

Workers Party Needed

OTTILIE Abrahams raised crucial issues in her article entitled 'To occupy or not to occupy? Is that really the question?' (*The Namibian*, November 28).

We are in agreement with the article that the interests of all Namibian workers, not only farm workers, should be addressed. We also concur that the focus cannot only be on the land question since this is not the only social question. There are many other questions such as the hunger question, the unemployment question, the housing questions etc that should be resolved. In the context of Namibia having the highest level of income inequality in the world these questions are matters of life and death for the working class.

Ottilie's article however raised other issues that should be debated. In our view for example, though we would understand the symbolism of Khoisan farmers, for us it does not matter if the farmer is white or black because the real question to pose is what the purpose of production is? Is it for profit or people?

There are many black farmers in Namibia but this does not ensure that poverty is eradicated or that exploitation would be stopped. Because these black farmers act like their white counterparts, i.e. the purpose of farming for them is to make a profit. The question of the skin colour of the farmer is a secondary issue. We can give all the farms to black Namibians tomorrow but this does not mean that we would end poverty and exploitation.

The choice is simply, are we approaching the land question from the point of view of making a profit or to satisfy the needs of people? Every policy option should be evaluated according to this basic yardstick of whether it is serving the profit motive or people's needs. In other words is it a neo-liberal policy or an anti-capitalist policy? These are the two basic options today.

We fully agreed when Ottilie suggested that "the

capitalist system never takes kindly to the handing over of the means of production to the workers unless it is forced to do so". As long as the so-called right to private property exists we will not make any significant social progress in this highly unequal country because the elite (white and black) will always violently defend its ill-gotten privileges. Ottilie unfortunately contradicted herself when she wrote later that "if we are social democrats at heart, let us bring about this social revolution in a democratic way, through the ballot box, and let us pay the taxes needed to enable government to run a social revolution in a democratic way, through the ballot box, and let us pay the taxes needed to enable government to run a social welfare state. Relying on the ballot box versus forcing the capitalist system is profoundly different approaches i.e. reform versus revolution!

The social democratic project died with the demise of Stalinism. The Swedish model, which was the prime example of the social democratic project for many historical reasons that do not even begin to apply to Namibia, does not exist anymore.

The only act in town at this historical moment is the (neo-liberal) capitalist one. Social democrats today are really neo-liberals at heart.

There is also no parliamentary road to social revolution. The Chilean experience in 1973 represented the end of the ballot box approach to anti-capitalism. Capitalism will never willingly give up power. It will have to be forced to do so far away from the ballot box. Only the well-organised mass action of the Namibian working class can put us on the road to an anti-capitalist society in which all the social questions could be addressed. We require a workers party immersed in the trade unions to begin to do this in Namibia.

CM Kaneymba, Walvis Bay