

(10)

~~The Transitional Communist~~ League is a revolutionary socialist organisation, whose aim is to organise the working class for the seizure of power and the communist transformation of society. All its activities, its method and internal regime are subordinated to this aim and are designed to serve it.

Only a self-acting and critical-minded membership is capable of forging and consolidating such an organisation and of solving its problems by collective thought, discussion and experience. From this follows the need of assuring the widest party democracy in the ranks of the organisation.

The struggle for power organised and led by a revolutionary party is the most ruthless and irreconcilable struggle in all history. A loosely-knit, heterogeneous, undisciplined, untrained organisation is utterly incapable of succeeding in this task. A revolutionary organisation has to unconditionally demand from all its members complete discipline in all the public activities and actions of the organisation.

Leadership and centralised direction are indispensable prerequisites for any sustained and disciplined action, especially in an organisation that sees its aim as leading the collective efforts of the proletariat in the struggle against capitalism. Without a strong and firm leadership, having the power to act promptly and effectively in the name of the organisation and to supervise, consolidate and direct all its activities without exception, the very idea of a revolutionary organisation is a meaningless jest.

It is from these considerations, based upon the experience of international class struggle, that we derive the Leninist principle of organisation, namely democratic centralism. This principle is embodied in our Constitution and guides us in all our organisational activities.

In any case where the Constitution does not give precise indications, the organisation shall be guided by the established traditions of democratic centralism, and particularly by the resolutions of the April 1940 Convention and the May 1953 Plenum of the Socialist Workers Party of the USA.

1. AIMS

- a) The ~~WSL~~ ^{WSL} bases its policy on the theory of Marxism as developed by Lenin and Trotsky, the decisions of the first four congresses of the 3rd International and the Transitional Programme, the founding document of the 4th International.
- b) The Workers Socialist League fights for the ~~rehabilitation~~ ^{political regeneration and org. reconstruction} of the 4th International.

2. MEMBERSHIP

~~The fundamental condition for membership of the I-CL is proletarian class consciousness. Concretely this means that members must:~~

- i) Agree with and be committed to defend the basic aims and programme of the organisation.
- ii) Engage in regular political activity under the discipline of the organisation.
- iii) Be a member of their appropriate trade union. If there is no trade union at a member's place of work, then he or she must, if possible (from the point of view of victimisation, etc) attempt to form a union branch.
- iv) Sell the paper regularly, especially at their place of work, if this is possible.
- v) Commit themselves to developing an understanding of the theory and traditions of revolutionary communism.

vi) Pay regular dues to the organisation as laid down by the NC.

3. CANDIDATE MEMBERSHIP

The conditions of membership must not only be adhered to by means of verbal agreement but also in reality. For this reason, new members will, as a general rule, be required to join the I-CL as candidate members. Any exception must first of all be agreed to either by the ~~Executive Steering Committee~~ or the National Committee. ~~All elections to full and candidate membership must be conditional on the written endorsement of the Steering Committee or National Committee.~~

i) Candidate members have all the rights and duties of full members except as restricted by other sections of this Constitution.

ii) New members are admitted as candidate members either by the collective decision of the branch they join or by the NC.

iii) Normally a candidate member is expected to go through a basic education programme with a full member of the I-CL before being admitted to full membership.

iv) Candidate members do not have the right to vote, either at branch or national level.

v) There shall be no formal time limit on the period of candidate membership.

4. FULL MEMBERSHIP

A candidate member who has satisfied his or her fellow comrades that he or she has fulfilled the conditions of membership shall become a full member.

i) Full members shall be elected either by the branch or the NC.

ii) Full members have a responsibility to play an active part in the decision making processes of the organisation through the various bodies which the organisation has established for this purpose.

5. NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The National Conference is the supreme policy-making body of the ~~WSL~~ ^{WSL} and can override any other body in the ~~group~~ ^{WSL}. Its decisions are binding on all members.

i) The National Conference shall be convened annually.

ii) Every full and candidate member has a right and a duty to attend and to speak. ~~Voting rights may be extended to all full members or confined to delegates from areas, at the discretion of the NC.~~

iii) Every member or group of members (e.g. branches, NC, factions, factions) can submit resolutions and amendments to the Conference.

iv) The ~~Executive Steering~~ ^{Executive} Committee is responsible for convening and arranging the Conference.

v) A Special Conference may be called by the NC when it wishes. A Special Conference must take place within two months of the receipt of a demand for one supported by at least ~~25%~~ ^{20%} of the full members of the ~~group~~ ^{WSL}.

vi) A Standing Orders Committee, elected by the previous Conference, shall be responsible for the running of the Conference. The term of office of all other elected committees of the I-CL ends at the beginning of the Conference.

6. THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The National Committee is the sovereign body in the I-CL between Conferences. It is responsible for political decision making and group organisation. Its decisions are binding on all members.

i) The NC is elected by Conference. The NC may co-opt additional non-voting members.

ii) The NC will, as a general rule, be bound by the decisions of the Conference. Changes in the objective situation are the only criteria for reversing Conference decisions. If between Conferences events occur that are thought by the NC to necessitate a change of line then the NC will have to account for this to the rest of the organisation.

iii) The NC must meet at least every two months or within one week of receipt of a written request for a special meeting signed by at least ~~three~~^{six} full members of the NC.

iv) ~~Except in very urgent cases, NC members must raise political differences first on the NC, and only in the organisation as a whole, after NC discussion.~~ NC members must fight for the implementation of NC decisions within the ~~group~~^{WSL}, except where they have deep and declared political differences; and in this case they must at least maintain discipline.

v) NC meetings will be prepared for and convened by the EC.

vi) Any member, branch, sub-committee, fraction or faction can submit a resolution to the NC. These must be sent to the ~~National OC Secretary~~ before the deadline for resolutions.

vii) The NC will normally meet in closed session. The NC has the right to discuss individual comrades in their absence. In open sessions of the NC, non-NC members may not speak without the permission of the NC unless they are defending themselves from a disciplinary charge or proposing a resolution.

viii) Minutes of NC meetings shall be available to all members of the ~~WSL~~. Minutes must ~~include~~^{provide} the full text of all resolutions and amendments put, together with details of the discussion and the vote. Skeleton minutes may, however, be circulated where security requires it.

ix) Relations with other tendencies as such or with members of other tendencies shall be entirely under the control of the NC and those bodies and individuals appointed by the NC to conduct these relations.

x) The NC has the right to structure discussion within the group so that maximum political clarity may be attained. The NC may stop debate on an issue, but only after full discussion has led to a decision. Under no circumstance does this override the right of the membership to hold the NC to account at Conferences.

7. NATIONAL OFFICERS

i) The NC shall elect National Officers and delegate to them the authority necessary to carry out their functions (under ~~EC~~^{OC} and NC control).

ii) The appointment, pay, terms of reference, and dismissal of full-timers shall be decided by the ~~EC~~^{OC}, subject to ratification by or (if factional victimisation is alleged) appeal to the NC.

8. ~~SECRETARY~~ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The ~~EC~~^{EC} is responsible for the day to day implementation of NC decisions; for reacting to events that ~~occur unexpectedly and require immediate action~~^{are}; for political leadership; ~~for the routine administrative and organisational running of the I-CL.~~

i) The ~~EC~~^{EC} shall be elected by and responsible to the NC.

~~ii) It shall consist of no less than four full members of the NC.~~

iii) Minutes of the ~~EC~~^{EC} shall be circulated to all NC members and to other members at the discretion of the SC. They must include the

9. ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The Organising Committee is responsible for the day-to-day running of the WSL between EC and NC meetings.

- i) It shall be elected by ^{R. EC} and responsible to the EC and NC.
- ii) The OC and EC, ~~may~~ operating under NC control, have the right to issue binding instructions to all members, ~~and~~ branches, fractions, etc. of the WSL.

10. BRANCHES AND FRACTIONS

i) Branches in geographical areas ^{or workplaces} and fractions in areas of work shall be recognised by the EC. They are responsible for organising the activity and carrying out the policy of the WSL in their area.

ii) Each branch or fraction shall elect an organiser, subject to the ratification of the EC (who may impose an organiser against the wishes of the branch or fraction). The organiser is responsible to the WSL and its leading committees

for the overall functioning of the branch or fraction and for ensuring that WSL policy is carried out.

iii) Branch or fraction organisers can give binding instructions to members in their areas on all day-to-day matters.

iv) In any ^{activity} ~~WSL intervention~~ the right to take decisions and give instructions belongs normally to the branch or fraction organiser responsible, or other comrade delegated to be responsible. ~~for that intervention.~~ In the event of a serious political issue needing an immediate decision, the organiser can be overruled by the senior NC or EC member(s) present.

11. AREA COMMITTEES

a. The definition of areas will be decided by the National ~~Conference~~ ^{Committee}.

b. Area committees shall consist of ~~one~~ ^{one} or more representatives for each branch in the area. The committee is responsible for the overall work of the area and for the ^{elect} ~~coordination~~ ^{organiser} of the work of the branches. Each committee will ~~have~~ ^{elect} a secretary and a chairman who is responsible for the work of the area between meetings. Area Committees shall meet at least once a fortnight and more frequently if necessary.

⑦ c. Area Committees shall be elected at area aggregates at least once a year.

d. Area committees may co-opt representatives necessary for their work.

e. Aggregates in each area shall be held at least every 3 months.

12. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

a) All members are obliged to support the majority decisions of ~~appropriate~~ relevant League bodies in action. They also have the right to express dissenting opinions, to gain a fair hearing for these opinions, and to organise within the WSL to change WSL policy.

b) Members do not have the right to organise outside the WSL for minority views. ~~They are not to have every voice expressed~~ This does not mean that they should pretend to hold beliefs contrary to their real ones.

~~They have~~ Minority comrades have a right to state that they hold a minority position, ~~in some cases that they are not propagating against them~~ and to give a brief explanation, but without making propaganda against the majority line. They have a duty to state to the best of their ability what the majority line is. And in any vote ^{or} practical action they must support the majority line.

~~Members do not have the right to take internal organisational disputes outside the WSL in any way.~~

c) Any member must first raise a political difference on the highest body on which he or she sits - branch, Area Committee, National Committee. ~~The matter must go to the National Committee for discussion if the matter is not resolved at the level raised.~~ If after full discussion with the National Committee no agreement is reached the member has the right to inform the National Committee that ~~he is~~ ^{he is taking the issue to the whole membership of} constituting a minority faction. Both the majority and the minority have a political responsibility to fully discuss any disagreement before such a step is taken.

d) In WSL internal debates, equal speaking time at area meetings, NCs, conferences etc. shall be allotted to all the different points of view represented. Representatives of minority points of view have the right to demand relief from part of their normal WSL work-load and financial assistance if these are necessary to enable them to ~~attend meetings~~ travel to meetings, prepare documents, etc. In any dispute between a minority point of view and the NC, EC, or OC, both the minority and the leadership have equal rights to use the organisation's apparatus.

13. INTERNAL BULLETIN

The Internal Bulletin shall serve as an instrument for:

- i) Promoting theoretical and political discussion in the ~~group, WSL.~~
- ii) Providing a means of generalising on the lessons that have been learnt from activity in a particular area, industry, union &c.
- ~~iii) Playing a centralising and organising role in national campaigns~~

To this end:

- i) The IB shall be produced at least once every 2 months.
- ii) The OC, or an IB editor appointed by the OC, is responsible for the production and distribution of the IB.
- iii) The editor has no right to refuse for publication any article submitted before the deadline unless s/he has received permission from the NC in accordance with section 5(x) of the Constitution. S/he can, however, ask for a contribution and/or labour towards the production of articles over 2,000 words, and insist that any document over 3,000 words appear as a supplement at the expense of the author(s). In the event that the author(s) of such a document lack money, they can appeal for financial assistance through the Control Commission or OC.
- iv) Every member shall receive a copy of the IB.
- v) The IB and its contents shall not in any way be communicated to non-members without the express permission of the OC or another leading body.
- vi) Any comrade submitting a polemical document of less than 2,000 words shall have the right to insist it be circulated within

14. DISCIPLINE

- a. In the event ~~of any member committing a breach of discipline or action prejudicial to the interests of the party and the working class~~ ^{of the party and the working class} disciplinary ~~measures~~ ^{measures}, including ~~censure and suspension of membership and expulsion~~ ^{reprimand and suspension of membership and expulsion}, may be taken by a branch, Area Committee, National Committee, or Executive ^{or EC} against a member or members covered by that body. ~~A National Committee member can only be expelled by national conference.~~ ^{In all cases the OC must be informed immediately of the circumstances.}
- b. Suspension will be for a period not exceeding 6 weeks. ~~This cannot be extended or reprieved prior to a National Conference taking place.~~
- c. Any member has the right to defend himself ^{himself} before a decision on disciplinary action is taken against him ^{her}, except ~~that~~ ^{in the case of} fines for absence ~~may be imposed~~ or suspensions where the WSL's security and integrity is at risk. Any member subject to discipline must have written notice of the charges against him ^{her} and the time and venue of the hearing.
- d) ~~and~~ Candidate members may be expelled by their branch, the EC or NC. One week's written notice of the charges and an opportunity for the member to defend him/herself shall be given. He/she can appeal to the NC, but not to the Conference, ~~unless the Control Commission so decides.~~
- e) ~~and~~ Full members can only be expelled by the NC or Conference. Two weeks' written notice of the charges and an opportunity for the member to defend him/herself shall be given. Any full member who is expelled may appeal to the Conference. ^{and may} have the material relating to his ^{her} appeal circulated by the National Committee throughout the whole party within 14 days of receipt. The disciplinary action is meanwhile upheld.
- f) ~~and~~ Where members have become inactive without adequate cause, and there is no dispute on this fact, they may be lapsed from membership with no more formality than a week's written notice. Members who allege invalid lapsing may appeal to the NC.
- g) ~~and~~ Previously expelled members may not be re-admitted without the approval of the NC ~~and~~ Conference.
- h) ~~and~~ When members resign from the ~~group~~ ^{WSL}, the OC must be informed immediately.
- i) ~~the~~ branches may grant total or partial leaves of absence for periods of up to two months, always subject to ratification by the OC.

15. CONTROL COMMISSION

- 1) The Conference shall elect a Control Commission annually. It shall independently investigate disputes ^{of fact relating to} disciplinary cases, ~~and~~ disputes between comrades, or complaints against leading committees or functionaries which are referred to it by any of the parties of the dispute, the EC, or NC. It has the power to subpoena witnesses and have access to all information and documents relevant to the matter. It shall consist of ~~three~~ full members who are not on the EC. Any member of the Control Commission who is involved in a dispute which is referred to it shall be excluded from the Control Commission for the investigation of that dispute. The Control Commission shall report to the NC.

16. FACTIONS AND TENDENCIES

Any group of members has the right to form a faction or tendency to fight for a particular point of view within the organisation.

The ~~WSL~~ recognises a tendency as an ideological grouping organised for an ideological discussion within the organisation. The ~~WSL~~ recognises a faction as a grouping which sets out to fight either to change the policy of the organisation on a particular issue or to replace the existing leadership by members of the faction.

i) Members wishing to form a faction must circulate a platform explaining their differences with the group's positions, signed by all members of the faction.

ii) The conditions of membership for factions differ in no way from the conditions laid out in section 2 of the Constitution.

iii) Factions can produce their own publications for circulation within the organisation, can hold internal meetings to put over their position, and can put members up for election on a factional platform. All faction meetings and documents must either be strictly internal to the faction, or open to all members of the group. This clause cannot be used to restrict private conversation or correspondence between individual members.

~~iv) In any dispute between a faction and the NC or SC, both the faction and the NC or SC have equal rights to use the organisation's apparatus.~~

v) A faction must not carry its platform outside the organisation without the permission of the Conference or the NC. If it does so then its members are subject to disciplinary procedures.

vi) Factions have a right to proportional representation on the NC and in election of area delegates to delegate conferences.

vii) The same rules apply for tendencies as for factions, except that candidate members cannot be recruited to a tendency.

Viii) ~~Members must not~~ ~~use~~ political differences as an excuse for inactivity or organisational disloyalty. Any member who does so is liable to be expelled, under the procedures laid down in section 14.

17. CONSTITUTION

The Constitution can only be changed by a Conference.

