use land and services for corruption.

DURING THE 24 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CREATED THE SCOURGE OF



The WRP is also standing in Windhoek. Above is the election poster for that campaign

TRIBAL OPPRESSION ON THE PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH.

At tourist sites, at lodges, at mines, at shops, in Government and Local Authority positions workers from the south are excluded by the capitalists and State officials. In their place they employ workers from the north on a family and tribal basis.

Jacobus Josob of the WRP reported in December 2012 on the struggle for housing of 400 Nama families:

“In April 2012 a group of 400 homeless families seized land. After a violent confrontation the Municipality allocated the land to the group. In the meantime some of the members were relocated to a dreadful area far away from the town centre. The community were resettled close to the Army Barracks. Soldiers seized erven (plots of land) and are running Shebeens smuggling liquor and drugs. Chief Fredericks of Bethanie has reported to Mr Niema Movassat the parliamentary representative of the Linke Partei in the German Bundestag that his people were subjected to cultural and

moral genocide. These soldiers provide liquor and drugs to minor children and use the ensuing dependency to rape underage girls. They spread HIV infection. This president ignores all complaints directed to him.”

The WRP’s role in the South

In 1992 the WRP started the campaign for Reparations for German Colonialism and Genocide.

In April 2012 the SWAPO regime sent an armed contingent of the police and the army to suppress 400 homeless families who had taken their land in Keetmanshoop for the purpose of building homes. Jacobus Josob the Secretary-General of the WRP intervened and warned the commander of these forces not to launch an assault on the families. The intended assault was called off.

The WRP then supported the families who united with communities throughout the south to form the Southern Peoples Allegiance. This allegiance undertook to organise the communities to fight against their continuing impoverishment and to fight for political power.

On 21 June 2014 Comrade Josob on behalf of the Allegiance tried to deliver a letter to Ban Ki-Moon at the UN headquarters in Klein Windhoek containing the statement, "Despite the ideals of the UN of peace and social and economic progress our people are still reeling under abject poverty in the presence of plenty. Under the supervision of the UN in 1922 we were murdered, maimed and disowned of our private property until today. They have never recuperated from these barbaric onslaught by the South African forces. The Namibian government received the Bondelswarts stolen property at independence from the South African illegal government. It is today occupied by the Namibian Government as "state property".

The UN used the SWAPO militia the Field Force to assault Cd Josob and abduct and detain him for several hours. The case is still pending in a court controlled and dictated by the SWAPO regime.

The WRP's local authority programme

The WRP field the following candidates for Local Authority Elections in Keetmanshoop:

Simon Isaak; Josephine Fredericks; Lizie Amunjera; Anna Martha Beukes Kaptrina Petrus; Thomas Andries Boysen; Henry Smith; Petrus Cloete'; Dawid Motinga; Veitjie Frederik; Johannes Vries; Govani Zatzirua

These candidates signed the following code of conduct undertaking to carry out the WRP's programme:

1. This manifesto constitutes an undertaking by the WRP to the working people of Keetmanshoop.

2. A WRP Town Council and councillors shall assist the Keetmanshoop working community to organise to govern the Keetmanshoop municipality. The Town Council will work as part of such communal organisation. The WRP will propose that such representative communal organisation convene annual policy meetings to review the performance of the Town Council and determine the policies of the Town Council for the following year.

3. As the WRP seeks the unity of the working class nationally, it shall follow a policy in Keetmanshoop and the south that the restitution of rights of workers originally from the south will be the priority in the general programme of struggle for workers' rights. All workers shall support unconditionally the measures by the Town Council to end tribal discrimination and to prioritise the

appointment of workers from the south within the general struggle to end unemployment. Workers will be united on true workers' solidarity and bogus unity based on bogus 'One Namibia, One Nation' of the SWAPO regime will be banished.

4. The WRP will work with the 400 landless families to develop their land at the east side of Keetmanshoop for council housing with town-planning based on history and their approval of architecture, town-planning and the necessary amenities and means to sustain themselves through economic activity. The WRP will take all actions to bring to book the police and State organs responsible for the confiscation of the properties of the families ejected from townlands in April 2012.

5. Keetmanshoop Town Council will bar corrupt mass housing schemes of the Central Government and build and develop council housing for the housing of all.

6. Books will be opened, all land transactions will be investigated. All property and assets acquired by corrupt practices will be impounded and damages as a result of loss of property will be recouped.

7. Privatisation of transport and properties of Keetmanshoop Town will be reversed and used in the drive to create employment.

8. Keetmanshoop shall seek unity and solidarity with other town councils to fight for the reversal of the privatisation of rail and road transport services, telecommunications, health, education and maintenance services and for the devolution of functions related thereto to local authorities for job creation. In this regard the Town Council will investigate and hold public inquiries into the malmanagement of the Central Government of road and rail maintenance, the corruption and destruction around TransNamib assets and properties and the creation of rotten infra-structure through tender corruption and rotten, low quality installations. Billions are involved.

9. Keetmanshoop shall spearhead the struggle to compel NAMDEB to repay the stolen revenue such as R5 billion of the Thirion Commission to the southern communities, compel all the mining and fishing companies to repay their financial obligations to the south.

10. Keetmanshoop will develop townlands for collective farming to create jobs and develop production of food.

11. Keetmanshoop shall institute a department of works to develop and maintain the town, maintain a clean and



Comrade Josob: tried to deliver letter to Ban Ki-Moon on 21 June 2014

beautiful town and to restore and develop its stature as a tourist destination. It will maintain the national rail and road infrastructure around the town.

12. Keetmanshoop shall demand the necessary budgetary allocations from the Central Government to realise those functions which reverted to the Central Government due to its policies of disempowerment of the local communities such as road and rail maintenance.

13. Keetmanshoop shall develop primary health infrastructure through satellite clinics and maintenance of secondary health facilities such as hospitals. These facilities are non-existent and hospitals are not maintained.

14. Keetmanshoop shall develop pre-school educational facilities.

15. Keetmanshoop will upgrade cultural life through a museum and insisting on educational material for pre-primary, primary and secondary education to disseminate the true history of the south which is currently suppressed in the national curricula.

16. The above programme will create extensive employment for the youth of Keetmanshoop.

17. Sport and youth development will be treated as a priority.

18. Keetmanshoop will spearhead the struggle for Reparations and Restitution of lands and land rights to the working people of the south through a programme of collectivisation of land and resources and the reversal of privatisation.

Our candidates shall treat with disdain the pretentious titles of 'councillor' and 'honourable' as instruments to set them apart from the working people and entitle them to parasitism.

- **Long live the Working People of Keetmanshoop!**
- **Long live the Workers Revolutionary Party, the party of the working class and poor peasantry!**

'Independent inquiry into Marikana massacre'

Unite the Union United Left calls for an independent inquiry into the Marikana massacre of 2012.

The United Left unreservedly condemns the killing of black striking miners in the Marikana massacre by South African police, an act that shocked the civilised world. In 2013 United Left welcomes the announcement by President Zuma that a Judicial Commission of Inquiry would investigate the facts and make recommendations. South Africa needed to re-examine itself closely following this atrocity committed by a predominantly white police force with guns and dogs that looked far too much like the apartheid era forces of state repression.

The Farlam Report (the report issued from the official government inquiry into the Marikana miners' massacre of August 2012) has failed to satisfy the calls from within and outside South Africa for justice.

1. The miners are blamed for their own deaths. It states: "The tragic events ... originated from the decision and conduct of the strikers in embarking on an unprotected strike by violence and intimidation, using dangerous weapons for the purpose".

2. The South African police are described as merely "incompetent" (including incompetent in attempts to deceive the public and the Commission). The report fails to tackle the central question about the role of the police in the Marikana massacre. An expert police witness described it as a force "remilitarised and politicised since 2000" in order to suppress increasingly numerous and angry protests and uprisings against stark inequalities in South African society. Senior police were completely evasive in their answers on politicians' involvement in the decision to use violence to suppress a strike.

3. Top politicians exonerated. Many top politicians including Cyril Ramaphosa (current ANC Deputy President and shareholder at Lonmin) claimed there was no labour dispute



Victims of the massacre are commemorated during a demonstration at South Africa House, London, on the third anniversary, 14 August 2015.

and that the miners were criminals, in the lead-up to the massacre. As one of the policing experts called during the Inquiry said, there is no way such a decision would be taken by the police on their own. It would have to involve politicians and the judiciary.

4. Lonmin, the mining company, gets a tiny, unenforceable slap on the wrist for decades of unrelenting economic exploitation it has imposed on miners and their families. Along with other foreign-owned mining companies, Lonmin has made super-profits from brutalising black migrant workers, condemning them to live in squalor, hundreds of miles from their loved ones, on starvation wages and in spite

of agreements to the contrary has failed to provide decent housing for their workers.

5. Farlam fails to identify those accountable for the deaths of the 34 miners who were on strike for a living wage. No state agency or politician has accepted responsibility, none of the police who shot the miners (many in the back) have been prosecuted – and no justice has been done.

6. In line with our November 2012 statement, United Left supports the proposal from the Marikana Justice Campaign for an independent inquiry into the Marikana miners' massacre.

October 2015.

Resolution of Solidarity with the Greek Dockers' struggle against privatisation

September 29 of this year marked the 20th anniversary of the start of the Liverpool Dock Strike. To mark the occasion the sacked Liverpool Dockworkers held a weekend event commemorating the many good and progressive legacies that were born out of the 28 month dispute. The dispute originally involved 500 dockworkers who were sacked from the Port of Liverpool for honouring the number one principle of the trade union movement in refusing to cross a picket line. When the dispute ended in January 1998 more than 80,000 national and international trade unionists and supporters had either pledged or taken part in solidarity action on behalf of the Liverpool dockworkers and their families. **Jack Heyman**, a retired longshoreman from San Francisco, was very prominent in the international movement of support for the Liverpool dockers. He attended the weekend of commemorations, where he proposed the following motion:

"Whereas representatives, members and supporters of maritime and port workers' unions are meeting in Liverpool, England on this 20th anniversary of the historic struggle by Liverpool dockers against mass sackings and union-busting; and

Whereas, while their struggle was ultimately lost, a key part of the Liverpool dockers' struggle was solidarity actions by maritime and port workers around the world, giving rise to the International Dockworkers' Council (IDC) and its successful campaign for the Charleston 5 longshore struggle; and

Whereas, 20 years ago Liverpool dockers were in the forefront of the struggle against privatisation and casualization of the workforce, today Greek port workers are facing the brunt of the worldwide capitalist attack on transport workers and all workers; and

Whereas, the Troika of the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund have singled out Greece for attack, and have insisted as part of the "bailout" (in reality of leading international banks) that the dockers of Piraeus, Thessaloniki and other ports be fully privatized; and

Whereas in recent years Greek port worker unions have already fought the partial privatisation of the Piraeus docks, under which union representation has been eliminated in the container port operated by the Chinese Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) leading to 16-hour shifts, unpaid wages and a sharp deterioration of safety conditions; and

Whereas, under the EU2020 strategy, the European Commission is pushing a "liberalization" program of Thatcherite measures aiming to priva-



The Liverpool dockers' struggle drew support from all around the world, with big marches and rallies like this one at St. George's Hall. One result was the formation of the International Dockworkers' Council

tize cargo, passenger and other maritime operations, as well as to eliminate protections against sackings and undercut the right to strike, thus threatening the very existence of dockers' unions throughout Europe; and

Whereas the troika's intervention in the Greek port sector aims to eliminate the Public Port Authority through the outright privatisation of the ports of Piraeus and Thessaloniki; and

Whereas we know from previous experience in the ports sector that the imposition of anti-union measures at the ports in one country will be exported to ports in other countries; and

Whereas this would embolden employers and the capitalist governments in attacking maritime and port workers throughout the world; and

Whereas, the IDC European Zone in March 2015 issued a statement expressing its support for Greek working people in opposing the vicious

austerity program dictated by European and international financial institutions; and

Whereas; both the IDC and ITF dockworkers have proudly coordinated mass protests against port service liberalization measures at the European Parliament in Strasbourg;

Therefore be it resolved, since the global conflict now is centered in Greece, and Greek port unions will undertake actions to prevent the privatisation of the ports ordered by the Troika and now imposed on the Greek government, this meeting commemorating the anniversary of the heroic dockers' struggle calls upon maritime and port unions to take all possible measures of solidarity with our Greek comrades in struggle.

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL! VICTORY TO THE GREEK DOCKWORKERS!"

'Source of that movement lies in the entire history of workers standing up to represent themselves'

Dot Gibson's speech at the commemoration event

Thanks! I am proud to have the chance to speak at this event

What is the significance of the Support Groups for the Labour Party and the trade unions today?

The movement which arose in support of Jeremy Corbyn in the Labour leadership election surprised many – not least the Parliamentary Labour Party, the media and the Tory establishment.

But is it so surprising? I suggest that the source of that movement lies in the entire history of workers standing up to represent themselves – setting up trade unions, the First International in 1864, the founding of the Labour Party in 1900, and perhaps particularly in the mass movement in 1945, which elected a Labour government to launch the NHS, nationalisation of basic industries and the welfare state.

And then in the Support Groups built by thousands of Labour Party and trade union members and socialist groups 40 years later from 1985 onwards to defend the gains of that post-war government.

Thirty years ago the Labour Party and the official TUC did not support the historic year-long miners' strike, yet the ruling class had been preparing for it for a long time.

They had a financial war chest for this battle, and they had the anti-trade union laws

In the vacuum of Labour movement leadership thousands of rank-and-file Labour Party and trade union members, and socialists built a network of support groups.

They transported food, clothes, babies' nappies, toys and other necessities to the mining communities around the country.

They organised fund-raising concerts and raffles. They joined picket lines, marched and demonstrated. They built lasting connections.

And then each time workers came into struggle the support groups went into action – for the print-workers, the seafarers, the dockers, the Hillingdon hospital workers.

And of course there was the massive rank-and-file movement against the Iraq war. But Labour went ahead with



April 1997 March for Social Justice: The delegation which delivered the message were dressed in the period clothes of the Chartists, 'the first mass working class party'

the war and the privatisation and refused to repeal the anti-union laws.

Then we got the Coalition government and now the Tories.

Despite the betrayals, rank-and-file members of trade unions and Labour did not stop. Over the years a myriad of campaigns have been set up in defence

of hospitals, schools, post offices, nurseries and day-centres, libraries and leisure centres.

And justice campaigns like the black-listing of trade unionists, deaths in custody and in support of asylum seekers. And the green campaigns, the anti-war movement, homeless stu-

dents and young people and of course, in defence of pensioners!

There isn't a city or town in the country without a campaign!

And over the past three or four years the People's Assembly Against Austerity has been established, led by the trade unions to unite these campaigns, and thousands of young people are coming forward to build on these experiences.

Add to this the development of community branches in Unite the Union, and now the "People's Post Campaign" launched by the Communication Workers Union.

The important change is that the gap between trade union industrial action and the struggle for political representation is being overcome and this is more and more a conscious development.

There will be a massive turnout in Manchester on 4th October.

It is against this background that the Labour leadership election took place. Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell are part of this movement.

So let's look at the significance of the Liverpool Dockers' lock-out in all of this.

I am proud to have been a member of the London Dockers Support Group (and I greet our Turkish comrades who joined the Support Group, representing workers in the East London clothing sweatshops). Our biggest event was to organise the huge March for Social Justice in April 1997, during the general election campaign.

This built on the determination of the dockers to stand up for the history of the movement and the rights of all workers. A message was delivered to 10 Downing Street addressed to whoever became the next Prime Minister.

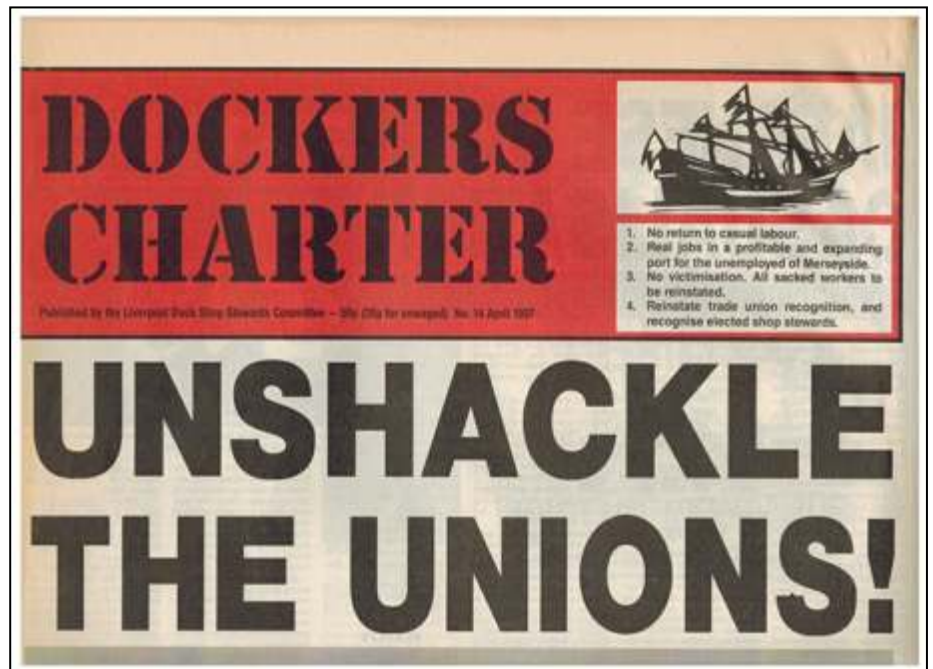
The delegation which delivered that message were dressed in the period clothes of the Chartists. Let's remember that the Chartist movement was described by Lenin as the first mass working-class party.

It was Tony Blair and a Labour government that won the 1997 election, but that government did not support the dockers.

I am also proud that I was the editor of the dockers' newspaper. The shop stewards committee was the editorial board.

In the 28-month lock-out, there were 25 issues of the *Dockers Charter* and these are now the basis for a book.

These papers are an on-the-spot record with statements from the



Dockers' Charter No. 14 April 1997 called for the incoming government to repeal anti-union laws

leaders and letters, reports and the views of the pickets.

From the beginning there were mass meetings every Friday and the dockers set out to build a community and an international campaign.

- Issue no. 1 advertised a Community March and Rally and announced the setting up of the Women of the Waterfront

- Issue no. 2 had a headline "Dockers Win Worldwide Backing" and announced the receipt of £20,000 from Canadian and Australian dockers

- Issue no. 3 was headed: "The world is our picket line" and reported support from Spain, Sweden, Italy, France, Germany and Japan

- Issue no. 4 announced the International Conference of port workers; the Liverpool dockers had refused an offer from the company to re-employ 100 men and pay off the rest with £25,000 each (a lot of money in those days).

- There are reports of the dockers' support for hospital workers, fire-fighters, local government workers, Liverpool schools and asylum seekers.

- In just the first eight months there were 14 trade union and community marches and rallies: "with the intention of rebuilding working-class confidence and solidarity"

- Dockers had spoken at 4,000 meetings throughout the country and initiated Support Groups in the major towns

- Reclaim our Streets a London group of young anarchists and socialists positively supported the dockers and –

with some difficulties over discipline – worked with the shop stewards committee

- The paper carries letters and discussion pieces from the pickets with many pictures. . .

- Whilst the shop stewards committee remained at the heart, rank-and-file dockers and a Women of the Waterfront toured the world and their reports are in the paper

- Local dockers got students of English to translate the Liverpool dockers' speeches – but the students couldn't understand Liverpool English! However – the host dockers said it didn't really matter because they all spoke the same language of struggle!

- In March 1996, in the sixth month of the dispute, at last the union's general secretary, Bill Morris (now Lord Morris) spoke at a mass meeting. We published the full speech in *Dockers Charter*. He said:

- "When my grandchildren say to me in 15, 20, 25 years from now "Where were you when the Liverpool dockers were fighting for their jobs, their community, their dignity and their pride" I want to be able to say: "I was marching on their side".

- Well we should send a reminder to him from this meeting!

This is just a taste of the priceless reports in the *Dockers Charter*.

This was a dispute over trade union rights and casualization. The dockers delivered a grim warning of the situation now experienced by millions today on low pay, zero-hour contracts, frail elderly and disabled people receiving

care in 15-minute slots, and the continuing brutal anti-trade-union laws..

After 28 months the dockers were forced to abandon their fight.

Jimmy Nolan and Jimmy Davies published a statement in the paper, and it shows how the Liverpool dockers pointed the way for the movement that arose this summer in support of Jeremy Corbyn for Labour leader. They said:

“It need not have ended this way:

- The Labour government could have repealed the anti-trade-union laws, which the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company used to sack us;

- They could have used the government’s ‘golden shares’ in the company to insist on our reinstatement;

- Our union leadership could have mobilised the whole union in our support and called upon the international Transport Workers’ Federation for worldwide support against the shipping companies.

- But Labour governs on behalf of capital and the Trade Union Congress, instead of representing the interests of millions of trade unionists, follows with blind faith a policy of tripartite accord between government, employers and trade unions – upholding the laws of bad employers.

- Meanwhile the global system of capital reaps profit and wreaks havoc.

- If the outcome of the Liverpool dockers’ fight for reinstatement has

shown one thing, it is that we must continue to organise, build confidence and step up the fight against further attacks.”

Now we have the chance for a widespread and democratic discussion throughout the Labour and trade union movement, and to learn the lessons of history. The Labour government of 1945 made many changes, but the mixed economy of public and private ownership remained. The private, capitalist sector mobilised their political representatives, and the state forces to destroy our gains. This time we must mobilise and join forces internationally to end capitalism. We must start working for socialism.

Marxist Considerations on the Crisis: Part 1 by Balazs Nagy

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The Hungarian Marxist BALAZS NAGY originally planned this work as ‘an article explaining the great economic crisis which erupted in 2007 from a Marxist point of view’. However, he ‘quite quickly realised that a deeper understanding of this development would only be possible if I located it within a broader historical and political context than I had anticipated ... it would only be possible to grasp the nature and meaning of this current upheaval in and through the development of the economic-political system as a whole’

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WORKERS INTERNATIONAL PAMPHLET

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The ‘future’ the bourgeoisie wants

“... To halt the bourgeoisie’s general offensive, we need to mount a united struggle on a comparable - Europe-wide - scale. When it comes to blocking those attacks on the rights and gains working people have achieved, and driving the offensive back ... struggles confined to individual countries one after another in isolation are doomed to fail”. By Balazs Nagy

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