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Europe:

## Against the strategy of disintegration

By Mirek Vodslon, 3 March 2016

### European crisis and the two plans

The capitalist unification of Europe has arrived at its limit. It is already disintegrating. Last year, the resistance of the Greek working class against "austerity" sharpened the crisis of the Euro-zone, bringing it to the brink of collapse. That crisis was only postponed, not solved. Even the postponement was only possible at the price of another turn of the screw, another worsening of the already intense suffering of the working class of Greece produced by an unprecedented fall of its working and living conditions in only five years.

Subsequent events, especially the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees, confirmed the common character of all the particular "crises" of Europe of the last few years, the "bank crisis", the "debt crisis", the "Ukraine crisis", the "Euro crisis", the "Greek crisis" and now the "refugee crisis". It is the existential crisis of the capitalist system itself and in particular of its mode of existence on the European continent, the European Union as an agglomerate of national capitalist states.

History now poses the fate of this whole system as an immediate practical



*September 2015: Refugees demonstrate outside Keleti station in Budapest. (Picture, Wikipedia commons)*

political problem, not just as a theoretical or ideological question. All classes in society and their parties are now called upon to come up with practical answers, each according to their class interests.

The answer of the capitalist classes is "austerity", an accelerating slide into poverty and, as is now becoming apparent, into barbarism. This is the **only** per-  
*(ctd. P.2)*

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(From p.1)

spective that capitalist Europe has to offer to its masses. To some of us, working class and youth activists in Europe, this has become clear. But what is **our** practical answer to the historical question? Theories and ideas with which the working class has tried to equip itself are being put to a test.

The discussion in trade unions and in workers' political organisations concentrates so far on two alternatives or "plans", each of them based on a different analysis.

"Plan A" considers the austerity policy unreasonable and proposes reforms to prevent the European Union from falling apart and also make it liveable for working people, without challenging the domination, much less the existence, of the capitalist classes. On the contrary, reform proposals are directed at these classes and are appeals to the reason of their leaders.

"Plan B" acknowledges that "plan A" has already failed, especially in the crisis of the Greek state debt, and proposes to return to national currencies and all the other attributes of full national sovereignty of European nations. The hope is that this will enable the weaker nations to defend themselves from the bullying by the stronger ones, especially Germany, and so stop the fall of their working classes into unemployment, precarious work relations and terrible poverty.

The common feature of both broad classes of programmes is what they do not include: the complete abolition of capitalist exploitation, the replacement of profit as the goal of production by that of satisfying the needs of working people. In short: the socialist revolution is beyond the horizon of both plans. In some cases it is still on the minds of their proponents. But partisans of plan A, like the former finance minister of Greece, Yannis Varoufakis, know that the addressees of their proposals, the political representatives of capital, will never agree to abolish their own class. Partisans of plan B, like Oskar Lafontaine of the German party "DIE LINKE", know that there can be no socialism in one country.

So their professions of socialist or "anti-capitalist" faith – on the rare occasions when they feel like making such professions – are necessarily just lip services.

### **Two tactics**

The question often looks like one of pure tactics. Britain is to vote on the question of staying in the EU in a referendum on 23rd June this year. Clearly neither staying nor leaving will in itself improve the conditions of the working class.

So is it better for the working class of Britain to vote to leave the EU? After all,

"the EU is a reactionary bosses' club and we must determinedly oppose it" – which is true – and having to leave the EU may destabilise not only the Tory government but the whole state, possibly leading to a breakup of the United Kingdom? This tactic is favoured by many on the extreme left.

Or is it better to respect another indubitable fact: the EU is an expression of "the impossibility of the productive forces - science, technique and the organisation of labour - being contained within the narrow limits of the nation state and private ownership"? The working class cannot be in favour of pushing the productive forces back into the narrow limits of the nation state. This means that the working class of Britain has to vote to stay in the EU and push for reforms to make it fit for the working people. This tactic was adopted by the Labour Party led by Jeremy Corbyn.

Both characterisations of the EU quoted above actually occur in one and the same article by comrade Peter Taaffe of the Socialist Party of England and Wales. (See <http://www.socialistparty.org.uk/articles/22023/15-01-2016/britains-fractured-politics>.)

While applying any of the two tactics, the working class will find itself siding with a faction of the bourgeoisie, the reactionary UKIP party in the first case, Cameron and the reactionary majority of the Tories in the second case. In both cases, the working class must not adopt the programmes of these factions. It must put forward its own, socialist programme. But which programme is it? The answer to this question is of primary importance. The question of tactics is secondary.

So, first things first, we should try and shed some light on the primary question.

### **Productive forces and capital**

Comrade Taaffe is right, European integration has gone as far as it has – that is, very far – because the productive forces of the peoples of Europe require it. It has become impossible to have a large-scale industry on this continent (or any other continent), with up-to-date industrial methods, and while still retaining thousands of kilometres of national borders with complicated tariffs, corresponding controls, uncertain currency exchange rates etc.

But these productive forces have, under capitalism, a peculiar character. They are only allowed to exist as capital. The increasing impossibility of the productive forces of humanity developing inside national borders translates, under capitalism, into an increasing difficulty any particular capital based on a narrow home market faces in competing with other capitals which have larger markets, are exploiting cheaper labour forces either at



**Oskar Lafontaine (Die Linke): "Knows there can be no socialism in one country"** (Picture Wikipedia commons)

home or abroad, or have secured access to cheaper raw materials for themselves. This competition takes place "at home" as well as "abroad".

As capitals, productive forces are pitted against other capitals, i.e. against other productive forces. As capitals, productive forces increasingly destroy one another. The productive forces of humanity are in revolt both against the narrow national straight jacket and against capitalism which allows production only in order to achieve profit and only if the rate of profit is sufficient to compensate for the risks of realisation of profits as money. As long as capitalism subsists, the revolt of the productive forces will take these ever more destructive forms. In Europe's history, this revolt has already taken the form of two world wars and of Hitler's attempt to unite the continent under the iron heel of the German bourgeoisie. The capitalist classes of all countries of occupied Europe at first adapted to Hitler's European union, but it failed.

It is in response to the utter failure of this road to European unification that the capitalist classes of Europe started, almost immediately after Hitler's defeat, another attempt, this time by peaceful means. The "reactionary bosses' club" first simply established a common market of certain goods (starting with coal and steel). Then, as capitalist crisis loomed larger, they had to accelerate their integration (the Maastricht treaty introducing the Euro, Schengen, extension to 28 States) and so to create not just a common "internal market" as before, but a much bigger internal market and a friction-less one. The productive forces of Europe, in their current form as capitals which need to accumulate, have dictated this course to the European capitalist classes. Their aim is of course not development of the productive forces of humanity as such. The aim is competitiveness of European capitals against those of other regions.

That requires on the contrary the destruction of large parts of these Euro-



### **Demonstration against austerity in Greece in 2015**

*(Picture: Democracy Now)*

pean productive forces, namely, those with no chances to compete as capital. The EU and its predecessor, the common market, have dutifully organised that destruction. The EU organised free competition inside Europe, so that capitals with high productivity can freely destroy less productive capitals. In order to anticipate and introduce some order in that destruction, it even established and executed purely destructive plans, such as plans to destroy large parts of European steel industries or of European agriculture.

For the national capitalist classes, the price of the big friction-less internal market is subordination of small or weak nations to the strong ones. The introduction of the Euro was intended to make Europe more able to compete with the United States, providing the EU with a currency which might aim to compete with the dollar and thus bring all the benefits which are assumed to follow possession of a world currency, and in the same movement, inside the EU, it accelerated the destruction of national industries almost everywhere with the partial exception of Germany. The weaker imperialist countries (France, Italy, United Kingdom) had to accept this and try and manage the social impact of this destruction.

That impact is the destruction of large parts of the main productive force, the working class. In exchange, their remaining industries have access to a larger market than before, the European market.

For the rest (Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Eastern Europe) this is even more so and the deal is now turning to a complete farce, where the best these countries now can hope for is to become suppliers of components for German industry, especially the car industry. But more and more they are reduced to the much worse condition of a kind of European Bantustans, suppliers of migrant labour. Merkel even went to Portugal and said in substance: you young, well-educated Portuguese who find no work at home, come to Germany, we can use you! In this way, too, the main productive force, the working class itself, is being destroyed.

#### **Decomposition of capitalist Europe is not a programme**

This is capitalist Europe in crisis and on the brink of decomposition. But what will happen as this decomposition progresses? Current events already provide adequate indications of this. For example, the "Schengen consensus" abolishing internal borders in Europe is in tatters. Barbed wire fences are springing up, border controls are being reintroduced. Already, this threatens the most modern forms of organisation of production. Just-in-time production will become impossible if goods have to pass several frontiers with fussy controls at each of them, taking unpredictable amounts of time.

This is only the beginning of productive forces being pushed back "within the narrow limits of the nation state". As this decomposition of the capitalist European

Union deepens and accelerates up to becoming a breakdown, there will be a catastrophic crippling and destruction of productive forces.

It is a dangerous illusion to imagine that such events create favourable conditions for political advances of the working class. On the contrary, Bonapartism, police states and fascism are the political forms which correspond to the retreat of productive forces. The Europe of sovereign Nations will be the Europe of Le Pen, Orbán and Szydło. The working class can only halt these developments in their tracks if it sets up against them an international programme of transition to the socialist revolution and above all to the often-evoked Socialist Europe. And that means, among other things, demanding not just national reforms, but also reforms of the EU. This is the way forward we propose.

Both capitalist plans, "plan A" and "plan B" lead to a cul-de-sac. In the British referendum, only the second tactics, that of Jeremy Corbyn, is worth supporting – with a European programme of transition. The opposed tactic of accelerating capitalist Europe's collapse in the hope to create the space for a future Socialist Europe is a variant of the deleterious principle: "the worse it gets, the better". This may chime with the impatience of many, especially young victims of the capitalist crisis but this tactic has never, ever in history been crowned with success.



# Who can solve the 'refugee crisis'?

By Mirek Vodslon, 11 March 2016

## The working class has to take it on

The Ukrainian war smoulders on. Usurers and outright robbers (such as German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, who unites both these activities of finance capital in a single person) are laying waste to Greece. While these two catastrophes go from bad to worse with no prospect of a solution in sight, the next "humanitarian catastrophe" is already putting them in the shade: millions of people are in flight from countries which are no longer fit for human habitation. A million people have already sought refuge in the European Union and millions more are coming.

Most of them want to come to Germany. Last year, they were met there by a large movement of solidarity on the part of working people. The organised working class movement, above all trade unions, remained on the margins of that solidarity movement. This needs to change.

Bourgeois politicians, above all in the parties CDU/CSU (Christian Democratic and Christian Social Union) and AfD (Alternative for Germany), as well as the bourgeois press, started a disgusting campaign promoting a breakdown of solidarity. It concentrated on the demand that chancellor Merkel must decide on an "upper limit" of the number of refugees Germany is going to accept.

If one were to take this inflammatory demand at all seriously, there would have to be some criterion by which to judge this upper limit. Tiny Lebanon took 1.14 million refugees, mostly from Syria, about 28% of her own population. Applied fairly conservatively to Germany, that would mean accommodating about 20 million people in distress; and Germany's per capital GDP is three times greater than Lebanon and her official unemployment rate four times smaller.

But of course refugee numbers cannot be decided at their point of arrival. Only bourgeois politicians like Söder and Seehofer in Germany or Fayman and Mikl-Leitner in Austria can give in to such a bureaucratic delusion.

Numbers are decided elsewhere: in the war zones and in other territories devastated by imperialism, not only in the Near East, in Afghanistan and in North Africa, but also in Europe, such as Bosnia and Kosova. Several imperialisms, Amer-

ican, Russian, and all sorts of European ones, participate in this devastation.

Fending off masses of refugees bureaucratically takes drastic measures which will – and already do – cost thousands of lives. For instance, NATO warships are to "defend" the Aegean Sea. The German minister in charge of the war against the refugees, Mrs. von der Leyen, assured us that "of course" refugees would be rescued if any of their rubber boats capsize. But, "of course", only the strongest will survive such an event. Children will drown again. And again and again. This does not seem to worry this wealthy mother of seven, a worthy representative of capital's "Europe of values".

Bourgeois politicians are accusing the refugees of coming to Europe in search of a better life than they have at home and proclaim indignantly that these people have no right to anything better than a life of poverty and oppression. In the capitalist system, this holds good for natives as well as for immigrants.

The German Party "DIE LINKE" (The Left) is right: it is not the number of refugees and other needy people that needs an upper limit. What needs an upper limit is the wealth of the super-rich, the capitalists. A humane welcoming reception and integration of refugees must be financed from that source. A redistribution of wealth from top to bottom is necessary in order to ensure equal working and living conditions for the whole of the working class, conditions that guarantee the reproduction of the labour force, without any reduction in living standards, for a whole life and also for the next generation.

Refugees are being used to divide the working class and to turn the screw a bit more, more cuts and more downward pressure on wages. Pilot projects have already started in various enterprises, with the purpose of training young refugees under worse conditions than those of native apprentices. The bourgeoisie has already demanded that the minimum wage, which is not generous as it is, be suspended for the first six months of employment of refugees. The representatives of the big companies wanted to drive this new wedge into the working class, with straight faces, in the name of "Integration". This scheme failed because of the resistance of the workers' move-

ment, which found its expression in a veto of the governing social democratic party (SPD). Nevertheless, refugees are to be discriminated against – though now only in internships. The big companies insist on it.

The German government's policy became clear when Schäuble proposed a Europe-wide special levy on petrol in order to "cope with the Refugee crisis". This divisive policy and propaganda have an impact, though not necessarily in favour of the governing parties. This can be seen from the results of the nationalist, right-wing party "Alternative for Germany" in the municipal elections in the German Land of Hessen as well as from the poll ratings of AfD everywhere and from the successes of such parties in other European countries. Not only the middle class, but also the working class and the poor worry that they are going to pay the bill "for the refugees". They are right, because that is exactly the plan of the ruling class, its government and their entire political caste.

As a ruling party, the SPD is responsible for it and its constituency has understood that. The election results of the SPD and its poll ratings are falling catastrophically. Therefore, and because the German state budget is in surplus, the SPD Chairman and Vice Chancellor, Sigmar Gabriel, proposed a "solidarity project for our own populace". This comprises more affordable housing and more day-care places for children. The pensions are to be increased. Implementing these proposals would counteract the division of the working class. Therefore, workers' organizations must demand their implementation and insist on it with the SPD.

But this "Solidarity project for our own population" is certainly not a true alternative to the existing government policy. The emphasis on "our own people" betrays the mindset of SPD leadership. They, too, are bent on breaking down "our own population's" solidarity with the immigrant "population". Obviously, the project is to be financed from existing tax funds, so it would be a redistribution within the class leaving the other, capitalist class, untouched.

The alternative is that the capitalists have to pay. A generous social development program is needed. Such a program would create hundreds of thousands of

jobs. DIE LINKE is obviously too weak to represent this alternative as a realistic objective. It lacks the power of organised labour, meaning mainly trade unions. It offers itself here and there as their political arm, but it is not that, or certainly not yet.

Above all, such an alternative is credible only as part of a program to overcome the rule of the bourgeoisie. Not as some socialist dream for the distant future, soothing the dreamers terrified by the present, but as the solution for today.

The working class movement, especially the trade unions in every country in Europe, can no longer afford the luxury of pretending that the refugee crisis is the problem of someone else: the governments, "politics". Vigorous intervention is absolutely necessary, in its own interest, in order to defend or rather recover the unity of the working class.

### **Fight for the right to asylum**

After the sexual assaults of New Year's Eve, especially in Cologne, some have demanded that the authors of such crimes be sent back to their countries. The tabloids and right-wing politicians tried to whip up a wave of distrust and even hatred towards refugees, Muslims, Arabs, etc. (With remarkably weak results, even among the immediate victims of the attacks.)

As long as there are States, they will also have the right to determine who is allowed to remain on their soil. However, there are entire categories which are exceptions to that law, including their own "nationals" and people recognised as refugees according to the Geneva Convention, having fled from political persecution or war. All states which have signed the appropriate conventions have thereby made their "choice" once and for all as far as these categories are concerned: they have the right to remain.

Those who demand "open borders" are in fact demanding the abolition of the State. In other words, communism, without any transition. In the Schengen area, the borders were open, but only because the EU established well-guarded external borders ("Fortress Europe"), and thus acted as if it were a State. For the same reason one can theoretically not reject "all removals".

But the workers' movement can and must claim the right to be able to control which foreigners are denied asylum or the right of residence, and why. Above all else, it must prevent anybody, refugee or criminal or both, falling into the hands of torturers and executioners. Thomas de Maizière, the German interior minister, just made a deal with three countries in North Africa. They promised that they will take back their nationals who fled to

Germany and are to be removed from that country. In all these so-called "safe countries of origin", torture and killings are practised under the supervision of the State or with its approval. The same is true also in the Middle East and in Central Asia.

In practice, the right of asylum was largely abolished in the 1990s. That is to say that the conventions have no longer been complied with. Refugees are not recognised as such. All paths to take refuge in Europe are blocked so that refugees can enter only at the risk of life and limb. Countries on the southern edge of the EU, such as Greece, have long been the victims of this Union. Now they are also being converted into the EU's refugee camps. EU regulations, such as Dublin III, make these countries guardians of the borders of the EU in the war against the refugees.

Refugees have been and may in future again be removed to their deaths. At the cost of a row within their own party and government, French "Socialists" have just rendered even nationality insecure.

Not because of an abstract principle, but because of these concrete barbaric circumstances all along the routes the refugees are forced to take and at both ends of their Calvary, the workers' movement should oppose all removals and support the movement to prevent removals.

The workers' movement must fight for the right of asylum and defend whatever is still left of it. The full right of asylum in accordance with the Geneva Convention must be restored. This means in particular that the disgusting hypocrisy of classifying the whole of the Balkans and the three countries of the West Maghreb as "safe countries of origin" must be immediately reversed.

On the contrary, "well-founded grounds for fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion" must be accepted for refugees from those countries, unless the contrary can be proved beyond doubt. Dublin III and all other bureaucratic obstacles preventing a person even from making an asylum application must be abolished. They were deliberately adopted to make a farce of the "right of asylum".

In general, the bourgeoisie will allow immigration only if the exploitation of migrants helps to divide the working class, to put a downward pressure on wages, to undermine all workers' rights, etc. It has therefore put the decision on refugee status and the right to stay, which is often a decision about life and death, in the hands of smug officials who usually

know – and want to know – very little about the situation in the countries from which asylum seekers have fled.

All experience shows that the right to asylum will be only truly guaranteed if the working class movement takes charge of its application.

Union representatives, delegates from refugee and migrant organisations and representatives of local support groups of the "welcoming culture" need to supervise asylum procedure and participate in it.

### **Improve the right to Asylum**

Even in the relatively generous form which was in use in the 1970s and 1980s, the right of asylum is simply not adequate in the face of the accelerating spread of barbarism in today's epoch. Millions are fleeing not (just) persecution and war but (also) hunger, i.e. for an "economic" reason.

Last year, for example, 200 workers from 4 factories in Tuzla (Bosnia) took the road to the Croatian border in order to emigrate collectively. (C.f. <http://workersinternational.info/2015/01/bosnia-acauldron-ready-to-blow>).

This example provides a good opportunity to study the "root causes" compelling so-called "economic refugees" to flee the allegedly "safe" Balkans. In the opinion of those involved: "We all have the same social problems and almost all of us want to leave. Perhaps that ought to be our new identity". ([http://www.tageswoche.ch/de/2015\\_13/international/683746/](http://www.tageswoche.ch/de/2015_13/international/683746/)).

Hunger and hopelessness are also crucial in the mass exodus from Syria. As we know, most Syrian refugees are fleeing for the second time, the first time from war and persecution in Syria, the second time for "economic" reasons from Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan. That alone shows that there is no way of clearly separating the two reasons.

The working class movement must fight for a more generous right to asylum.

The German workers' movement cannot just tell the 200 Bosnians and all the rest in bankrupt semi-colonial countries: "stay where you are and fight against conditions there (which many have already done, especially in Bosnia), just as we do (or rather ought to) in our own country".

The answer must be: In alliance with you we combat the real reason why people flee – imperialism – and as long as this reason exists we will also help those who flee because they cannot see any other way out.

Refugees who will stay in Europe are going to increase the "supply" side of the "labour market". The bourgeoisie has issued the slogan: "The boat is full". The

truth of this is that their rule forces all, natives and immigrants, into a very narrow "boat". In this boat only production promising profit for capitalists is allowed, and that is getting more and more difficult because capitalism is a dying system less and less able to meet its sole purpose, squeezing profits out of people. This is why an increasing proportion of youth has already no place in the "boat". In southern Europe, it is already 50% of the youth, in Greece, more.

The EU decided these days literally to throw refugees overboard. Whoever accepts the capitalistic logic of this action, makes it easier for the capitalists also to let "our own" youth drown in a sea of poverty and hopelessness, which is what has been happening for a long time.

The only alternative is distributing the available work in Europe to all able hands, with a corresponding reduction in working time and no loss of pay. In other words, the only chance the fight for the right of asylum and the right to stay has of succeeding is as part of a plan containing this demand in order to overcome unemployment for all; ultimately, a plan to overcome capitalist Europe and to move to a Europe of the working class.

Many immigrants of previous decades have long lived in harmony with their "indigenous" neighbours and, more importantly, with their work colleagues. They have become "integrated". But that was not a success of the repressive governmental type of "integration", which the bourgeoisie has been forcing on migrants in recent years. For a long time, the official government policy was to prevent integration. The more recent bourgeois demand to "integrate", directed at the immigrants, is used everywhere mainly as a hypocritical pretext to denounce and isolate immigrants: the opposite of integration. Masses of children and grandchildren of earlier immigrants are still experiencing discrimination. Immigrant ghettos have been forming. Bourgeois "integration" is failing everywhere.

Many new refugees and other migrants still hold medieval or barbaric conceptions which may be customary in the backward areas from which they originate. The worst expression of this is the so-called Sharia and in particular the contempt for and oppression of women codified in that outdated law. Some sons and grandsons of migrants in Europe cities are returning to such views and trying to implement them. The working class movement has to oppose these effects of decaying capitalism. People holding on to such backward conceptions must overcome them and adopt more advanced conceptions and customs.



***"Defended" by NATO warships, the Aegean Sea crossing will become even more perilous for refugees. (Picture: Commons Wikimedia)***

Today's western, bourgeois norms must be taken as the minimum level of such progress, as mendacious as these norms may be.

Backward layers of the working class can rise to the level of today's bourgeois-democratic norm only through the action of the working class. Only that class can also guarantee the rights of ethnic and religious minorities. The bourgeois class is incapable of both tasks, be it through state "integration" into the so-called "leading culture", or through middle-class disintegration masquerading as cultural tolerance.

So the working class movement cannot be content with merely criticising forced bourgeois "integration". It must organise integration into the working class, into its culture and especially its struggle and organisations.

In the seventies and eighties, Turkish and Arab immigrants in Germany and France showed us that this is possible. Of course this integration was not achieved in full and the international defeat of the working class of 1989-91 has made a powerful backward movement possible, as expressed in the ghettoisation.

Above all, the de-industrialisation of Europe led to deterioration in the situation of the working class. Old-style integration took place under conditions of relatively low unemployment and in large enterprises, as in the engineering industry, with work forces in the tens of thousands. These objective conditions for integration in Europe are considerably weakened at the present stage of decay of capitalism.

It is all the more necessary that trade unions take off their untimely apolitical blinkers and pursue integration with proper determination and energy.

### **European tasks**

There are organisations like the Red Cross that help people in distress because they are humans and because they are in distress. They organise humanitarian aid. But what is a humanitarian catastrophe supposed to mean? A philanthropic catastrophe? Of course not, it is yet another monstrous neologism of thoughtless bourgeois newspeak. It expresses nothing and hides something important.

What it tries to conceal is the fact that the all-pervasive moving principle of today's society, capitalists' pursuit of profit, is making ever larger areas of our planet unsuitable for human life.

It is this colossal disaster that uproots millions and puts them on the road to Europe. Angela Merkel, the German "Christian Democrat" Chancellor and as such the supreme political commissioner of capitalist corporations and banks, is right: Europe as a whole has an obligation to welcome the refugees, provide for them and integrate them. The EU member States, at the national level, cannot cope with this task. Merkel is right also in this: the causes of the catastrophe must be "combated".

However, the question arises, which Europe can cope with this capitalist disaster?

Capitalist Europe as a whole is falling at the first hurdle. Agreements on the "distribution" of refugees, concluded months ago, have not been met – quite apart from the fact that human beings cannot be "distributed" as if they were things. Rather than seeking agreement on how refugees should be welcomed, the reactionary governments of most EU member states take ridiculously few refugees, or only "Christians", or none at all. At various borders, a war against the

refugees is being waged. The inhuman and yet declared goal of that war is to make their already desperate situation even worse and so force them to go back. The "Schengen area" of open borders within Europe has broken down in this war.

The state of the second task is no better. Peace in Syria and Iraq is not in sight. With good reason, because what is taking place there is more and more obviously an imperialist war between the United States, Russia and the EU (France and Germany) for domination over the whole region. The aim of that domination is to secure access to oil.

The Turkish bourgeoisie under the political guidance of its would-be "Sultan" Erdogan and his so-called "moderate" Islamists is one of the warring parties. Covertly, it supports the Islamic State and other Islamic militias in their war against the Kurds. It wages an open war against "its own" Kurdish population, against the working class movement, and even against rival bourgeois Islamic currents. The Turkish bourgeoisie is thus creating new causes of flight and will trigger a new exodus.

Capitalist EU disintegrates due to the inability of its national capitalist classes to take up people in distress, even minimally. Angela Merkel has now drawn her conclusions from the decomposition of this EU over which she has been presiding as its impotent figurehead. In a complete turnabout she decided to ask Erdogan for assistance in order to stop this disintegration of the EU on the "refugee issue".

Erdogan's regime is transforming itself into a more and more open dictatorship. Angela Merkel and Thomas de Maizière think that precisely this regime should take over the role of gaoler guarding the refugees from Syria and Iraq. Refugees who have risked their lives to reach the shores of Europe are to be delivered back into the hands of this regime which is in underhand alliance with the very militias from which they fled. That is not possible under international conventions currently in force and so it means publicly acknowledging disregard for all such conventions.

This agreement at the expense of the Kurds and the Iraqi and Syrian Refugees is being negotiated with Turkey, and the former "left-winger" Alexis Tsipras, Prime Minister of Greece, is complicit in this crime.

Merkel and de Maiziere had to reward Erdogan with the prospect of accepting his authoritarian, murderous regime as the 29th member state of the EU. Erdogan demands as a first step visa-free access of Turkish citizens to the EU. The irony of

this desperate deal is that no one is in a position to appreciate its exact consequences. CSU politicians have been warning of a new, legal wave of migration from Turkey. Only one thing is certain: this action, intended to stop EU's disintegration, is going to accelerate it.

Oskar Lafontaine of the party "DIE LINKE" says: "The reason why people flee is capitalism". Because this is so, only a socialist Europe of the working class will be able to cope with the consequences of the catastrophe on this continent and only this class can work to address the causes of flight in alliance with the working classes in the Middle East, North Africa and Central Asia.

However, we cannot stop at promulgating this lesson from the events. The workers' movement in Europe must take concrete steps to enforce its own solution to this crisis. A cooperation of European trade unions on the refugee issue would be a small beginning of this alternative Europe of the working class. The European Trade Union Confederation must call an international conference to address the refugee crisis and its causes. On the agenda are the urgent tasks of

welcoming the refugees, integrating them into the fight of the European working class, and developing an international strategy for the unity of this class: both the unity of native workers and immigrants, and the unity of workers in the various countries of Europe against attempts to divide them using the refugee issue.

European trade unions should also take the first step to really address the root causes of the mass flight into Europe, starting with the immediate causes. They should send commissions of inquiry into the refugee camps in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and to the buffer zone on Syrian territory south of Kilis where Turkey lets refugees from destroyed Aleppo rot under the supervision of Islamists and out of the public gaze. Light must also be quickly thrown on the situation in North Africa.

Resistance must be organised against the international crime against humanity which is being concocted by Merkel and de Maiziere with Erdogan and which is also already being put into practice. First and foremost it is necessary to take a clear stand against it.

## **WORKERS INTERNATIONAL PAMPHLET**

### ***Back to mass poverty***

# ***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*

Available from Workers International to Rebuild the Fourth International, PO Box 68375, London E7 7DT, UK, Price £2. Cheques payable to "Correspondance"

# How can we build a workers' Europe?

Bronwen Handyside comments on the discussion

Most of the UK left favours a vote to leave the EU in the referendum which one section of the Tory party has forced UK Prime Minister David Cameron to hold and which is due to take place in the UK in June.

The Socialist Party (SP) says "We should be in favour of an 'Out' position but totally independent from the Tory right, UKIP, etc., and on the basis of a socialist anti-austerity Europe."

But if this position is supported, who is going to build this "socialist anti-austerity Europe", and how? Will it be European workers, minus British workers? Are we waiting for them to build it without us – and then we will inspect what they have built and let them know whether we fancy joining it or not?

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) are putting forward the slogans: "No to racism, open the borders, leave the EU", "Yes to workers unity everywhere, solidarity against neoliberalism and capitalism, leave the EU", It will also say "No to UKIP and TTIP and the other neoliberal treaties, fight the bosses, leave the EU" and "Yes to real action over climate change, no trust in the bosses solutions, leave the EU". Counterfire, (which split from the SWP in 2010) has a similar analysis.

The Communist Party of Britain says "the EU functions as a cheerleader for unconfined monopoly capitalism, it cannot be reformed, it can only be opposed".

They are all calling for the trade unions to back a NO vote in Cameron's referendum.

I think that this position shows a complete lack of confidence in the capacity of the European working class to recover and develop its understanding of itself as a class, and in particular its ability to act in its own independent interests as a class i.e. as a class "in itself" and in particular "for itself".

It is a manifestation of a mind-set with which the working class as a whole has been brainwashed over many, many decades.

That mind-set says: the political structures both national and Europe-wide through which class rule is carried out cannot be changed and directly controlled by the working class. It says: those political structures will always exist in

this form and belong to the enemy class; all we can do is beg for crumbs from them, or protest against the injustices they perpetrate.

The Socialist party says very correctly that the inability of the bourgeoisie to develop the productive forces is shown in its inability to really unite Europe economically, politically and socially. Therefore the task falls to the working class to be at the head of a struggle to really achieve such a unification. But unless concrete steps can be outlined which lead to carrying out that task, such an insight degenerates into a dogma, which can serve as a rallying cry for a small sect on the fringes of the working class, but bars the way to any mass action by it as a class.

To advocate a "leave" vote in the referendum is to retreat timidly to national boundaries and to admit defeat before engaging in the fight.

In the UK we have an unexpected opening in a Corbyn-led Labour party with a new style of politics, putting forward the principle that politics and political decision making does not belong only to a special breed of human being (educated, middle and upper class) who decide, based on some detached, dispassionate judgement of the relative strength of the working class and the bourgeoisie, which class interest they will uphold.

Corbyn's leadership is saying that politics should involve and be controlled by everyone affected by it. In the UK, that is primarily the working class and many layers of the middle class.

The new style leadership in the Labour party did not come about by accident. – the political strategy of Unite the Union played a key role, coming together at the right time with the gathering surge of anger amongst sections of the working and middle class over the UK government's austerity programme.

The working class (particularly in the trade unions) sees its way forward now through getting this new-style Labour party elected in 2020, the party that it (Unite in particular) has exerted some degree of control over. The success of that campaign will go some way towards changing the mind-set now prevalent that the working class can't aspire, through its own party, to take control, of

the British parliament, and thus of its own future – the mind-set that says: "Politicians are all the same, no matter who gets elected, workers will still get shafted".

An election victory for Corbyn's Labour will go some way to restore the class consciousness that reigned in Britain in 1945 when workers on a mass scale had complete confidence that they could run their own industries: the commanding heights of the economy and their own society through the establishment of the welfare state, and that they did not need the ruling class to do this. Workers of course in other parts of Europe had gone much further in revolutionary uprisings. The British working class compromised with leaving the capitalist class in power. The "mixed economy" expressed this compromise – and this contributed to the erosion of socialist consciousness over the decades that followed.

Syriza failed in resisting austerity because the European working class has not yet understood that the interests of capital and the working class are irreconcilable.

Unlike the leadership of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa, European workers (and in this their parties accurately represent the level of class consciousness) still think that if only capital understood how brutal and damaging its austerity policies are, it would pull back and make concessions. (The experience of Syriza should show us pretty clearly that this is not the case.)

Syriza's failure has led some to reiterate that they knew this would happen all along, and that if you just changed the leadership of the working class from Syriza to a leadership that understands that the working class itself has to seize control of all the political, industrial and economic structures of society the problems would be solved.

However, it is the working class – on a mass scale – that has to develop the understanding that it can and should seize control. Not small socialist groups, or even small groups of militant and politically educated workers, but the working class on a mass scale. It has to learn that this is possible through its own experience.



The question arises: what experiences can the class undergo that will enable it to understand that it is a class, and that it can act as a class in its own interests?

The fact that the biggest trade union in the UK was able to use its political strategy to change the Labour party (however partially) into an instrument for workers I think is the beginning of that process.

Unite, other trade unions and the changed Labour party (with a huge influx of new members) further plan to change the British political structures through

the election of a Corbyn-led Labour party in 2020, so that the working class (however partially) can exert some control.

The success of the process will elicit the nature of the class enemy. The more successful it is, the greater the class opposition will be. The role of Marxists will be to develop at every stage in that process the working class's understanding of its own nature, the nature of its class enemy, and the irreconcilability of the interests of the two.

Motions are going to the Unite Policy Conference calling for Unite to use its influence with the Corbyn-led Labour

party to persuade it to call a conference of all the left parties in Europe (Syriza, Podemos, Die Linke, Front de Gauche etc) together with the unions to build a Europe-wide programme for a Europe fit for workers.

Such a conference would be another practical step forward in the process of the working class acting as a class in its own interests. The problems that would confront the class as it takes steps to act in its own interests, if we Marxists are in and of this process, will be occasions to develop the class in itself and for itself.

**Draft programme for discussion, elaboration and amendment:**

# A Europe fit for working people

**Workers International submits a draft of a programme for a Europe of working people**

## **The interests of the working class**

The economic life of the European Union is not planned in the interests of all its citizens, but organised by the big industrial, commercial and banking monopolies for their own profit. The difference between member states are manipulated in a "race to the bottom" as workers migrate from poorer to richer areas and capital migrates from richer to poorer areas in order to profit from lower wages. In both ways capitalists fuel the downward spiral of working conditions, wages and benefits by setting workers of different nations into competition with one another

Workers International is the party of working-class unity in struggle across and within all frontiers. We stand for the unity of workers of all nationalities, cultures and ethnicities.

The German bourgeoisie has emerged as the most powerful force in the EU, but it should be remembered that on the way to this supremacy it inflicted significant setbacks on the working class of Germany, considerably affecting workers' wages and conditions in the big industrial concerns and cutting social welfare, health care and more besides in the last 15 years.

We oppose the backward wholesale denunciations of "Germans" in relation to the German bourgeoisie's undoubtedly arrogant and bullying domination within the EU. The German working class is a detachment of the European working class.

As a political formation dominated by the bourgeoisie, the institutions of the EU are increasingly backing away from the "Social Chapter" which originally served to overcome opposition to the EU in the labour movement.

The "Social Chapter" secured the major trade union confederations' support for steps towards European integration, such as they were. The EU Charter guarantees workers' right to form trade unions and negotiate and enjoins national governments to respect equality at work, limit working hours and so forth. But at the same time the EU's institutions have been used to advance privatisation of state-owned enterprises such as British Rail and to chip away at public provision of the National Health Service in the UK.

But retreat into an illusory national safe-haven is a blind alley.

Workers know that the social advances they made in matters such as employment rights, trade union recognition, welfare, education, health and housing were originally enshrined in national constitutions and legislation. At the same time, these same states have let the central EU institutions do a lot of the dirty work, often behind closed doors, of introducing "reforms" which undermine these gains. Some political groups have concluded that it will be easier to fight to defend and restore such gains if "their" state backs out of the EU. It is tempting, but it is a dangerous illusion.

## **Democracy**

The euphemism "democratic deficit" designates and at the same time hides the utterly undemocratic nature of the EU's organs. Their main feature is that they act as a screen hiding the responsibility of those who really govern, which is the national governments (but not all national governments equally. Only the governments of the imperialist powers really have a say). Above all, both those governments and the European Commissions take orders from big corporations and banks through national lobbies and the huge European "lobby industry" which mushrooms in Brussels:

- Transparency in the decision-making process!
- Unmask the business lobbies!
- The trade unions, led by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), should establish a commission which can immediately reveal publicly who the real authors are of every European directive and other decision, past or future.

Attempts by the Greek and now the Portuguese people to assert their rights and defend their living standards are rich in lessons. In Greece the people voted for a party (Syriza) which undertook to seek a better, more rational approach to their problems on the part of the European Commission, the spectral collective of European finance ministers and the European Central Bank (ECB). (The conference of European finance ministers apparently takes no minutes because it has no legal

existence!) These bodies are both unelected and beyond any effective democratic political control. But they had in their hands the power to bankrupt the entire Greek nation in a financial blockade, a power they exercised without a shred of conscience.

The chaotic state of the European Union is a measure of how deep the crisis of the capitalist system is. Only a way forward which offers a route towards a better form of society – socialism – can effectively confront this crisis.

But the recovery of the working-class movement is at present still weak and uncertain. The gains achieved by working people in Europe over many decades, but particularly since 1945, have all been won in struggle, wrung from a very unwilling bourgeoisie at the point of the knife. But the mass of society was led, and the gains were administered, by reformist politicians who believed that a peaceful alliance with the bourgeoisie is possible and desirable.

Whether Stalinists, Social Democrats or British Labourites, these political forces have been exhausted and discredited by the bourgeois drive to reverse all these gains. This drive is variously labelled “neoliberal” or “supply-side” economics, “Reaganomics”, “Thatcherism”, etc., and often treated as merely one policy option, indeed, a pretty disastrous one as it has turned out. But it expresses directly the material interests of the bourgeoisie as a class within modern capitalism, which, as the Marxist leaders of the past explained, is imperialism.

In their first tentative steps towards re-establishing their own political party, masses of people have turned towards movements which offer a nostalgic memory of the past. They look for a formation which will not be bullied and pushed around by the bourgeoisie and blackmailed by the government bond-holders and “paying down the debt”. They can see the point of a movement which offers to continue the relative prosperity, secure jobs and decent living standards, which were won and defended by class struggle in the past, but does not call for really radical political action now, a movement which is radical in words but in fact proposes – peaceful reform which does not challenge (or even recognise) class rule.

Such are Die Linke in Germany, Syriza in Greece, Podemos in Spain, le Parti de gauche in France, Sinn Fein in Ireland, and the surge around the new Labour Left leadership in the UK.

Workers International will do everything it can to support, strengthen and develop this movement and take it forward. But we have to say now that the fate of the “Oliver Twist” policy of the “radical

left” SYRIZA government in Greece, who “opposed” the bourgeoisie’s draconian Memoranda with a closely reasoned but impotent begging-bowl, should be considered seriously. (Oliver Twist was the hero of the Dickens novel of the same name who was chosen by his fellow orphans to ask for second helpings of food with the immortal words: “Please sir, I want some more”, with absolutely no success).

As former Greek finance minister Varoufakis discovered, the other side were simply not listening, and he had no way of making them listen.

Where working people do not have the political force to impose their wishes, the bourgeoisie inflict theirs, and they will not hesitate to fan the flames of irrational reaction in order to advance their own class interests. A programme is therefore needed which can provide workers employed and unemployed (and around them the mass of the people) with a genuine force which can challenge the bourgeoisie.

It falls to socialists and working people to plan a route forward for a Europe fit for their own purposes. This will require some profound changes.

#### **Equality is an international issue**

Workers International is in favour of a united Europe where all inhabitants enjoy equal rights and living conditions. But none of this is possible in an unequal world.

How senile the capitalist system is, is made plain by these facts: industry has progressively migrated from its early home in Europe and North America, leaving behind a sort of industrial graveyard involving massive unemployment and precarious employment, a shrinking working class defending its past gains and a bloated financial bourgeoisie.

It is instructive that Europe has not only exported whole industries such as textiles, steel-making and chemicals, to former colonies or semi-colonies, but also old Europe even lags behind in the development of computers and other sophisticated electronic hardware. Britain boasts that she is a hub for developing software applications, but does not even have her own computer production lines.

Instead of a harmonious economic development all over the world, bringing millions up to the economic, social and political level of the great powers, we see the most savage exploitation of workers, violent suppression of trade unions and destruction of any existing social protection (not to mention utterly irresponsible destruction wrought upon the environment). Politics is dominated by corrupt cliques, as in South Korea, Pakistan, India, the Middle East and most of Africa.

Trotsky’s theory of permanent revolution is validated in the most painful way. Imperialism does not leave any room in the “developing” world for the organic, historical, development of “modern” capitalism gradually establishing democratic institutions and pulling whole societies forward as it goes. Capitalism in its new fields of development means corruption, poverty and growing ethnic and religious conflicts.

The monstrous outcomes of this process feed the crowds of refugees massing at the border of Europe and now more determinedly than ever kicking the door down and walking in. They come to Europe expecting a decent life led in dignity and respect. The lesson for Europeans is: there is no progress here without progress elsewhere. Internationalism is essential.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is one of a series of such arrangements which enshrine the power of the great monopolies and seek to nullify any political influence upon them. Bourgeois Europe and North America certainly see TTIP as the only hope of reviving capitalist economic growth. The proposed “Partnership” consistently strives to remove all limits to the power of the economic oligarchs of business and finance, greedy to lay their hands on public health, education, transport and communication and other services.

The mongrel mish-mash of institutions that is the European Union as it stands reflects the kind of global development the bourgeoisie is bringing about. Socialists should retreat neither from European unity nor from international development and trade. The problem of both is that they are currently dominated by the bourgeoisie and its interests. There is no future in attacking either problem just on a national basis (although undoubtedly they have to be fought at every level!). The problem in each case is the bourgeoisie and capital; no movement against either tentacle of the beast is possible without aiming at its heart.

- Equality for all. Equal rights, equal pay and equal living conditions across the whole of Europe for working people!

#### **A plan for prosperity**

The obstacle to a plan for European prosperity and jobs lies in the private ownership of banks and industry by a small minority of the super-rich motivated only by profit, the present-day bourgeoisie.

This is the force which broke the struggle of the Greek people by giving them a whiff of financial blockade.

Workers International supports all initiatives which aim to uncover the real issues involved in debt, such as the preliminary report of the Greek Truth Commis-



*Jubilee Debt Campaign campaigns brought their message to a rally in London to defend the Greek government against financial blackmail (Picture Workers International)*

sion on Public Debt and the stand of former speaker of the Greek Parliament, Zoe Konstantinopolou, and the Jubilee Debt Campaign.

Our specific proposals are based on the experience that reasoned argument has not moved the bourgeoisie to soften its odious Memoranda for Greece, and there are no grounds for thinking it will do so anywhere else. Political pressure and street actions must be allied with building a movement of workers across Europe conscious of their class interests and determined to use all means – political and parliamentary organisation, mass demonstrations and concerted industrial action - to achieve some simple steps:

**A financial transaction tax (Tobin tax)**

- The right of working people to lead decent lives must dominate over the right of companies to make profits.
- Work out the implementation of a financial transaction tax (Tobin Tax), the income to be invested to develop the economy of Europe, especially the manufacturing industry.
- Establishment of democratic control by the working people of Europe over the European Commission, the collective of European finance ministers and the European Central Bank (ECB) which threaten all the nations of Europe with bankruptcy if they do not follow the savage austerity

programme currently trampling the needs of humanity.

- Expose the real issues involved in European national debts. Who incurred these debts, and in whose interests was the money spent? Repudiate those debts not legitimately incurred by the working people of Europe or used for their benefit.
- Democratic control over the whole European banking system to end casino banking and force banks to provide funding for small businesses, affordable housing, public services etc. and to develop the economy of Europe in the interests of working people.
- Banks and finance companies which re-locate in order to avoid the tax to be banned from doing business anywhere in the EU, either directly or through intermediaries.
- Expose all the obscure workings of international finance and prosecute all those engaged in criminal profiteering.
- An inspectorate of finance to be established employing suitably qualified people together with representatives of working men and women to track and expose the obscure workings of international finance.
- The European Central Bank (ECB) must be placed under the control of the European Parliament. It must be empowered to make loans directly to member states' governments. We must end the

situation where the ECB can lend money at infinitesimal interest rates to privately-owned banks which can then lend money to governments at "market rates".

- A European Development Bank to be established in order to invest the proceeds of the tax in the continent's economic development.
- A clear corporate legal responsibility of CEOs and directors of institutions which use perverse incentives to encourage their traders to break the law. Cut the bankers' bonuses! Punish the lords of fraud!

**Plan for jobs**

Currently Europe's economy is organised in the interests of major monopolies in alliance with gigantic banks and a complex system of finance. A few big firms dominate industry. Alongside them, huge groups of traders dominate the production and distribution of "commodities", the fuels, foodstuffs and minerals which are society's lifeblood.

Capitalist finance rules over all these, measuring all economic activity by one criterion – how much profit can be extracted from it and how fast.

These interlocking concerns operate over the whole world, warming their hands on what have been high growth rates in "emerging markets" such as China, India and parts of Latin America. Europe's economy and society, where growth rates have been much lower for a considerable

time and are now virtually flatlining, are parasitical upon these “emerging markets”.

The official EU Directorate, Eurostat, reports in October 2015 that a little over 23 million men and women are unemployed throughout the whole Union of 28 states, a rate of 9.5%. In the euro-zone states, some 17.6 million people are unemployed, a rate of 11%.

For a start it must be warned that the objective observer has every reason to distrust such statistics, which are systematically falsified to exclude whole categories. The definition of “unemployed” is changed and juggled in order to conceal the truth. We may need to multiply the official statistics by between 1.25 and 1.7 in order to get nearer to reality.

- Unions should challenge these statistics and present their own. Again the ETUC should take the lead. Honest accounting in this and all other areas is a basic condition for a European Framework Plan.

At the same time, the figures reveal some dramatic differences. Eurostat reports: “Among the member states, the lowest unemployment rates in August 2015 were recorded in Germany (4.5%), the Czech Republic (5.0%) and Malta (5.1%), and the highest in Greece (25.2% in June 2015) and Spain (22.2%).

And unemployment is everywhere highest among young people. “In August 2015” according to Eurostat, “the youth unemployment rate was 20.4% in the EU-28 and 22.3% in the euro area ... the lowest rates were observed in Germany (7%), Austria (10.8%), the Netherlands (11.2%), Denmark (11.4%) and Estonia (11.5% in July 2015), and the highest in Spain (48.8%), Greece (48.3% in June 2015), Croatia (43.5% in the second quarter 2015) and Italy (40.7%)”

- Europe needs a framework economic plan which will provide jobs for all and suitable education, training and apprenticeships for all young people.

- All private industry, commodity traders and banks (not to mention universities and think-tanks) have more than adequately-trained staff and facilities to undertake economic planning, but their objectives have to be changed. Rather than maximising returns to investors, planners should be freed to plan for jobs for all to meet the needs of the population.

- A first priority must be that every young person must have access to an apprenticeship which genuinely prepares them for a working life and pays an adequate wage.

- If there appears to be an “excess” of workers, then working hours should be reduced, with no loss of pay. The huge advances in productivity as science devel-

ops and production technique improves should not lead to an army of unemployed people left to rot.

### **Rights at work**

All workers must have the right to

- belong to a trade union of their choice
- organise freely in the workplace and in society at large
- negotiate collectively with employers
- wage the class struggle in the workplace collectively, including withdrawing their labour
- act in solidarity with their brothers and sisters in struggle everywhere
- have unimpeded access to a trade union representative
- protection from victimisation
- immunity from employers’ claims arising from industrial action
- communicate and discuss freely with fellow-workers
- a firm contract of employment stating working times (40-hour maximum, all hours over 35 hours a week to be paid at overtime rates)
- To prevent discord among European workers and stop the downward spiral of working conditions, wages and benefits, these must be equivalent right across the EU and aligned at the level of the highest.

### **Welfare:**

The working class includes children, pensioners, carers, single parents, the sick and the helpless, and the unemployed. Provision which respects “hard-working people” must also guarantee a dignified life for all these groups.

Freedom from fear and a guarantee of a dignified life for all those unable to work as a right and not as charity. These rights to be the same across Europe.

### **Housing:**

It is the basic right of every member of society to have access to a well-designed, well-constructed home supported by an adequate and proper infrastructure.

Experience has shown time and again that the housing market **cannot** fulfil this basic right.

- Where appropriate, home ownership should be arranged through a market that is regulated to prevent housing being used as a means of speculation.
- The movement of house-prices must be regulated within certain limits so that potential home-owners are not locked out by disproportionate price increases and actual owners do not suddenly find themselves deep in “negative equity”.

But most people will rely on rented accommodation

- Rents must be subjected to genuine control to prevent profiteering.
- Building regulations must specify acceptable standards of rented accommodation

- There must be an inspectorate with legal powers to impose acceptable housing standards at affordable rents.

- “Affordable” has to have real meaning. The level should be set at a manageable percentage of an average wage.

The current arrangements for building, letting and selling homes is first of all a bonanza for the building monopolies, who manipulate the shortage of housing in order to rack the prices up. It is a heaven for speculators who buy property simply in order to sell it later at a profit – contributing to an asset bubble which is bound to burst later and cause enormous damage. It is a forcing-house of a class of brass-faced slum landlords callously battenning on the masses.

- Above all our movement must urgently study the housing needs of the whole population and undertake a programme of constructing everywhere high-quality social housing of the appropriate type.

- Workers International strongly supports all residents’ and tenants’ organisation which are campaigning against the deteriorating conditions of housing and for decent housing.

In the UK, the whole system of housing benefits is back-to-front. Instead of imposing affordable levels of rent, the state has for many years subsidised excessive rents charged by greedy landlords through housing benefits, on which many people now rely. Nevertheless, we should ensure that benefits are fairly distributed, including to new arrivals.

- Down with the divisive proposal of Cameron to deny housing benefits to new arrivals!

### **Health, Education, public services**

Free and universal access to publicly-provided health and education services paid for out of taxation: These vital things were established in the post-war regimes of north-western Europe. A movement for a Europe of Working People would inscribe their defence and extension clearly upon its banner. We oppose all privatisation in these spheres and all attempts (such as university tuition fees) to impose charges upon users.

- Pre-school nurseries for children and long-term care for frail elderly and disabled people to be part of free education and health services.

- End the privatisation of public services,

- Renationalise all privatised public services

- Reject TTIP and all such exploitative, pro-privatisation trade treaties.

### **Civil rights**

The experience of Greece is salutary. The bourgeois masters of Europe have ren-



dered the sovereignty of the Greek parliament null and void; they have imposed changes upon the Greek constitution against the very clearly-expressed wishes of the Greek people and anchored the supervision of European commissars at the heart of the Greek executive.

More broadly, terrorism and economic crisis are used as a justification for reducing civil rights.

Everywhere the ruling class has been limiting and curtailing workers' rights to resist exploitation, rights which have been won by struggles of workers over a period of more than 100 years. But it becomes increasingly obvious that the capitalist class cannot stop at that. It has to destroy even older democratic and civil rights and liberties which it helped to establish centuries ago. This class has become reactionary even by its own standards – a clear indication that humanity must get rid of it.

Across Europe, bigotry towards religious minorities is providing a basis for the most vicious right-wing violence. This is supplemented by the systematic erosion of rights by “democratic” governments. In France the “fiche blanche” (index card) system can lead to a person being subjected to what is effectively house-arrest if the file reads “goes to the mosque three times a week” or “participated in a demonstration against the projected airport at Notre-Dame-des-Landes”. Besides hounding refugees out of the country, the British government is also doing everything it can to criminalise particular sets of religious and political belief as “extremist” through the “Prevent” strategy. The German government develops the idea of “Gefährder” (“dangerous individuals”) in order to take away protest rights.

- Defend the right to protest!
- Defend freedom of expression!
- Defend all from repression on religious grounds!
- Defend civil rights!
- Defend measures such as legal aid and the institutions which guarantee access to justice for all!

#### **The basis for a continent-wide movement: Solidarity**

The campaign of solidarity with the people of Greece has provided a pointer to how a movement of workers' rights across the continent can develop. The strong spontaneous outpouring of support for the refugees last summer is a reminder that there is more at stake than just Greece, while all over the Balkans there are national groups in former socialist states struggling along in isolation, poverty and outright starvation. Beyond them are the masses in Belarus and Ukraine. There is a massive interest in these countries in joining up with the rest of the continent, but the

entry-ticket to the EU is a “shock therapy” wiping out any remnant of the social gains achieved in the past.

- Welcome free Ukraine into the free Europe of working people!

Since the first realisation that the Greek working and middle-classes were to be made the scapegoat for the economic crisis, support for them has grown across the continent. It increased sharply when the Syriza government was elected in February of this year, and continued to grow even after the fiasco of the Tsipras government's climb-down in the face of a financial and banking blockade.

That was also when real interest at a rank-and-file level in the trade union movement in the UK started to make itself felt. Growing numbers of local trade union branches and Trades Union Councils started to affiliate to the campaign and seek links with parallel organisations and solidarity initiatives in Greece.

The clearest expression of this movement is the resolution presented by Jack Heyman to the dockers' meeting in Liverpool to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of their struggle (see Workers International Journal no. 14, November 2015, page 13). One result of

this dispute was the International Dockworkers' Council (IDC) which arose from the organised international and very effective solidarity action with the Liverpool dockers. But if solidarity is confined to purely humanitarian responses to someone else's tragedy, we will miss building the movement which must be built to end the causes of tragedy.

**This article is merely a sketch of what a programme for the working people of Europe would look like. A discussion is needed which explores every aspect of such a programme.**

**Already the working class is making new experiences in confronting the effects of the crisis, for example in the shape of Solidarity for All in Greece and in the big issues around refugees.**

**One big step forward would be a conference on the economic future of the continent linking sympathetic economists with representatives of workers', migrants and local community organisations from every nook and cranny of Europe. If it gained widespread support, such a conference could really concentrate thinking about the way ahead and provide it with a sharp edge.**

## **Marxist Considerations on the Crisis:**

### **Part 1 by Balazs Nagy**

Published for Workers International by Socialist Studies. ISBN 978 0 9564319 3 6



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’

£10 per copy (Inc. delivery in UK) from Workers' International, PO Box 68375, London E7 7DT. Cheques payable to “Correspondance”

**Namibia:** In elections in 2014, the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) won two Parliamentary seats and the constitutional right to party funding. The authorities are determined to block these rights and have resorted to a variety of measures to deny them. The WRP continues to campaign robustly for their rights and the rights of all the working people of Namibia

# Letter to the Director of Elections

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY TO REBUILD THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

P.O. Box 3349 Windhoek Fax: 088641065 Tel: 061-260647 [ericabeukes@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ericabeukes@yahoo.co.uk)



2 March 2016

*Dear Professor,*

It was with a renewed shock that the WRP Political Committee was informed that Speaker Peter Katjavivi was the keynote speaker at the ECN party finance workshop for all parliamentary political parties.

The Speaker is a SWAPO parliamentarian elected as a chairman of the National Assembly for no other purpose than to act as chairman, but otherwise to serve the interest of his party, SWAPO.

The workshop concerns all parties with a legal and financial interest in parliamentary funding. It also deals with your role as a neutral and independent supervisor. Your elevation of the Speaker to a pontificator to co-parliamentary parties about the prudent use of finances is unac-

ceptable. We complained about this gross irregularity in the run-up to the elections in 2014 when you used former SWAPO Speaker Gurirab as keynote speaker.

This practice relegates you to a SWAPO organ.

Besides this clear subservience of the ECN to SWAPO dictates, Mr Katjavivi without blinking an eye speaks about accountability and transparency, while he has not declared his unethical interest in the Mass Housing Scam and other tenders in which he uses his SWAPO membership, his parliamentary membership and his Speakership as instruments to get himself tenders.

As we speak Mr Katjavivi is setting up police around the WRP offices in a clear provocative effort. The pretext is that the

police shall protect WRP parliamentarians. Peter Katjavivi's dangerous and insidious actions might be little known to others, but it is well known to the WRP. Chief Clement Kapuuu lost his life due to the same underhand and treacherous actions of Mr Katjavivi.

Lastly, he has denied the WRP its parliamentary fees until now on the basis of fraud and connivance.

The WRP demands from the ECN to apologize and to undertake that it will not commit this mockery again.

---

*Erica Beukes*

Member of the Financial Committee

Administrative Secretary

On behalf of the Political Committee

## Open communique to Professor Paul Isaak

WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY TO REBUILD THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

P.O. Box 3349 Windhoek Fax: 088641065 Tel: 061-260647 [ericabeukes@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ericabeukes@yahoo.co.uk)



*TO: Professor Paul Isaak, Director of the ECN, Speaker Katjavivi, All Political Parties*

The WRP Political Committee on 7 March 2016 discussed the following matters and resolved to address publicly the parties indicated above:

On Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016, the WRP led by Erica Beukes the administrative secretary attempted to participate in a "workshop" for funding of parliamentary parties. She was barred from raising points of information and objection. She had to take her own opportunity to speak and distribute the attached letter.

It is clear that the ECN is openly constituting itself as a forum of SWAPO, a parliamentary party and not as a democratic forum as envisaged in the Constitutional provision and as a forum for complaint, consultation and discussion as provided in the Electoral Act itself: Article (1) The Republic of Namibia is hereby established as a sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary State founded upon the principles of democracy, the rule of law and justice for all.

(2) All power shall vest in the people of Namibia who shall exercise their sovereignty through the democratic institutions of the State.

The ECN's clear subservience to SWAPO and Peter Katjavivi is a grotesque irregularity and a mockery of both the law and the democratic purports of the Constitution. Working people have voted the WRP into parliament. Katjavivi contemptuously disregards this fact and the rights of Namibian voters.

We note that this is in direct contradiction to the purports of the Electoral Act requiring that the ECN as a public funded mechanism serves electoral parties.

The WRP rejects the said parody.

Likewise, the WRP rejects that the Speaker Peter Katjavivi assisted by the Secretary of the National Assembly constitutes himself as the National Assembly thereby denying not only the rights but the very existence of parliamentary parties outside SWAPO. More seriously, he negates the purpose of elections and the rights of the working people, the working class in particular who have voted to be represented in parliament.

Amongst the presumptuous illegal decisions taken by Katjavivi and relayed by Harker as it was his, the following example will suffice: on 5 October 2015 Mr Findley Harker notified the WRP as follows: "The National Assembly cannot under the present circumstances while the matter is sub judice release the aforementioned funding until the court case is finalized."

The National Assembly never discussed nor made such a decision. The National Assembly has no legal power to make such a decision in any event. The National Assembly consists of representatives of elected parties, none of which has the legal power to infringe on another's rights as an elected party including funding and representation.

This is fraud. Fraud committed by Katjavivi who man-alone is turning the National Assembly into a farce run by SWAPO.

The reliance on the "sub judice" rule in an unrelated court case to the WRP's parliamentary rights is further proof of the abuse of Katjavivi of the rule of law and his own position as Speaker. This rule

does not suspend the rights of a registered party to funding, but is defined as follows: "The term sub judge literally means "under judicial consideration". The sub judge rule is part of the law relating to contempt of court. The rule governs what public statements cannot be made about ongoing legal proceedings before, principally, the courts"

The rule has nothing to do with compliance with a statute. It cannot suspend a statute.

The WRP further rejects the manner in which Mr Katjavivi abuses his position and the National Assembly to enforce his corruption: In this regard Mr Katjavivi is corruptly involved in the Mass Housing Scam. He is using his parliamentary and political position to benefit from corrupt schemes.

In the Parliamentary scam which has now escalated from R700,000 million to R2 billion, Mr Katjavivi barred the SWANU leader and parliamentarian Mr Maamberua to speak on the unnecessary new parliamentary building. He then went on to motivate (Note: as chairman of the house) the building of this building.

This is open abuse of what was to be the respected position of Speaker and clear corruption as Mr Katjavivi is involved in building scams, and his conduct in this matter is that he is prepar-

ing a tender for himself alternatively for his cronies. The fact that this a criminal scam is that the feasibility study costs are included in the tender amount. (A feasibility study is to determine whether the project is truly necessary and precedes the tender. Likewise the costing of the building precedes the budget allocation. This is voracity.)

"The 2016 to 2017 development budget tabled in the National Assembly last week allocates N\$2 billion for the construction, renovation and improvement of the new parliament building, while the other N\$260 million is for feasibility study, design and supervision. 'It is, therefore, logical that the construction of a new parliament building that would accommodate both houses is likely to cost a little more than it was originally conceived when the new building was going to house the National Assembly alone,' he said in a statement issued yesterday. By paying little more, Katjavivi actually meant roughly N\$1,6 billion on top of the initial N\$640 million planned for two years ago."

This level of depravity and now open abuse of his position ties in with the fact that he keeps Benson Kaapala on the payroll of the Parliament as parliamentarian while the WRP has removed this person as parliamentary representative as he is not a member of the WRP. More

than an estimated R1 million of public money has already been spent on Katjavivi's corruption in this instance to pay Benson Kaapala illegally.

The WRP Political Committee resolves as follows:

1. The WRP demands that the ECN publicly distances itself from the corruption, manipulation and abuse of position of Mr Peter Katjavivi and to uphold the rights of parties as equal participants in elections.
2. The WRP call on all who reject the usurpation of the National Assembly by Mr Katjavivi to join with us to fight this monstrosity he is creating in the place of a National Assembly worth the name.
3. The WRP call on all who respect the rights of the working people of this country to join us to demand the full payment of our parliamentary funds and our right to appoint our own representatives on behalf of the voters who voted for the WRP.
4. The WRP call on all who are concerned about spiralling corruption to join us to fight Mr Katjavivi's turning the National Assembly into a cesspool of abuse and corruption.

---

*Hewat Beukes*

Nominated Member of Parliament

Authorized Representative

On behalf of the Political Committee

The Committee of Parents  
The Truth & Justice Commission

## **DECLARATION: Programme of demands and action**

tel: 061-260 647 P.O. Box 3349 Windhoek, [ericabeukes@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ericabeukes@yahoo.co.uk)

We demand the following:

1) The immediate disclosure of the whereabouts of the missing persons under the SWAPO terror in exile prior to independence by the SWAPO and the United Nations Organisation: the continued concealment of this information is a crime against humanity.

2) The disclosure of the manner of death, the burial sites and the return of the remains of our relatives killed in exile by the SWAPO leadership.

We undertake the following action:

3) The initiation of a Truth & Justice International Inquiry to determine the full political circumstances around the mass killings in exile and the political facts around the victims and their persecutors including the role of the churches, governments and the Anti-Apartheid Movement including the continued relations at present. This is necessary for justice to the

victims and defence of the Namibian Nation in particular the working people. Our relatives who lost their lives and who found themselves accused as spies and collaborators with the enemy shall have the justice of the truth.

### **The Background**

The Committee of Parents was formed in 1884 to fight against the jailing in holes, torture mass murder of Namibians in Angola and Zambia by the SWAPO.

We attach hereto copies of articles in "The Namibian" newspaper of 21 and 28 February 1986 which comprehensively set out the beginnings of our struggles against the forces which sought to exterminate our people and to protect and assist the murderers of SWAPO politically.

At independence in 1990 the SWAPO together with the United Nations Organisation and the Red Cross would only divulge a small part of the facts about the

tragedy. They refused to divulge the scale of the mass murder and the whereabouts both of the remains of our murdered relatives and the missing survivors. At present we still do not know whether the missing survivors are still alive.

As time went on the SWAPO continued with its accusations against our relatives while increasingly more and more openly discriminating against survivors of 1976, PLAN fighters and Youth League members, who had exposed the corruption and collaboration of the SWAPO leadership with the South African colonial Apartheid regime.

As a result of the struggle of the Committee of Parents more than 300 persons were rescued from a certain and brutal death at the hands of the SWAPO leadership, and they were allowed by the United Nations to return home.

*(ctd. P. 16)*

The exposed organisations such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement went silent, but their members dispersed in other organisations where they continue the imperialist work of protecting and supporting the SWAPO in an underhand manner against the rights of the Namibian working people and the self-determination of the nation.

The SWAPO since 1990 started to establish itself as an institution of liberation and promulgated the Veterans Act of 2008 in which they equate themselves as the liberation struggle and bestowed benefits on mostly a new group of loyalist and opportunists.

They continue to slander former PLAN and Youth League survivors who were opposing them politically and morally.

Persons are shown away from the Veterans Ministry accused as 'spies'.

The SWAPO bestow 'Veteran' status on former police spies and collaborators of South Africa in exchange for their support. SWAPO parliamentarians are infested with such persons. Collaborators who have killed Namibians under protection of South Africa are honoured and awarded 'Veteran' status.

#### **International Call**

We call on the workers movement in Namibia and internationally, all true democrats and decent people to support our demands and efforts for seeking restitution and to establish the truth in the national struggle. We seek in particular that justice be done to the victims, that

their remains are returned and the truth around the workers' struggle from the 1971/72 General Strike through the struggle for unionism from 1980 and the truth around the slander and murder of working class leaders in exile be uncovered.

We undertake to set up a Truth & Justice Commission immediately and we call for persons with untainted reputation to join our Commission for an inquiry to establish the truth around SWAPO's activities in exile and locally.

Signed

*Erica Beukes*

Chairman

25 February 2016.

**The Committee of Parents and the Truth and Justice Committee sent this Letter to: the Secretary General of the United Nations, Section on Human Rights Abuses, the President of Namibia, the Lutheran World Federation, the Council of Churches in Namibia and the 5 Western Powers (USA, Germany, Great Britain, Canada and France)**

# **Continued human rights abuses**

[ericabeukes@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ericabeukes@yahoo.co.uk) tel: 061-260 647 P.O. Box 3349 Windhoek

1 March 2016

The above two Committees were brought about by affected Namibians, whose family members and Comrades suffered and died at the hands of the SWAPO Party, while in exile. These abuses continue today, albeit in a different form, as survivors of these abuses on their return to Namibia after independence, continue to be marginalized and prejudiced at Government Institutions in various ways etc.

- The former fighters are being discriminated against and humiliated by the SWAPO Leadership in every conceivable way.

- They are refused veteran status and therefore cannot overcome the continued hardship the SWAPO leaders are bringing onto them.

- They are called derogatory and degrading names etc. South African Agents, Puppets of the South African Regime, Imperialist Agents, Spies and Counter Revolutionaries

- In the light of the above and the general discrimination against this group, we demand that the wrongs that we have suffered and continue to suffer be rectified.

We want the SWAPO Party and Government to categorically declare that we were not South African Spies of the South African Regime and to stop the vilification of our names and personalities. They have poisoned the communities from where we

come and are sowing division amongst our families and communities.

SWAPO must rectify the falsified history of the 1976 call for a congress which SWAPO called a rebellion. It is important for us that this denunciation be done for us, our children, our families, the people from the villages and towns we come from, the broader Namibian nation and the world at large.

The Committee of Parents came to know about the atrocities in the SWAPO camps in Exile in Angola and Zambia' after reports surfaced from delegates to a SWAPO meeting held in Lusaka in September 1984. We at that time learnt about the difficulties experienced by the youth of 1976 and that this had been ongoing since that call for a Congress in 1976. They were allowed and aided to continue with their atrocities by the governments of Zambia and Tanzania, and later Angola. The lucky ones that were able to flee these atrocities in Tanzania and Zambia, eventually found refuge in Kenya. These are the people that SWAPO is continuing to purge and persecute to this day.

We therefore demand the following:

- The clearance of our names.
- Reparations for suffering and the losses that we have incurred due to the action of the SWAPO leadership and their allies.
- Counseling to offset the effects of years of hunger, thirst and pain that we suffered for the sake of liberation
- Our names be cleared in Namibia, Zambia, Tanzania and the world at large

- That our role in the liberation be recognized internationally.

- That the monies expropriated from us in Zambia in 1974, be reimbursed to us with interest.

- A reputable, impartial commission of enquiry to be instituted to investigate the abuse of Human Rights of Namibians in exile in Angola, Zambia and Tanzania.

- The Namibian Parliament to pass a Bill of National Reconciliation for the Whole Nation to rectify the wrongs of the past.

Most importantly, we want the SWAPO Leadership, the Governments of Angola, Zambia and Tanzania, The United Nations Refugee Department, The Lutheran World Federation and the Council of Churches in Namibia, to declare the whereabouts of our missing and unaccounted people that vanished in exile.

We also hold the five Western Powers that brokered the so-called "Liberation Deal", accountable for their devious role in the whole episode.

Furthermore we will expose to the Namibian People, and all working people in the different countries about the "cover-up" by churches and Human Rights Organisations as well as donor agencies and donor Countries Norway and Sweden.

The youth and the Namibian People in particular the Working People of today must be informed about the atrocities and how these organizations played a leading role in "covering up" these abuses thus distorting the true history of our country.



These revelations and the true history of our country must not be lost to the youth and future generations. We cannot build a truly free and democratic Namibia while there are still so many outstanding matters on which the perpetrators of gross human violations continue to keep silence. It is important for our youth to

know the true history in order to avoid an occurrence, which is slowly starting to come to the fore.

Together with the support of the same agencies and countries like before the SWAPO regime is driving this country to a very dangerous and oppressive situation. We attach our Joint Declaration hereto.

We await your response to our letter by 26 March 2016.

ERICA BEUKES  
JOHN AMUTHENU

On behalf of the Committee of Parents and The Truth & Justice Committee

**An ethnography of SWAPO camps by Christian A. Williams**

# Report on a Windhoek book-launch

by Sheldon Heenan 7 March 2016

A former American volunteer teacher at Tses High School in the South, the author obtained a doctorate on the SWAPO camps in exile. He subsequently wrote a book on the ethnography of the SWAPO camps in exile which he launched in a timely fashion on Tuesday, 15 March, perhaps coincidentally, perhaps due to the rising clamour around the issue.

The event was sponsored by *The Namibian* newspaper which hosted a panel consisting of the author and Robben Island veteran, "General" Charles Namoloh. This was an opportunist move to be the catalyst for "reconciliation" finally. We reckon they will be in hot soup with SWAPO given what followed.

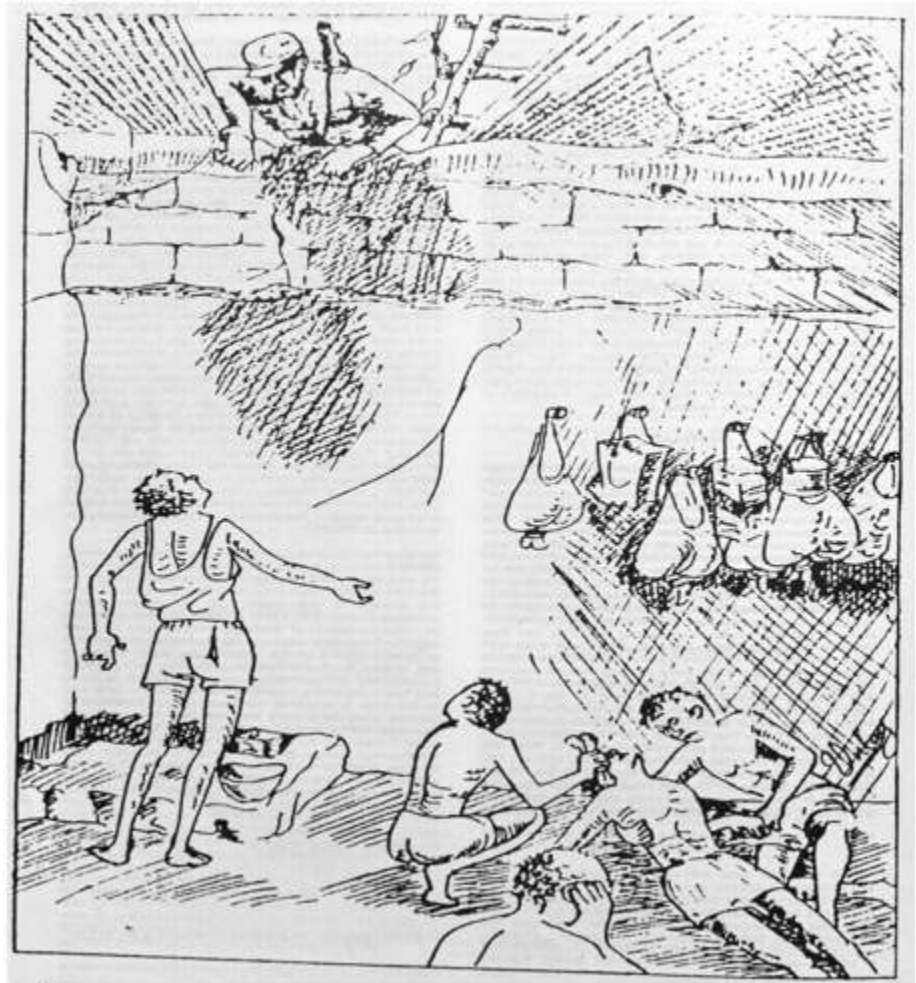
More than 100 people attended. Namoloh issued the thinly veiled threat as a Stalinist: "Don't play with the Generals". "What generals?", the meeting wished to know, among much derisive laughter. One of the first to rise to speak was one Martin Von Luttichou who reminded the General that he, Martin, was in the dungeons with the "General's closest friends" whom he named one by one.

The meeting criticized the book in that it was not written in the political context in which the events took place. The meeting wanted an inquiry.

The Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) distributed their newspaper, *Die Werker*, which was eagerly accepted except for four or five SWAPO members.

Namoloh rejected the book on the basis that the author had no first-hand knowledge. The Robben Island veteran encouraged people to "bring their truths" for all to know as the only basis on which Namibians will be able to deal with this historic problem.

Erica Beukes (WRP) spoke first in the contributions from the floor. She pointed out that SWAPO was the lesser partner in the imperialist collaboration of the imperialist states, the churches, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the African states, the latter which were agents of imperialism.



**Former SWAPO detainee Frederick "Cheetah" Gomaseb sketched this "hell-hole" dungeon in Angola**

There were two ludicrous reports by youngsters in their early 30s who claimed that they had a ball of a time in SWAPO camps, happy "childhood" times to which they longed to return. These were brushed aside.

A SWAPO survivor, Jackson, addressed Namoloh on the "nonsense" that the author had to be part of life and the "culture" in the camps to have written an ethnography. To much laughter from the house, he informed the General that he had written various ethnographies

amongst them an ethnography of prostitutes in Kenya's Nairobi where he had fled from SWAPO, but he was never a prostitute.

Hewat Beukes (WRP) spoke last. Except for the four or five SWAPO members, the house unanimously agreed with him that the "war" could not have been as "complex" (according Namoloh) as to make an inquiry impossible. They also agreed that it was a SWAPO farce to

(ctd. P.18)

Otjozondjupa region of the Miners' Union of Namibia supports

# Independent civil society inquiry into Marikana massacre



*Relatives of the massacre victims meet to discuss the outcome of the Farlam Inquiry*

The Otjozondjupa region of the Miners' Union of Namibia has passed a motion in support of an independent inquiry into the Marikana miners' massacre.

The Miners also sent a letter to the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) to nationally support the motion.

They expressed support for the following letter:

OTJOZONDJUPA REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE MUN

mailto: onemay52@ymail.com Cell: +264 81 883 3136

MOTION

We Namibian miners support an inde-

pendent civil society inquiry into the Marikana miners' Massacre.

The South African government's long-delayed official report on the Marikana miners' massacre (arising from the Farlam Inquiry), was released on 26 June 2015.

The report is a white-wash which fails to identify those accountable for the brutal deaths of 34 miners on strike for a living wage, many of whom were shot in the back.

No state agency or politician has accepted responsibility, no-one has been prosecuted for their murder - and no justice has been done.

The Otjozondjupa Regional Committee of the Miners' Union of Namibia supports the proposal for an independent civil society inquiry into the Marikana miners' massacre coming from the South African workers' movement (which will decide its nature and composition).

We further call upon the MUN as a whole to endorse our Motion and this Motion is thus forwarded to the Headquarters.

Signed on 25 February 2016.

*Marcus Makaza*

Chairman

*(from p.17)*

equated its exile activities to the liberation struggle. The struggle inside the country was the essence and involved the entire nation not only SWAPO. He scoffed at the magnitude of the "war" as did others. They agreed that an international inquiry was necessary to unearth the truth. He pointed

out that the book *Namibia: a struggle betrayed* written in 23 days in 1986 with its analytic and conceptual shortcomings was still the most accurate factual and political exposé of the history of SWAPO within imperialism.

He ended by supporting the call of the Committee of Parents and the Truth & Justice Committee for an immediate international inquiry. A number of persons

pledged support for the WRP after the meeting. Silas Shikongo, who now lives in Tsumeb, was a former PLAN fighter trained in Israel and was the first prisoner of SWAPO in 1964 for 6 months. He was then deported to Tanzania. He was trained in politics including unions and their organization. He will train the miners in Tsumeb and surroundings and write articles for *Die Werker*.

# Roads Authority continues on reckless road of rotten roads

By the Road Workers of Okondjatu, Namibia

Two hundred road workers have taken up a principled struggle against the Namibia Roads Authority (RA) for constructing bad quality roads due to corruption. They also took up the struggle against poor and dangerous working conditions and deteriorating employment conditions generally. They say that the RA is putting road users' lives at risk. They undertake to leave no stone unturned to fight the RA's reckless actions. The Chief Engineer is part of this corruption and turns a blind eye on the terrible construction when he visits sites for "inspection".

A tender was issued to China Henan International Corporation group (Pty) Ltd, P.O. Box 4085, Windhoek, Tel. no. 061-307488, to construct a road of 140 Kilometres between Otjinene and Okamatapati.

The Tender was issued by the Roads Authority, the parastatal in the Ministry of Works tasked with the building and maintenance of the Roads Infrastructure in Namibia. (The Company is registered with the Ministry of Trade and Industry under the Registration No. N2007/0531.)

Site establishment for the project commenced in 2013 and the actual building of the road began in March 2014. Initially around 300 workers from the local and neighbouring communities were recruited to provide the labour. The number of workers employed has in the meantime been reduced to about 200. The workforce comprises qualified artisans, semi-skilled workers and un-skilled labourers.

The workers decided to join the trade union NANSU, which was newly established by trade unionist Kaaronda Evalistus. The majority of the workers decided to join this Union. In due time, serious issues developed between the workers and the company management. Unfortunately the Union did not give the necessary support to the workers, and the only time that there was interaction between the workers and the union was when the Union collected the monthly subscriptions.

The following are the prevailing conditions at the site:

Some workers stay on site in shelters provided by the Company, while others rent accommodation privately.

Workers not staying on site are picked up by company transport and ferried to the site on a daily basis.

Workers have to feed themselves with no subsidisation from the company.

The site office is 4 km from Okahandja and workers staying on site are not provided with transport to and from the nearest shops.

Water and ablution facilities are provided by the company on site.

First Aid training is run and provided by unqualified employees of the company.

There has never been an inspection by the Ministry of Labour.

Although the workers are allowed to join a union there are no shop stewards on site as they are fired with impunity, once being appointed. This raises the question as to whether the Union is in cahoots with the management, as there is no protection from the Union.

In the beginning the Union was very visible but the situation changed gradually as their visits become infrequent.

Incompetent workers are appointed in supervisory positions.

There is absolutely no adherence to safety regulations on site.

This is exacerbated by the fact that there are no inspections by the Ministry of Labour.

This was the main reason for a fatal accident that occurred on site in 2014, where a worker was killed in an accident, due to faulty plant being used on site

Low quality of work and the use of substandard materials.

Materials used in the construction of the road are not as per the tender specifications

The soil is not treated to tender specifications and the ground is not compacted as to standard and basic principles for this type of construction Cracking of the under-layer is camouflaged by "topping

up" deficiencies. Concrete mixtures, a vital part of the construction, are not according to specification.

There is a lack of inspections from the Roads Authority

The topping stones are of a low quality and not close to the standard required by the Tender. This will lead to serious deterioration in the road surface once it gets to carry heavy loads.

The costs for building this road are way beyond the tender submitted.

## What are the national issues at stake?

1. The Namibian consulting engineers are turning a blind eye to all the "cutting of corners" and sub-standard construction which workers are identifying. These workers have years of experience in this type of construction, yet they are ignored and have to be satisfied with labourer tasks.

2. In short, the whole project is a farce and needs urgent Government intervention, taking into context the national importance and long term consequences.

## Conclusion

- Working conditions are bad, especially as regards Health and Safety Regulations.
- The Trade Union is not doing its job, and has forsaken the Workers, collecting only their contributions at month end.
- The whole tender process was flawed and should be re-visited

## The workers' issues

- The Question of Labour Hire, where workers are on short term contracts and removed as soon as they become acquainted with the systems and can identify the shortcomings of the project
- No benefits to workers, although the Pay Slip indicates that provision has been made for these benefits.
- No provision for Income Tax Deductions..
- Health and Safety concerns



Discussion:

# Capitalism employs religious ideology as both a soft and a hard weapon

*Workers International Journal* welcomes a discussion around the issues raised in this contribution by reader Allen Rasek , 10 February 2016

Napoleon exposed the true nature of religious ideology at the service of capitalism more openly and frankly than any other leader of the capitalist class when he pronounced that society is impossible without inequality, inequality is intolerable without a code of morality, and a code of morality is unacceptable without religion.

Marx aptly countered Napoleon's dictum, declaring that "religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people."

End of quotation!

Some American neo-cons wistfully wonder why the US Founding Fathers enacted the separation of Church and State<sup>1</sup>. The answer is that, as the intellectual representatives of the rising Bourgeoisie/ capitalist class with which the Founding Fathers of the USA were associated, Voltaire, Diderot and other intellectuals of the Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, based their perception on reason or rational thinking. They radically criticised, refuted and cast aside religious ideology, dogma. The separation of Church and State meant that religion was considered a personal and private matter and kept out of the whole public domain.

Western capitalist countries have not in general incorporated the separation of Church and State into their constitutions<sup>2</sup>; while they hypocritically boast of being secular countries, they consistently, to varying degrees<sup>3</sup>, advance religious ideology in school curricula, allow Churches to run schools, grant religion generous coverage on TV, on film and in the print media, participate officially in religious ceremonies; support religious institutions financially, etc, etc.

In many other countries the intrusion of religion in public life is much worse than that. It is sufficient to refer to Saudi Arabia and Iran, both of which have States based on Islamic ideology, the first implementing the full weight of Sharia Law - Quran and Hadiths<sup>4</sup> - through Wahabism, and Iran enforcing Sharia law - Quran and Hadiths - pursuant to the Shia branch of Islam.

In the wake of World War II the Allied powers split into two hostile camps East and West, the so-called communist states and the free world. This resulted in the



**Diderot (above) and Voltaire (right) based their perception on reason and radically criticised religious ideology.**

*(Pictures Wikimedia Commons)*



period of the cold war which provided a fresh opportunity to employ religious ideology in the field of class struggle. Thus US President Truman hyped up the god-fearing West against the godless Soviet Union as extra fodder for the propaganda machine.

## **Religious ideology as a 'soft' weapon at the service of capitalism**

Keep in mind the two quotations about religious ideology at the head of this text. The first saw it as a stratagem for masking the existence of class division, class antagonism, the reality of the capitalist society of exploiter and exploited, and sanctifying inequality. The second quotation cogently expresses that, just as opium provides the taker with momentary relief, so those who take refuge from capitalism's suffering in the opium of religion also find very temporary solace.

Thus as a part of capitalist ideology Christianity, Islam etc. justify Capitalism's inhumane wage-slavery system, and preach to the working-class masses submission to their living and working conditions. We see that as soon as capitalist crisis breaks out, the Churches send their agents door-to-door in working-class communities telling unemployed people that

Jesus Christ- Son of God!- and his Bible are here to save you. Of course, the Church hierarchy do not throw their support behind capitalism free of charge, relying on charity from their flock or even dropping from Heaven for their livelihood. Rather, capitalism well understands the service religious ideology provides, and handsomely rewards them.

However, in those capitalist countries where the ideology of Islam constitutes the state ideology itself, society as a whole is besieged by religious ideology and the doctrine of Divine Providence controlling the lives of human beings and everything that happen to them. Consequently there are no social classes, everybody is equally a slave before God; democracy, i.e. men and women running the affairs of society as a whole, and the principles of the right to strike, freedom of expression, of organisation and gender equality, etc, are banned and considered the godless ideas of infidels. What a fabulous tool the ideol-



ogy of Islam is at the service of the capitalist class for exploiting the working classes. **Religious ideology as a 'hard' weapon at the service of capitalism**

In the aftermath of World War II and the outbreak of the cold war, US imperialism, at the head of her allies, listed nationalist and progressive movements as her enemies alongside the Soviet Union. Those colonies which were struggling for independence from colonial powers<sup>5</sup>, and others who had already gained their independence or were semi-independent and were seeking independent policies, met the wrath of US Imperialism and her accomplices. US Imperialism regarded their independent policies as tantamount to communism and ergo as hostile acts. In other words, "you are either with us or against us".

For instance, in 1953, the Iranian Nationalist government of the liberal Dr Mohammad Mosadegh was overthrown by a joint coup d'état of US and UK imperialists. Fidel Castro was originally a Nationalist leader of Cuba, and only when US Imperialism refused to recognise his independent status did Fidel Castro turn left toward the "infidel" Soviet Union. The same was true of the late Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt, also labelled an "infidel".

Against the backdrop of such warmongering by the imperialists and their accomplices, the ideology of Islam in particular was also used as an additional "hard" weapon in the class struggle. And the medieval, super-reactionary state of Saudi Arabia based on Sharia Law - Quran and Hadiths - as represented by the Wahabis rose as the pillar of the above heinous project. Besides exporting millions of barrels of oil a day, Saudi Arabia also exports innumerable volumes of grisly Wahabi literature and many thousands of Wahabi Imams - preachers. Moreover Saudi Arabia has built thousands of mosques and keeps building more mosques across the world. At these mosques Sharia law - Quran and Hadiths - is taught and young people, in particular, are brainwashed.

Thus, since the end of World War II, Saudi Arabia, in collusion with imperialist powers, has continued to use Sharia law as a weapon, on the one hand, to oppress internal dissent, and on the other against progressive and left currents in the Arab world and beyond.

Afghanistan used to be a fairly secular country, making slow but steady progress. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, it furnished US Imperialism with an exceptionally inhumane opportunity to plunge the country into being the Soviet Union's Vietnam. Military training, weapons and associated facilities were supplied by the US; Saudi Arabia etc. pro-



**Tehran, Iran, 1952: Masses come out onto the streets to back Dr. Mosadegh.**  
(Picture: Wikimedia Commons)

vided the weapon of Wahabi Sharia Law - Quran and Hadiths - and money. Additional Wahabi fighters were recruited locally from Saudi Arabia, etc. The result was the birth of Al-Qaida as a twin creature of the US and Saudi Arabia. Soviet imperialism was defeated in 1988 and quit Afghanistan. Mission accomplished for US imperialism and her accomplices! They callously left a ruined and chaotic Afghanistan in the hands of a bunch of Pashto, Tajik, Uzbek, etc, gangsters who set about savagely tearing into each other and inflicted further devastation, rolling Afghanistan back into the dark ages. How, charitable to the Imperialists and their accomplices were!

Later, the Pakistani<sup>6</sup> Wahabi Taliban, brainwashed at Pakistani Madrasas (seminary schools), financed by Saudi Arabia with the imperialists' blessing, crossed the border into Afghanistan and in 1996 set up a brutal Wahabi state in Kabul. In short, the Taliban Emirate hanged cassettes from posts, women were completely shut out of public life, etc. The imperialists and their supporters helped create Hell in Afghanistan and their Frankenstein's monster, Al Qaida is still delivering<sup>7</sup>.

#### **American Neo cons redraw the map of the Middle East**

About the time George Bush Jnr. became US President in 2000, a revised map of the Middle East, called the 'New middle East' was briefly made public. It revealed that as sole imperialist super power, the USA felt entitled to redraw the map of this oil rich and geo-politically important Middle Eastern region in her own interests. The dubious attacks by Bin Laden's al-Qaida on the twin towers and

the Pentagon building furnished an excuse for whipping up bizarre and fanatical patriotic and chauvinistic propaganda. Then in 2001 the US invaded Afghanistan and swiftly removed the Taliban from power. Two years later, in 2003, accusing Saddam Hussein of possessing so-called weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and also an alleged connection with Osama Bin Laden, in alliance with the UK as her junior ally, the US invaded Iraq and within a month the regime was smashed. Now the land of Iraq became fertile soil for a mushroom growth on the part of Wahabism. Now, Iran, squeezed between US-conquered countries on its eastern and western borders, looked dangerously like the next intended target. However, the ferocious resistance of the Iraqi nationalist movement and Al-Qaida's involvement vexed the US and UK imperialists in Iraq. Further, exploiting US negligence in Afghanistan, the Taliban crept out of their hiding places, regrouped and forced the USA and her allies to return to Afghanistan: Wahabism swarmed again. Still further, with the rise of the Arab Spring, to make up for the debacles in Afghanistan and Iraq, the imperialist powers of USA, UK, France and their allies Saudi Arabia and Qatar collaborated to topple Muammar Gaddafi of Libya. However, sadly for them, their involvement in Libya fared no better: Wahabism burgeoned here too. No sooner had the Libyan fiasco unfolded, than the Imperialist powers and their accomplices were hell bent on this time mutilating Syria and turning her into something resembling the ghostly devastated Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki<sup>8</sup>. They provided training, arms

and finance and opened Turkey's border with Syria, etc. and thus created the monster ISIS and suchlike- and Wahabism flourished both in Syria and Iraq. Like Al-Qaida, Isis is not a stupid stooge of the imperialist powers and their accomplices; rather, they have now developed their own dynamism.

The Syrian government's various enemies have diverse objectives. Semi-dictator R.T. Erdogan, president of Turkey, wants to carve up a part of Syria and more importantly annihilate Rojava, the Syrian Kurds, and the movement of the Kurds of Turkey for democracy and self-management. Israel, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have aimed on the one hand to remove Assad from power, thereby drastically reducing Iran's influence in Syria and Lebanon and weakening her position in Iraq, and on the other to at least downsize Russian Imperialism's dominance in Syria.

On 31 May 2015 ISIS surfaced and captured Mosul, providing the US military with the opportunity to return to Iraq, expand her military base there and in particular to expand bases in the Iraqi Kurdistan client regime of Masood Barzani. It was intriguing that, while the US and her allies have pursued the violent overthrow of the Syrian regime, when ISIS emerged in all its barbarity, Obama said the latter's issue needs to be resolved through political channel. On another occasion he said ISIS needed to be "contained"! However, while US policy towards Syria has vacillated, that of Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar has remained consistent.

#### Summing up:

Since the aftermath of World War II, and particularly from the 1960s onwards, US imperialism and her allies have employed religious ideology as both a soft and a hard weapon for waging class struggle and aggressive wars. Imperialist powers have reprehensibly created, assisted and supported states based on oppressive religious ideologies.

1- As a soft weapon, and resembling opium, the ideology of religion masks class society, the very division of society into classes of exploiter and exploited; to varying degrees it denies civil society, democracy and democratic rights, and, as a result, it preaches making the condition of suffering under the capitalist system of exploitation bearable to masses of workers.

2- As a hard weapon, we see how the ideology of Wahabism - Sharia Law - is being used as a sickening weapon for aggression, conquest and regime change. It is hysterically hostile to democratic values: gender equality, the right to strike and to organise, the right to freedom of expression in speech and in writing, etc.



**Masood Barzani, Kurdistan client regime leader**

(picture Wikimedia commons)

The weapon of Wahabism has created oppressive and insecure environments - totally opposed to civil society - and wherever it puts its dreadful hands sweeping off the social stage the class struggle, democratic values, and the demands and ideals of the working class.

How remarkable! The Sharia Law of Wahabism based on Quran and Hadiths is serving the wage-slavery system of capitalism. Meanwhile we have to point out that the Sharia Law of the Shia branch based on Quran and Hadith is no less culpable than its twin brother, Wahabism. Since coming to power the Shia Sharia law - Quran and Hadith - in Iran has ceaselessly been challenged by secular opponents; and it has survived by employing the same brute force as was used by its founder-Shah Ismail.

2-1 Using the weapon of Wahabism, imperialism has wrought havoc across huge swathes of infrastructure, destroying colossal quantities of constant capital, particularly in the middle east, and generating fantastic opportunities for the reconstruction industry of world capitalism.

2-2, The current Imperialist wars spurred by Sharia Law - Quran and Hadith - have created fabulous opportunities for military industrial complexes to sell weapons and make profits (e.g., awash with the weapons they supply, Saudi Arabia is ruthlessly killing Yemeni people while "humane" Imperialist powers and their accomplices happily look on). All this at the cost of apocalyptic destruction, the killing of hundreds of thousands, with many more adults and children maimed, while some ten millions are forced to fleeing their homes to seek refuge in an unwel-

coming and no less racist capitalist west, who are mainly to blame for the whole current nasty scenarios.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Since Ronald Reagan took over the white House in 1981, the Christian religion, particularly the evangelical kind, has been so promoted in the media that nearly 50% of Americans now believe the Old Testament, (the Torah), when it says God created the world in 6 days and rested on the seventh

<sup>2</sup> Britain is the only country which does not have a constitution, so her hands are free, and whilst claiming to be a secular country, the British state actually widely promotes religious ideology and several thousand schools are run by the Church of England

<sup>3</sup> There are a Christian Democrat Party and a Christian Social Union in Germany, a Christian Democrat Party in Italy, etc. These parties have religious ideology written into their party constitutions. Needless to say, they are right wing parties.

<sup>4</sup> While quite detailed on certain subjects, quranic prescriptions did not suffice to provide the complete code of social and political conduct needed to assert Islamic hegemony in the lands it conquered. And so *hadith* (tradition) came into existence, consisting of what the Prophet or his Companions or his wife had said at a particular time and date to K or Y, who had then passed it on to Q or Z, who informed the author, who in turn wrote down the 'Hadith' or 'tradition'. There is a discussion of the history of Islam in Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms*, Verso, ISBN: 9781859844571.

<sup>5</sup> For example, in 1960 US imperialism labelled the great Nationalist in the former Belgian colony of Congo, Patrick Lumumba, a Communist agent and plotted an unsuccessful coup d'état against him. However, Lumumba was later captured and killed and his dead body dissolved in a container of acid. Why? Because, he wanted to pursue an independent policy and was bold enough to refuse to serve as a stooge of American Imperialism and its accomplices.

<sup>6</sup> On 5 July 1977, General Zia ul Haq overthrew the Secular Government of Zulfekar Ali Bhutto and established Sharia Law, based on "Quran and Hadith". As a result, Saudi Arabia pumped money and huge quantities of Wahabi literature into Pakistan. Very many mosques and Madrasas were built in Pakistan and children and youngsters started as "Taleb" - seminary students - to learn Wahabism and later on became the Taliban of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

<sup>7</sup> In 1979, Khomeini came to power in Iran and set up Sharia Law, etc.

<sup>8</sup> Of course the Syrian regime was not faultless. However, as soon as it was revealed that Wahabi currents were going to exploit the situation, the US, UK and France should have been alarmed, if they really were humane and seeking a peaceful and democratic solution. They did not. And in 2012, peace missions led first by previous UN General Secretary Kofi Anan and then by UN representative Lakhtar Ebrahimi were torpedoed. Imperialist powers and their accomplices have continued to cynically accuse the Assad regime of destroying the country, etc.

# Marxism and Religion

The essence of all religion, whatever its particular form is that it believes that there is some force outside the material or natural world. The world, according to religion, develops in accordance with the 'will', 'intention' or 'design' of this super-natural force.

The religious conception of the world is therefore directly opposed to the materialist world outlook. Materialism starts from the understanding that there is nothing existing outside the material world.

It rejects completely all 'explanations' of this world which derive or start from any notion of 'spirit' or 'God'.

But the question now arises: where does the idea of God or religion itself come from? What is its basis? Here it is very important that we adopt a materialist outlook in answering this question.

It would be very wrong merely to dismiss religion as being based on *stupidity*. For this would not enable us to understand why it has been such a powerful force in history.

To grasp the nature of religion we must, as in all problems, start from man's struggle against nature. Religion is above all an expression of man's ignorance in the face of his struggle to overcome nature. Not understanding the laws which governed the development of nature, man was forced to invent, in fantastic form, 'explanations' for these laws. The forces which he could not understand were transferred to a being outside the world, God.

In other words, religion is rooted in ignorance. Science and religion have always, throughout their history, been in conflict against each other.

For the aim of science is always to discover the real nature of the universe and the laws which govern its operation. Implicitly it stands opposed to any religious conception of the universe.

But religion must also be understood from another standpoint. In all societies except those based on the primitive commune, the fight against nature takes the form of the struggle between *classes*.

Man does not confront nature collectively, in a unified manner, but in a society divided into classes. Religion is one of the means through which the ruling class, at each period of history, has sought to oppress the exploited class or classes.

It is for this reason that Marxists start uncompromisingly from the standpoint of



**Geoff Pilling**

atheism. The revolutionary party has the duty to educate all the party members as materialists and to fight idealism in all its forms. There can be no compromise with religion within the revolutionary party.

At the same time, however, we must also see that religion cannot be destroyed as a social force merely in the realm of argument or propaganda.

To think so would itself be an idealist attitude to religion. This is the mistake which all rationalists make. They believe that religion is 'unreasonable' and can be defeated merely if enough correct arguments are marshalled against it. What such a position ignores is that religion has

a definite social basis. It cannot be overthrown merely 'in the head'. Religion will only finally disappear when social and economic conditions are created which will make it superfluous or unnecessary.

Such conditions will be achieved only within a socialist society. Because man's struggle against nature will become increasingly conscious and because the class divisions which presently dominate society will gradually be eliminated and the basis for religion will also disappear.

Once the working class take power, religion will become a private matter. All state support for religion — which under capitalism is considerable — will be immediately withdrawn as will all religious teaching in schools. But religion cannot be destroyed merely by force or persecution.

This is why the attitude of the Stalinists towards religion within the Soviet Union is basically wrong and reactionary. The fact that religious feeling still survives and thrives testifies above all to the fact that economically and culturally Russia has not been raised to anything approaching the level of socialism as the advocates of 'socialism in one country' falsely claim.

The struggle to break the youth from religion is a vital part of the work of the Young Socialists and we recommend all those who followed this series should read Lenin *On Religion*, Marx and Engels *On Religion* and Trotsky's *Young People Study Politics*.

## **WHY WE MUST REBUILD THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL**

A NEW PAMPHLET BY  
Miroslav Vodslon,  
£2 from Workers  
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South Africa:

# Support for mass march against white supremacy and for decolonised free education at North West University

United Front Press Statement, 14 March

The time has come to tear down the last bastions of white supremacy and Afrikaner arrogance! Events at North-West University (NWU) and the University of the (un)Free State (UFS) confirm not only that Afrikaner dominance over black students and workers has not been dealt with, but that a mass response is necessary to defend those who fight for the emancipation of black people. The United Front fully supports tomorrow's mass march against white supremacy at NWU. The march is led by the Reform PUK student movement, and the outsourced workers at the university. The march is supported by the broader black and working class communities of Tlokwe, and the rest of the North West province. The march will start at 10h00 at Trimpark (outside McDonald's) in the Potchefstroom CBD and head to the university.

At these former - or rather still - Afrikaner universities, Afrikaans is given place of privilege that subjugates and excludes, as indigenous languages continue to be marginalised. This emboldens white supremacy in the management, administration and academic staff who continue to humiliate black students in class, in the residences and other amenities, who face the constant threat of financial exclusion, who also have to endure the exploitation of outsourced black workers and then face beatings and bullets when they protest. NWU's Potchefstroom campus is not only a colonial institution that undermines black history, it is also physically dominated by Afrikaner students who make up 70% of the student body.

The time has come for the few black students who make it there to be joined by the many black people who are excluded, to send a message that the struggle of black university students and workers is the struggle of the black majority of our people who still live with the indignity of white supremacy, oppression and exploitation. The time has come to build on the work of ReformPUK who have forged strong bonds between students who demand the end of financial exclusion, marginalisation through the



**Resistance to student fees swept South Africa's campuses last autumn. This protest was at Cape Town University (Picture Wikimedia Commons / Discott)**

Afrikaans language policy and workers who are weakened through outsourcing through which labour brokers exploit black labour, keep wages down and reproduce and entrench inequality and poverty. Their demands echo those of #RhodesMustFall, #FeesMustFall, the Black Student Movement and all progressive student-worker alliances in our universities.

The time has come to stand with student leaders who face repression, intimidation and brutality because they refuse to back down. The court interdicts and militarisation of campuses across the country do nothing to quell the tensions and fears faced by those who are crushed under the boot of white supremacy at our universities. ReformPUK's demands are clear:

1. The immediate reinstatement of all the workers dismissed by the Servest company without loss of pay!
2. The Immediate withdrawal of charges against all students who have been charged for organising other students and workers as these amount to undemocratic repression;
3. The Immediate withdrawal of the Court Interdict which creates an atmosphere of fear and tension.
4. Full rights of representation on the task team dealing with outsourcing!
5. Full Insourcing and a minimum wage of R10 000.00 once all contracts are

terminated. In the meantime a minimum wage of R6 500.00 to be topped up by the University while contracts are still in place.

6. Free education for workers and their children as enjoyed by all other staff members.
7. Free medical care as enjoyed by all other members of staff.
8. Full employee benefits in terms of the Labour Relations Act including a Provident Fund and a thirteenth cheque which other staff members enjoy.

We call on all students, progressive and worker organisations, trade unions, leftwing political organisations, NGO's/Social Movements and all black people toiling, unemployed and marginalised to support their cause by mobilising for the Mass Action of 14 March. Let's make 14 March a milestone in the sustained struggle for free education, the end of exploitation through outsourcing and the forging of a mass united front to take forward the fight for a South Africa of black dignity, prosperity and freedom. The time has come!

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