

DRAFT PLATFORM OF THE WORKERS' SOCIALIST LEAGUE

The crisis of leadership	p. 1
(Then read sections on:	
Marxism	p. 7
Trotskyism	p. 8)
The Transitional Programme	p. 2
Democratic centralism	p. 9
The Fourth International	p.10
Permanent Revolution	p.10
Women	p.10
Imperialism and National Liberation	p.11
Racism	p.12
Fascism	p.12
Nationalism	p.12
Youth	p.13
The Stalinist States	p.14
The Labour Party	p.14
The Workers' Government	p.15
The WSL and the far left	p.17
Disagreements	p.19
Our immediate demands	p.19

DRAFT PLATFORM

Capitalism is inseparable from the exploitation by the bourgeoisie of the working class 'at home' and (since 'advanced' capitalism became imperialist) of the workers and peasants in the neo-colonies and colonies abroad.

It is a vicious system geared to buttressing the strong against the weak, to serving the handful of capitalists against the millions of workers, and to keeping many millions in poverty so that a few may prosper. Capitalism exalts property and degrades life. It is at the root of the racialism which poisons and divides worker against worker. It is a system of massive waste and social disorganisation, and at the same time it forces the working class to fight every inch of the way to better or even maintain its wages and conditions.

Having once been progressive, in that it at least developed, in the only way then possible, the productive resources of humanity, it is now a totally reactionary force in history. Its expansion after World War 2 gave it merely the appearance of health. By the late '60s, the boom had given way to creeping stagnation, followed in the '70s and '80s by the biggest crises since the 1930s.

Today the ruling class can keep their system going only at the cost of large scale unemployment and attempts to cut the living standards of workers in the 'rich' parts of the world; of massive starvation and bloodshed in the 'poor' two-thirds of the world; and of the ever-present threat of the destruction of humanity through nuclear war.

The only way out is for the working class to take power and bring the resources of the modern economy under a rational working class plan. Having overthrown capitalism and established social ownership of the means of production, the working class will build towards a truly communist society, in which at last the principle will be: 'From each according to his or her ability, to each according to his or her needs'.

THE CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

The working class is the locus of all real progress. But the present condition of the labour movement prevents it from playing the role - which it alone can play - of revolutionary reorganiser of society. The existing Labour organisations are under bourgeois domination in varying degrees: in particular the domination of bourgeois ideology and the bourgeois state.

This crisis of leadership manifests itself absolutely in times of decisive clashes, in the defeat of the class. It manifests itself relatively at other times in a loss of effectiveness in struggles on wages and conditions.

The continued existence of world capitalism to its present over-ripe stage is the direct result of this crisis of leadership. Time after time in the past decades, in country after country, in tune to the convulsions of what could have been capitalism's death agony, the workers have moved against capitalism. Each time the conservative apparatus of the Labour organisations, political parties and trade unions, has held the class back, demoralised it, derailed it, deflected its blows.

from the weakest points in the enemy's defences: in every decisive clash the workers have been misled to bloody defeat.

The Communist Parties were founded after World War 1 to oppose the renegade Social-Democratic apparatus which had become the hangman of the European revolution. But the results of the Social-Democratic betrayal of the post-war revolutionary upsurge were to mean the isolation and degeneration of the one victorious workers' revolution, and within a decade, under the influence of the burgeoning Stalin dictatorship in Russia, the new Communist Parties began to play the same sort of role, ever more openly, ever more treacherously - and far more effectively for, after all, they carried the banner of the October Revolution.

Despite their successive acts of renegacy it has required a whole historic period, the experience of the Hungarian Revolution and the break-up of the Stalinist monolith, to present again the opportunity for the solution of the crisis of proletarian leadership in the building of a new mass workers' international and of new national sections of this international revolutionary party.

Capitalism, the most dynamic and adaptable system in human history, has survived despite the murderous crises by which it has been wracked throughout most of this century. If circumstances permit it to pay the necessary price in an ever-increasing toll of proletarian blood and degradation, there are no insoluble crises for capitalism. The bourgeoisie will not fall automatically into history's abyss. It is a highly conscious force, struggling for its positions, capable of defeating the proletariat time after time and even of dragging it down into nuclear war: the victory of the proletariat depends on conscious preparation, on its ability to struggle effectively and successfully to deliberately take control of society out of the hands of the bourgeoisie. (And this consciousness is the necessary prelude to the scientific control of nature which is the pre-requisite for socialism).

In immediate practical terms it depends on our ability to construct a world revolutionary organisation, with strong national sections, as a solution to the crisis of leadership. The WSL will play its part in resolving this crisis.

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME

In the epoch of social democracy, before the international labour movement collapsed into national fragments at the feet of the warring bourgeoisies in 1914, socialists operated with a minimum programme and a maximum programme.

The maximum programme was the millennium, the unseen goal in the far distance, the subject of abstract propaganda, holiday speeches and moral uplift; the theoretical property of an elite within the loose parties of social democracy. The minimum programme consisted of limited practical goals and the immediate aims of the everyday struggle of the working class. The failure of social democracy to link the daily class struggle with the goal of socialism led to its gradual accommodation to capitalism and eventual collapse.

The communist movement, reorganising itself during and immediately after world war 1, resolved to have done

with the minimum/maximum division, with its inescapable consign-ment of the masses to passivity vis-a-vis the struggle for socialism, which the leaders would talk of and History would take care of.

It declared: "The alternative offered by the Communist International in place of the minimum programme of the reform-ists and centrists is:- the struggle for the concrete needs of the proletariat, for demands which in their application undermine the power of the bourgeoisie, which organise the proletariat, and which form the transition to the proletarian dictatorship, even if certain groups of the masses have not yet grasped the meaning of such proletarian dictatorship".

The Stalinists abandoned the method of transitional demands. The communist rearguard, organised in the Fourth International, in 1938 adopted a Transitional Programme, based on this method and summarising a whole epoch of revolutionary experience.

The demands of the Programme have been widely misunderstood, ignored, or opportunistically distorted in the 40 years since they were formulated. But in today's class struggle, with the growing contradiction between the readiness of the working class to fight and the determination of their official leaders to betray, the struggle for these demands and for the kind of independent working class organisation to which they lead, offers the most effective way of challenging and exposing the labour bureaucrats.

Future cadres of the revolutionary party will be found among the fresh layers of workers thrown into conflict with their misleaders in the course of the class struggle. But forces drawn from a middle class milieu will become a drag on the building of the movement if they do not acquaint themselves at first hand with day-to-day struggles and problems of the workers' movement.

Day-to-day struggle alone however does not create communists, and a fight against middle-class dilettantism must go along with opposition to any tendency towards syndicalism and nationalism among worker comrades. It is in this process of struggle that the selection of communists takes place.

A readiness to fight for the demands and methods of the Transitional Programme, and to give leadership in all struggles - no matter how partial - must be the general orientation of the Trotskyist movement.

Interventions of a qualitative character must flow from an understanding, given the deep crisis of leadership, of the political significance of even some apparently minor class battles. In the course of the fight our understanding of the programme must be deepened and developed - particularly the knowledge that its correct application is not a formal question, but derives essentially from a correct understanding of the period through which the workers' struggle is passing.

Whatever the struggle - whether it be for transitional demands or simply on basic union rights - Trotskyists must resolutely draw the lessons from the conflict with the trade

~~union bureaucracies which will inevitably result from the~~ struggle, sooner or later, in one form or another. Our method is not to denounce the bureaucrats as a ritual, abstract, propagandist routine, but to spell out the steps needed to win the struggle, to seize on any positive steps taken by the bureaucrats, to put the bureaucrats to the test, to denounce them when they sell out and sabotage the struggle, and to draw the lessons.

The intervention must be based firmly on our appraisal of the counter-revolutionary role of the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies - but must seek to help workers learn this truth in the course of the struggle, not simply to confront them with a ready-made conclusion based on our perceptions and our experience.

We are convinced that the method of the Transitional Programme consists not in the mere repetition of the words on its printed pages, but in the actual mobilisation of the working class independently of the class enemy, and in conflict with the bureaucrats who aim always to tie them to the employers and the capitalist order.

We cannot make it a condition of our participation in any struggle in the workers' movement that it should begin with a rounded programme, including correct positions on governmental questions. To say that only movements with a worked-out programme can be successful would be to miss the meaning of the programme, which has the central role of mobilising the independent strength of the working class and raising it from its existing level of consciousness to a grasp of the need for socialist revolution in confrontation with its bureaucratic leaders and their various centrist and other hangers-on.

It is for these reasons that Trotskyist work in the unions, while grounded on the programmatic principle of working class independence, must be flexible in form and organisation.

The WSL will work for a genuine mass national rank and file movement aiming to unite workers for militant policies, transform the unions, establish rank and file democratic control, and thus oust the bureaucracy. As part of this work we will promote rank and file caucuses in industries and workplaces. Within any such rank and file grouping we fight for communist politics and for communist leadership on the basis of our politics, raising key transitional demands as they become tactically relevant, while avoiding any ultimatism or sectarianism.

But we reject the method of the British SWP, which limits rank and file industrial groups almost entirely to militant trade unionism, and which uses rank and file groups as a substitute for the struggle to call the bureaucratic leaders to account, rather than as a means for that struggle.

In this we follow the method of the Transitional Programme.

"Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments, advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists; but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organisations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society..."

Trotskyists must spearhead all struggles against attempts to shackle the unions to the state - through repressive legislation, incomes policy, court interference, compulsory 'arbitration' etc. - or to the employers, through forms of 'workers' participation' and similar class-collaborationist systems designed to suck leading trade union representatives into acting as an army of management in the imposition of speed-up, sackings and wage controls.

For similar reasons, Trotskyists resolutely oppose capitalist import controls, which effectively tie workers in any country to nationalist efforts to protect their 'own' bourgeoisie against 'foreign' competitors at the expense of workers in other countries.

All forms of outside interference in the machinery of the workers' movement - including the imposition of secret or postal balloting designed to split the mass strength of the working class and pressurise trade unionists as 'individuals' - must be combatted.

At the same time the struggle against the reformist and Stalinist union bureaucracy must include specific demands for the regular election of all full time labour movement officials, for them to be subject to recall at any time, and for them to be paid no more than the average wage of the members they represent.

In some countries where the existing trade union organisations are tied more or less openly and directly to the political parties or state machinery of the bourgeoisie, the struggle for the independence of the unions is obviously linked to the fight to break such reactionary links and, where appropriate, to fight for the unions to construct independent, Labour, parties to represent the class interests of the proletariat.

Marxists, following on the method spelled out by Trotsky in his discussion with SWP(USA) leaders on the Transitional Programme, fight for such Labour Parties to be established not on a reformist platform but on a full and adequate programme of transitional and democratic demands. However, we do not present that programme as a take-it-or-leave-it ultimatum. We recognise that in the very break by trade unions from bourgeois parties an important opening could be created for the struggle for independent working class politics. It is important that every avenue for propaganda and agitation on the class divide between the labour movement and the organisations of the bourgeoisie is exploited by Marxists and the necessity for class political independence retained in the forefront of political work in these countries.

In many more countries a fight is also necessary against the system of stringent 'no strike' clauses inserted by employers

who ~~fully exploit the fact that plant-level strike action is illegal and subject to vigorous repression by national union officials.~~

Wages and conditions must be fully protected by a sliding scale of wages based on a cost of living index compiled by elected committees and must be negotiated at least every year; and workers must assert the right to strike on any issue without fear of legal penalties and bureaucratic victimisation.

In every struggle, we call for strike committees or occupation committees accountable to, recallable by, and drawing new militants from mass meetings. We fight especially to involve women workers and young workers.

Where the struggle develops broadly enough to make it appropriate, we favour the further call for councils of action.

We do not see these as in any sense counterposed to the existing labour movement, but as a means of uniting it in struggle which overflows the normal channels.

Soviets - which can develop into the basis of workers' democracy - will emerge out of Council-of-Action type bodies at very high levels of struggle. They will only begin to counterpose themselves to the bourgeois system as an alternative form of government when a serious erosion of the working class's acceptance of Parliament has taken place.

Depending on the tempo of the class struggle, this can happen relatively quickly. Revolutionaries, by propaganda and by practical work in the class struggle, will help to make it happen. But a programme of building a system of soviets in advance, before a decisive escalation of the mass struggle, would be diversionary. Workers have to learn in practice that soviet-type bodies can play a role in furthering their struggles. The development towards workers' councils must be firmly linked at each stage to all the economic and political issues which can at the relevant stage of the development of the mass struggle arouse sections of workers to take action.

The future instruments of workers' power can begin life as bodies to unite and organise strikes for specific demands or, in dictatorial regimes, to fight for the implementation of democratic demands such as the release of political prisoners or free elections to a Constituent Assembly. Revolutionaries must guard against any formalism blinding them to the variety of ways in which workers' councils can develop, sometimes from quite un-revolutionary beginnings. They must equally guard against mystifying limited councils of action, equating them with one possible

development from them, i.e. soviets. A bud is not a flower, and not every bud becomes a flower.

As Bolsheviks, we see workers' councils as representing the unity and independence of the working class, and its historic role in leading behind it the other oppressed masses. But this does not mean that workers' councils are sufficient in and of themselves to advance the spontaneous struggles of the working class. The crucial role in the development of such

councils must be played by the intervention of the revolutionary party itself. We argue that all representative organisations of the oppressed masses must be allowed to participate in these soviet-type bodies, and to fight within them for the adoption of their programme.

Given political leadership from a developing Trotskyist party we see such bodies as the future organs of workers' power. At some stage in the struggle it will be the task of revolutionaries to call for all power to devolve to these bodies. But it is crucial not to outpace the developing mass movement.

In the post-war period, as the capitalist market mechanism becomes increasingly incapable of assuring the basic needs of society, the state has played an increasing economic role through nationalised industries and through state social security, health and education provision won by the working class. Certain additional demands not contained in the Transitional Programme must be taken up by Trotskyists.

In an area of production so closely related to the machinery of the capitalist state, the demand for the opening of the books of the nationalised industries and the public services acquires a particular importance.

On the one hand this will expose those sections of the banks and those privately owned suppliers and contractors that profit from the exploitation of workers in the public sector: on the other, in making clear the case for nationalisation of these sections without compensation, and in revealing the ways in which the public sector is run in the interests of capitalism, workers can use the figures uncovered to spell out the necessity for workers' control of this sector as part of the fight for workers' management of it, under a workers' state, as part of a workers' planned economy.

In advancing this challenge to control and property rights assumed by the capitalist state, the struggle against austerity cutbacks and closures in the public sector must centre on the fight for occupation of threatened facilities, backed up by supporting strikes, both in the public sector and private industry.

In opposition to public spending cuts designed to help make private industry more profitable at the expense of the working class, we call for protection of public services against inflation by automatic inflation-proofing of expenditure, with an index assessed by elected trade union committees.

The practical fight for such demands as the crucial 'bridge' between the present consciousness of the working class and the consciousness required to accomplish the socialist revolution is the task confronting every Trotskyist in each sector of the workers' movement.

MARXISM

The basis of our activity is the scientific theory of Marxism, the only theory which gives a clear understanding of present-day society and of the necessity of revolutionary change. Marxism is not a series of texts from the past, but in

its essence a scientific method, which allows for permanent development and regeneration of our understanding of the world and for definition and yet sharper re-definition of our goals in the light of experience.

TROTSKYISM

Trotskyism is the basic Marxist programme of the conquest of political and social power by the international working class and, on that basis, the end of exploitation and the setting up of a system of democratic self-rule by the working class.

It is the unfalsified programme of Lenin and Trotsky: based on the experience of Bolshevism - the most advanced practice of revolutionary Marxism ever attained - it links that past with the current struggles and revolutionary perspectives through the Marxist method of Lenin and Trotsky, guiding the practice of revolutionary Marxists. Trotskyism embodies the world experience also of workers' struggles, including the defence and development of Bolshevism by Trotsky and the Left Opposition in battle against the Stalinist counter-revolution in the USSR and against its poisonous derivatives in the world labour movement.

Trotskyism means reliance on the self-controlling activity and on the revolutionary creativity of the working class, which the revolutionary organisation strives to relate to and mobilise on the transitional demands which can be a bridge between immediate elementary class struggle and a working class drive for the overthrow of capitalism and for workers' power. It is the programme of the workers' revolution, organically linked with the practical struggle to aid its development. Therefore it is not only a programme but the struggle to build revolutionary parties to fight for that programme: "The significance of the programme is the significance of the party".

Its traditions are those of the Bolsheviks and the Left Opposition: workers' democracy; unrelenting struggle for theoretical clarity; revolutionary activism on the basis of real and practical identification with the living struggles of the proletariat and with all oppressed sections and groups whether in the capitalist states or in those parts of the world ruled by Stalinist bureaucracies; unbending hostility to capitalism and irreconcilable struggle against it and against those in the labour movement who stand for its continuation; unbending hostility to all that is specifically Stalinist in the labour movement and in the degenerated and deformed workers' states, and irreconcilable struggle against it and in the Stalinist states for political revolution and direct workers' power; and war on all (even avowedly 'Trotskyist') conciliation towards Stalinism, whether in the form of political accommodation to Stalinist movements and mimicry of them, or in the form of theories of softening or disappearing contradictions and antagonisms between the working class and Stalinism (and therefore between Trotskyism and Stalinism).

We base ourselves on the traditions of Bolshevism in both its phases: on the experience of building the revolutionary party and making the revolution, and on the experience of the struggle by the Bolshevik rearguard against the Stalinist

degeneration. We are guided by the first four Congresses of the Communist International and the fundamental documents of the Fourth International, particularly the Transitional Programme - all these we hold to have fundamental relevance for current struggles. The Transitional Programme we regard as the basic revolutionary programme of our epoch - the programme of workers' revolution, refined and flexibly structured for use by an organisation of revolutionaries fighting for leadership of the working class in its day to day struggles.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

The Workers' Socialist League fights to build a revolutionary party to resolve the crisis of leadership of the working class; a party, democratically controlled by an active working class membership, which preserves its political independence, fights the ideological domination of the ruling class, and is able and prepared to lead the working class for the seizure of power.

The major orientation of the WSL's work is thus always towards the working class and the labour movement, aiming to build an organisation rooted in the workplaces and the working class communities. Non-worker members of the WSL must learn to involve themselves as closely as possible in the life and struggles of the working class, and to structure the rhythm of their lives accordingly. To this end, they will be assigned to work in labour organisations, in workers' districts, and as assistants to the factory militants of the WSL.

Only a self-acting and critical-minded membership is capable of forging and consolidating an adequate revolutionary 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 and 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 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.

THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The programme of socialism is a world programme, or it is a utopia: socialism presupposes a working class seizure of all that has been progressive in the capitalist epoch, and it will build on the economic achievements of capitalism. Capitalism is a world system. Socialism in one country, even the most advanced country, is an absurdity.

Therefore the working class needs a revolutionary international party.

The WSL fights for the political regeneration and organisational reconstruction of the Fourth International founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky. We seek the maximum contact, cooperation and dialogue with the forces of Trotskyism internationally, as the means of reaching theoretical and political clarification and forging organisational links.

The WSL is part of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, and seeks to develop it into a democratic centralist tendency, as our immediate contribution to the work of regeneration and reconstruction. Success in this development will of course be only a step towards the greater task of political regeneration and organisational reconstruction.

PERMANENT REVOLUTION

Exactly as in 'The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle', p.12, with the addition on Nicaragua - and the misprint in that addition corrected - but without the one on Iran.

+ + + + +

These basic positions and principled considerations lead us to the following positions on the living and immediate issues on the ideological, political and economic fronts of the class struggle.

WOMEN

We fight for full and equal rights for women, for female emancipation from the male domination which throughout history has coexisted with class society and which has its roots in class society. We fight, in particular, for the emancipation of women of our class, suffering a double and triple oppression, who have been most accurately described as 'the slaves of the slaves'.

Women's liberation presupposes the root-and-branch reorganisation of society. It will be one of the most profound revolutions in history. The necessary social reconstruction demands a proletarian revolution. Women's liberation is necessarily linked to the proletarian revolution - or else it is either utopian, reformist, or both.

In history mass working class women's movements were built in association with the early Second International and the Communist International. They were destroyed by fascism and Stalinism, and vanished.

Today a movement is being re-born, in ideological chaos - because it has to rediscover so much, and because no mass revolutionary movement exists to help it. Yet it is a healthy ferment, this chaos.

We believe that the women's movement must be firmly linked to the working class struggle for power, and ideologically educated to make that link. At the same time the labour movement must be thoroughly transformed so that women can play their full part in it.

A revolutionary working-class based women's movement must be built. For the first time in history it is possible to build it at a time when a mass female industrial proletariat exists. We fight to build it, keeping in mind an imperative need for a sensitive approach to the movement, recently reborn, of the doubly-oppressed half of humanity.

We support the Women's Fightback campaign, and will work in a careful and patient way within it for our class-struggle politics.

We pledge ourselves to fight to make the WSL an organisation which women revolutionaries can find habitable and accessible, and can play a full active role in.

IMPERIALISM AND NATIONAL LIBERATION

We give unconditional support to the struggles of the oppressed peoples everywhere fighting against imperialism, and to their organisations leading that fight, irrespective of political differences we have with them and which would lead to sharp conflict were we working on the same political and geographical terrain.

Communist internationalism does not counterpose itself to the struggle of oppressed nations for national rights of self-determination and independence - any more than the communist programme is counterposed to the fight to preserve democratic rights. The programme of communist internationalism subsumes the struggles for national liberation, including national separation; it absorbs the progressive elements in the nationalism of oppressed nations, the elements of struggle for freedom from oppression and of assertion of the right to national identity into its own programme, and fights for these (and against the bourgeois and chauvinist versions of such demands) from the position of the working class and of the communist international programme of the working class.

It recognises that the road to the real world-wide unity of the working people will not be over the protesting backs of the oppressed nations and peoples of the world, on tracks already laid down by brutal capitalism - but that it runs through a whole period of reconciliation, including freedom of separation, leading to a voluntary world federation of workers' states, and thence to the stateless United Communist world system.

We support the struggle for a united and independent

Ireland, and for an end to the political and military interference in Ireland by British imperialism. We also pledge ourselves to give all possible assistance to Irish revolutionaries in the task of building an independent revolutionary workers' party in Ireland.

RACISM

British workers have - fundamentally - more in common with every single worker throughout the globe, irrespective of race, religion, language or colour, than with the whole of the British ruling class. Racism divides the working class and can cripple it. The fight against racism is a matter of life and death for the labour movement.

We fight to deprive racists of all positions in the labour movement and to drive racism out of the movement. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support black self-defence and advocate that the labour movement gives active support to black self-defence against racist or police violence, persecution and harassment.

We advocate that in areas like Brixton or Southall the police should be withdrawn and the labour movement, in cooperation with black workers' organisations, should take on the responsibility of organising a workers' defence force, consisting of black and white workers, to ensure the defence of the area against fascists and racists.

FASCISM

Fascist movements express the reactionary fury of people frustrated by capitalism - fury expressed through violence against militant workers, against socialists, and against oppressed minorities. They can be used as the shock troops of a moribund capitalism, to smash up the labour movement. We must destroy fascism, or it will eventually destroy the labour movement.

Fascists should be driven out of the unions. They should have no right of way to march or speak or organise. Workers' defence squads must protect meetings of the labour movement, and massive mobilisations must drive the fascists off the streets.

NATIONALISM

We reject the nationalist/reformist politics of the 'Alternative Economic Strategy' and of import controls, and counterpose a socialist programme. As an essential part of our alternative to the nationalism of the 'AES', we argue for the Socialist United States of Europe.

In the areas of advanced capitalism, the nation state has long been a roadblock to development. Nowhere has this been so incontrovertibly demonstrated as in Europe. The competition of Europe's major states has twice this century sparked a world

imperialist conflagration.

The nation-state structures in Europe have survived long beyond their natural historic time only because of the successive defeats of the working class.

The capitalist states of Western Europe have in the last decades taken hesitant but definite steps, through the European Economic Community, to loosen the strangling cords of the nation state. However, under capitalism, these attempts come up against definite limits. This is clearly the case with the EEC: competition between national capitals has not ceased but has been carried into a new arena.

The Socialist United States of Europe is our answer, both to the reactionary nationalisms of the major European powers, and to the EEC, their hesitant and inadequate step away from political and economic national limitations. The proletariat must unite Europe in a free socialist federation - all Europe, East as well as West.

YOUTH

Young workers are especially vulnerable under capitalism. Within the family they are often stifled. The education system is an obstacle race, grading them to fit the stratifications of capitalist society - irrespective of interests, abilities, desires.

Masses of youth go straight from school to the dole. Those who get apprenticeships work at a pittance for years longer than necessary for the training process.

Most trade unions make no provisions for recruiting youth into active membership. The dull and sluggish routine repels most youth, and stifles others.

We fight for:

Full trade union rights for young workers, including the right to strike. Special provisions for youth in the trade unions. Creation of junior workers' committees. The right for young workers unemployed since leaving school to join the unions and to receive unemployment benefit at the adult rate.

Further education opportunities for all young workers. Unlimited access to further education. An end to the use of apprentices as cheap labour. Ban on all work for apprentices not connected with the apprenticeship; reduced periods of apprenticeship. Trade union committees with youth representation to supervise apprentice training.

Full pay at 16.

A democratic Labour youth movement - free from the bureaucratic control of the Labour leaders and the pseudo democratic-centralist regime in the Labour Party Young Socialists maintained by the 'Militant'.

We support 'Class Fighter' and the National Left Wing Youth Movement.

THE STALINIST STATES

We stand for a political revolution of the working class against the bureaucracies of the U SR and the other countries called 'communist', which we consider to be degenerated and deformed workers' states. The social and political regime of the different bureaucracies has nothing in common with socialism, let alone real communism - unless you believe in police state socialism.

At the same time, we defend the nationalised economies of these countries against capitalism and imperialism, unconditionally: that is, irrespective of the self-serving, usually anti working class and reactionary policies of the ruling bureaucrats, and against those policies. In any case, or apparent clash, between this defence and support for working class revolt against the bureaucratic tyranny, we stand entirely with the working class against the bureaucratic parasites who oppress them with police state terror.

What is the political revolution?

While the degree of resistance by the bureaucracy and by the state machine will vary from country to country (in Hungary in 1956 the ruling party itself fragmented, sections joining with the proletarian revolutionaries), the political revolution means:

a) The smashing, through revolutionary direct action under the leadership of a revolutionary party, of the bureaucratic state apparatus, its dismantling, and the assumption of direct power by the working class masses through a network of workers' councils (the historically established form of proletarian democracy).

b) The simultaneous assumption of direct control in industry by the working class - control in which factory and area organisations will interact creatively with the central state power, and organise the economy according to a democratically arrived at, and democratically controlled and implemented, working class plan.

c) The complete destruction of the bureaucracy as a social stratum by removing all material privileges, as well as destroying its totalitarian monopoly of control and power in society.

THE LABOUR PARTY

The Labour Party - in its ideas, its policies, its relation to the bourgeois state, and its record in government over 60 years - has shown itself to be tied and integrated into the established system. At the same time, the bedrock organisations of the working class, the trade unions, support and finance the Labour Party.

It is a party which serves capitalism, but which can only do so because it is based on the organised working class movement, many elements of which want to bury capitalism. In that contradiction lies the potential of transcending Labourism.

The 'open valve' connection between the Labour Party and the unions allows for the possibility of large scale working class participation in the party.

Labour in Government can be a strong party for capitalism when, together with the trade union bureaucracy, it induces workers patiently to bear the cost of capitalism's problems. Or it can be weak for capitalism when, as with 'In Place of Strife', its working class base rises up against it.

The WSL asserts that it is organically part of the political and industrial organisations of the working class. It does not concede that the Labour Party is ordained to be the exclusive property of its pro-capitalist leadership. The WSL will build an organisation based on Marxist politics inside the labour movement, not outside it and need ssly counterposed to it in the manner of the sectarian-abstentionist left.

We relate to the Labour Party by developing the contradiction between the working class base and the pro-capitalist leadership, and by attempting to advance the working class towards outgrowing and breaking through the particular stage in its development represented by Labourism. We aim to help bring the political wing of the working class movement to a political self-reconstruction on the basis of revolutionary socialist politics, methods, and objectives.

We pursue the struggle despite and against the conservative bureaucracy of the labour movement. We fight for our right, and the right of all varieties of socialist thought, to exist and organise in the Labour Party. We oppose any voluntary or unnecessary self-isolation. But if the bureaucracy forces it to a split, then in no case will we flinch or capitulate on our principles.

The Labour Party should exist to serve the working class, and socialists should fight to make it do so. In no sense does the working class exist to serve the reformist Labour Party which serves capitalism.

THE WORKERS' GOVERNMENT

The desperate decline of Britain, basically the decline of British industry's competitiveness and profitability, makes desperate measures necessary - and for the Tories desperate measures are measures that make the workers pay.

The repeated failure of different government strategies, Labour and Tory, prepared the way for demolition-squad Toryism. Put into office in the wave of industrial direct action that scuttled Heath, the last Labour government behaved as a straight-line capitalist government. It abused the confidence of the workers. Basing itself on the trade union bureaucracy (until 1978) on one side, and the state machine on the other, it ruled in defiance of Labour Party conference decisions. It got wage restraint and actually cut real wages for two years running.

But what the ruling class learned from that experience was

the insufficiency of even a relatively successful (in their terms) Labour government.

They needed to make the sort of attacks Labour could not make without shattering its base. Thus Thatcherism.

Whether the next Labour government - in 1984, or earlier if the w.class does as it has the industrial strength to do and kicks out Thatcher - will be a more or less radical new instalment of the sort of Labour governments we have had this century, or not, will be determined by two things:

+ By whether a real attack is made on the wealth and entrenched power of the ruling class, and,

+ By whether or not it rests at least in part on the organisations of the working class instead of on those of the state bureaucracy, the military, and Parliament - that is, whether in response to the direct demands of the working class it can do what the workers want, or endorse what they do (taking over factories, for example) without being a captive of the state machine.

The working class itself would only serve and protect its own interests by organising itself outside the rhythms, norms and constraints of Parliamentary politics, expanding its factory shop stewards' committees, combine committees, Trades Councils, etc., and creating new Action Committees, to be an industrial power that could as necessary dispense with the Parliamentarians.

The Brighton/Blackpool/Wembley decisions to control MPs and to give the majority of votes on who shall be prime minister if Labour has a majority in Parliament to the CLPs and trade unions could open the way to a new kind of 'Labour' government - a workers' government, instead of the government of the trade union party which merely administers capitalism according to capitalism's own laws.

Revolutionary Marxists believe that there must be a socialist revolution - a clean sweep of the capitalists and the establishment of the state power of the working class, leading to the setting up of a workers' democracy. The big majority of the labour movement don't yet share our views. But we have a common need and determination to oppose and fight the Tory government and to oppose any moves, even by the Labour Party in government, to load the cost of capitalist decay and crisis onto the shoulders of the working class.

If we cannot agree on a root-and-branch transformation (or on precisely how to go about getting it) we can at least agree on a whole range of measures to protect ourselves and to cut down and control the capitalists. Thus we propose:

To get the most out of the breakthrough for Labour democracy at Brighton/Blackpool/Wembley, we must fight for the next Labour government to act radically in our interests and to base itself on the movement, not on the bosses' state bureaucracy. And at the same time we must prepare and organise ourselves to be able to protect our interests however it acts.

We must fight to commit the Party to radical socialist policies, and use reselection to make sure MPs are held to those policies.

But if the Labour Party were really to strike at the power and wealth of the bosses, they would strike back, using their army and state forces to repress the movement if necessary - or simply to cow the Labour government.

Whoever wants to break out of the limits defined by the interests of the capitalists must be prepared to disarm the ruling class and destroy its state. Only the working class can do that, organised in squads like those which the flying pickets organise, which can arm themselves when necessary.

Any Parliament-based government that attempted really radical change would put its head on the block, and while the present armed forces exist the axe is in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

The power of the ruling class is not entirely, nor even essentially, in Parliament. That is the terrain to which they now go out from their redoubts in industry, the civil service and the armed forces, to meet and to parley with the labour movement, and to put on a show for the people.

But if the labour movement insists on new rules for the parleying game, they have a reserve language to resort to - force. So have we.

In other words, we propose to militant workers to join with us in a fight for the labour movement to reconstruct itself and gain real control for the rank and file, and for a government of the labour movement to take radical measures against capitalist power.

Effectively this means calling upon workers to fight with us within their existing organisations for a revolutionary programme and perspective.

We cannot say in advance how far such a struggle could go before it produced a major split within the reformist organisations. But the experience of the struggle would win important and broad forces to the banner of socialist revolution and create the possibility of mobilising the class as a whole.

An essential part of this fight for the workers' government must be a drive to arm the labour movement - or at least big sections of the rank and file - with socialist politics.

If the labour movement is to be ready to offer a real socialist alternative at the 'next stage', the foundations must be laid and built upon now, and urgently. That is what the WSL exists to do.

THE W.S.L. AND THE FAR LEFT

We fight for political regeneration and organisational reconstruction of the Fourth International in a situation where

the would-be Trotskyist forces world-wide are generally politically disoriented and inadequate, and organisationally fragmented.

The USFI has a history of shying from the fight for political revolution (Cuba, Vietnam, China, etc. at various times); opportunist policies based on hopeful speculations about left-moving petty bourgeois forces (most recently in Nicaragua); and opportunist dabbling in the labour movement in the advanced capitalist countries.

The WSP(USA) segment of the USFI has recently hardened this approach into brazen political self-identification with the Cuban bureaucracy.

The FI(IC) proclaims Trotskyist orthodoxy; but their blustering proclamations and organisational sectarianism often go along with flat opportunism (e.g. the 'anti-imperialist united front' in Latin America, and the 'workers government' without programme and without serious criticism of the social democracy in France).

The WRP's "ICFI" cannot be discussed merely in terms of political errors. It has moved from wild political flip-flops to its current self-abasement before the Libyan dictatorship and the bourgeois terrorist regime of the Basathists in Iraq. Its gangsterism and its complete lack of scruple in pursuing factional conflicts brand it as a force harmful to the working class movement.

The British SWP and its international co-thinkers differ from us on their characterisation of the USSR as state-capitalist - a characterisation which logically implies a perspective of state capitalism as a whole new stage of relatively progressive development, at least for the Third World. But our most crucial political difference with them is that, rejecting the method of transitional demands, they interpret 'building the revolutionary party' as maximising recruitment on the basis of militant but shallow agitation for minimum-type demands and general socialist propaganda. In sharp clashes or crises, their politics are typically weak and dithering.

We do not see the WSL as the nucleus of the revolutionary party, fully-formed except for our small size. Nor do we believe that we somehow stand remote from the difficulties and inadequacies of our movement, the Trotskyist movement, over the last 35 years. The revolutionary party will not be built simply through one-by-one recruitment. A whole process of splits and fusions, and also of ideological rearmament and regeneration, will be necessary.

We seek to develop dialogue with and to win over the best forces from the other would-be Trotskyist currents. Here and now, however, we don't "speculate", but build the WSL as the immediate contribution we can make to preparing the future. We are the pioneers of the future revolutionary party, or we are nothing.

DISAGREEMENTS

The WSL openly acknowledges the existence of different views within its ranks on historical questions of the Trotskyist movement, on the Russian occupation of Afghanistan, / and on the EEC /(+). A timetable has been fixed for a discussion and a decision on Afghanistan / and on the EEC /. In the meantime the different views will be expressed publicly in the press of the movement.

Once a decision has been taken by majority vote, that is then the line of the WSL, and all members are obliged to support it in practical action. The minority may, however, continue to argue internally and to try to change the policy. At the discretion of the majority, public debate may also be allowed.

Since the historical questions are not questions of active political programme, no timetable has been fixed for a vote on them. The WSL will, however, strive for a common understanding, through internal debate and (at the discretion of the leading committees) public discussion.

....

(+) Delete if decision to be taken at fusion conference.

....

OUR IMMEDIATE DEMANDS

As a platform of immediate class-struggle demands, we endorse the following.

[The broad-groups platform, as amended]

.....