

Report: Summer Conference 2013

January 18, 2013 (from the Workers Party website: <http://workersparty.org.nz>)

Our organisation met in Wellington over the weekend of the 12th-13th of January 2013, as one of our two annual national conferences – summer internal conference, and winter public conference. Along with electing national officers, we held discussions on industrial perspectives, and passed resolutions on changing the organisation's name, and on Stalinism.

Jared Phillips presented an industrial perspectives document which will be adapted into an article for the paper. In short, the neoliberal organisation of work (casualization particularly) is being forcibly extended into core industrial sectors such as meat processing and the maritime industry. We discussed the need to push for more militant fightback than is currently advocated by trade union leadership, and pushing demands such as nationalisation of failing workplaces under workers' control.

We discussed changing our name to reflect re-assessment of our organisation and approach. In particular, we have discussed whether the name "Workers Party" reflects our perspective of not currently being a mass workers party, but aiming to build a fighting propaganda group, defining our aims this way:

an organisation whose chief concern is propaganda, but which conducts its propaganda while always immersing itself in and responding to the class struggle, and while always seizing every real opening for genuine agitation.

The organisation voted unanimously to change our name from the Workers Party to Fightback, which will also be the name of our newspaper. Our primary slogan will be "struggle, solidarity, and socialism." Once we have redesigned our logo, newspaper and website, the organisation will roll out this new name and slogan.

Finally, our organisation is re-assessing our socialist history. At summer conference we passed a resolution on Stalinism. Comrades agreed that this resolution was intended neither as an endorsement of Trotskyism, nor a

statement on Maoism, but an assessment of the Eastern Bloc bureaucracy and its global historic implications:

We remain partisans of the Bolsheviks and the October 1917 revolution which saw an unprecedented flourishing of human freedom. However, because of Russia's economic backwardness and, crucially, the failure of revolutionary movements in Western Europe, the infant workers' state was precarious from its inception. Eventually a Stalinist counter revolution prevailed at immense cost to the working class and peasantry. The Stalinists established a model of "socialism" characterised by a top-down direction of society and the economy by an unaccountable bureaucracy, which gives some social welfare benefits to the working class but which atomises, exploits, oppresses and spies on them in a similar manner to an authoritarian capitalist regime.

Stalinism has wrought immense damage to the international communist movement, due to its misleadership of workers' struggles, and its effect of repelling large masses of workers from the ideas of revolutionary socialism.

We remain committed to building an international communist movement in solidarity with struggles in the majority world.

We believe that socialism will be brought about by workers' own efforts, our struggles in the workplace and in society, the fight to create a workers' government, or it will not be socialism. As Karl Marx put it: "The emancipation of the working class is the act of the workers themselves".

Our public conference will be held at Newtown Community & Cultural Centre in Wellington, over Queens Birthday Weekend 2013. Further details TBA.