

it involves the handing over of a list of members to the class enemy and transferring the means of financing the union into their hands;

g) In its best tradition, militating in the union is carried out by ordinary workers, after work and at their own expense. The excessive use of paid officials, of official absence from work for union reasons, of meetings in working hours, conducted under the eye of the boss and his spies, only make things easier for the organisation in a superficial way, and are often used as a form of corruption, of intimidation and blackmail;

h) The class union, having rejected prejudices and erroneous explanations of the causes of the degeneration of the regime unions, must aim to eventually become a centralised unitary organism, organised on a national scale, which proletarians join voluntarily with a view to taking part in coordinated actions in pursuit of common objectives. In order to function properly, permanent executive organs are an indispensable requirement since only these can ensure the requisite speed and unity of decision-making when it comes to taking practical action. The necessary monitoring of the leaders to ensure they are firm in their commitment to the class interest, and selecting the best political line for the trade union, is a capacity which the class will need to develop. They are problems which cannot be sidestepped by adopting the suicidal conclusion that the class can do without its indispensable organisational instruments;

i) The class union holds on to the fact that the exploited will experience real and lasting relief from suffering only by fully emancipating itself from the condition of wage labour, and this is the general objective which it pursues.

## **Towards the Rebirth of the Working-Class Trade Union**

1. The deepening of capitalism's economic crisis is driving the bosses to offload the painful consequences onto the workers. Now that the cycle of enormous profits for the well-off classes, which allowed some minor and ephemeral wage rises and certain regulatory improvements – although not without bitter struggles which cost dozens of lives in battles between the strikers and police – has drawn to a close, capital and its State suddenly want to plunge the workers into the most abject poverty and insecurity. This attack by the various States on the workers is happening at the same time throughout the world, inside and outside Europe, in the East and the West, in the poor countries and in the so-called “rich” ones.

2. The forces of the bourgeois regime – government and police, television and press – have all lined up to hinder the workers' spontaneous reaction. They will resort to any violence, intimidation and distortion to defend the privileges of the capitalists, even if it means reducing the working class to desperation and hunger.

3. Indispensable instruments for opposing the mobilisation of the exploited masses are the trade unions officially recognised by the State, whether confederated or non-confederated. Their actions are such that, in practice, they may now be considered as a special police force deployed against the workers.

4. What is needed today, therefore, is for the exploited to reconstruct their own strong, loyal and combative CLASS UNION as a permanent expression of the hatred of the oppressed toward their condition, and as a vehicle for their resistance struggles against the boundless greed of the

b) It isn't the job of the class union to defend the national economy or finances of the bourgeois State, nor to propose alternative solutions to their crisis such as a “fair taxation system”, which in this society is unimaginable. If the State is constrained to attack the petty bourgeoisie, let IT take the blame: the position on which class union lines up is the intransigent defence of the working class;

c) Struggle for normative and wage equality for the same job, regardless of age, race, sex, nationality, religion or language;

d) its objective is international workers' solidarity, understood not in a sentimental or abstract sense, but as a prospect based on common goals, struggles and organisation;

e) It considers that the de facto capacity to strike and organise derives not from rights enshrined in laws or constitutions, but depends on which way the balance of power between the classes is tipped: a legal strike being forbidden is just as likely to happen as an illegal trade union establishing itself. To accept strike-limiting laws in order to obtain recognition by the State is a serious mistake since the bosses and the State will never recognise a truly combative union unless constrained to do so by force; the union will only be able to acquire true representation when it is backed by the workers and is able to mobilise them around an intransigent class line;

f) The trade-union organisation must be separate from, and opposed to, the various forms of organisation and internal structures set in place by the employers within the workplace and must be funded by workers alone. The delegating of the collection of dues to the bosses is to be decisively rejected since

organised separately, in parallel, or as an alternative, to the union. It is by being organised in the union that workers overcome the narrowness of the factory, of the sector and of the category, such as to arrive at the stage of mobilising themselves, as a class, in defence of common interests.

8. There are no organisational recipes which can guarantee a correct class line. That is why we say that invoking the principals of trade-union democracy (deliberative assemblies, consultations and referendums) will not resolve the problem of the reconstruction of the classist trade-union organisation. In periods of reaction the base can respond in ways which are very controversial and out of synch, if not downright opposed to the class's interests. Nevertheless, you cannot place on the same level workers who are involved in a struggle and blacklegs, layers of the working class which are prepared to fight and workers' aristocracies or white-collar workers who may try to divide the movement in order to defend their particular interests. Furthermore, it is to be expected that the bourgeois State, when it is faced with a resolute movement aimed at class reorganisation, will resort to its typical tried and tested use of provocation and violent repression. Such a process of reorganisation will not, therefore, develop within a peaceful or legalistic climate, but in a setting of open State repression and of bitter social struggle; which may entail it taking on forms which are appropriate to ensure its own protection.

#### 9. PRINCIPLES of the class union:

a) To aim for solidarity amongst workers of every category in order to oppose the disadvantageous divisions imposed on workers by bourgeois society;

capitalists. It must be an organisation which emanates from the working class and which responds to it alone; which assumes no responsibility for the battles between the bourgeois classes, for their economy and for their nation, and whose declared aim is defending the workers against its class enemy.

Confronted with a capitalist attack which is coordinated and united, the workers are divided, into factories, trades and regions: only within a Class Union which is broad and spontaneously disciplined in its actions will it be possible for them to enter the struggle united.

In order to achieve the greatest mobilisation the Class Union has always recruited not on the basis of such and such an ideology, but anyone who finds themselves in the objective position of being a worker, whatever their political sympathies might be. The class needs both trade unions and its political party, which even if different are nevertheless complementary and require separate organisations. To hypothesise the formation of a trade union which is composed solely of communists, or a hybrid organisation halfway between a union and a party, would be to condemn it to impotence from the outset, and mean abandoning the majority of the proletariat to itself, in other words, to the regime's trade-unionism. On the other hand, to demand "independence from the parties", in the sense of the preventing party militants from joining and putting their message across, would mean consigning the union to the "diffused party" of dominant bourgeois ideology which infiltrates itself in a thousand and one ways amongst the workers as well.

5. The so-called "trade-union left", manipulated from within the union hierarchies, try to convince the workers with ambiguous

and superficially combative statements that they should still place their trust in the regime's unions. Their real aim is to sow confusion so as to delay the genuine reorganisation and general mobilisation. The trade-union left, which typically demands "democracy in the unions", is deceiving the workers. It isn't the case that the union has sold out to the bosses because it isn't responsive enough to the membership; on the contrary, it can't obey the workers because it has gone over, once and for all, to the bosses. To persuade the workers, therefore, that they should concentrate on getting a hearing from these leaders is only a delaying tactic.

6. The aim of the class union is to protect the standard of living and working conditions of the working class. The latter term is to be understood in its widest sense to include all employees, not proprietors of their instruments of labour, whatever their form of retribution may be: it therefore includes those engaged in manual and intellectual work, productive and unproductive work, employees of an individual boss, of a cooperative of bosses, or of the State. Excluded from it are members of the other classes, that is, all capitalists, including extremely minor ones (artisans and peasants) and those strata which straddle class boundaries (tenants, students etc). On the other hand, pensioners and the unemployed are organised in the union, not separately, but within the professional category they were originally part of.

THE WORKERS' DEMANDS which the class union traditionally takes up are the protection of wages with special consideration for those on the lowest incomes; the reduction of working hours; and the defence of pensioners and the

unemployed along with the demand for a living wage for them and their families.

7. THE MEANS that the class union is prepared to use to impose its demands on the employers and their State can be summed up as direct action by the workers involving untrammelled strike initiatives, adjustable according to the harshness of the bourgeois resistance. To be rejected on principle would be the entrusting of workers' conditions to the results of referendums which include all classes as participants, such as votes in the bourgeois parliaments and court and tribunal rulings. The best way the class can deploy its forces is through the general all-out mobilisation of all crafts and professional categories, and by rejecting the regulations and control today imposed by the bourgeoisie and accepted by the regime's trade unions: from limitations imposed in terms of time and space, to the obligation to give notice; from the obligation to provide minimum services, to the suspension of strikes during negotiations.

For the class union a territorial organisation which is outside the workplace (in the tradition of the chambers of labour) is absolutely indispensable. It is here that representatives from the factories, and individual workers dispersed over small and very small units of production, can meet regularly, draw strength from each other and coordinate their initiatives.

The Factory Council necessarily cling to a vision which is limited by the in-plant environment and which can be very one-sided, if not actually in conflict with the requirements of the general movement: this is why it is a mistake to raise them to the same level as the class union and predict a network of councils