

The WSA's concept of unionism is different than that of the reformist AFL-CIO and similar trade unions. While these trade unions only want their "fair" share of the economic pie, anarcho-syndicalists want the whole pie. We want a society where the producers and consumers are in control, not bosses of any type.

Reformist trade unions are organized along bureaucratic, centralized lines, similar to those of the State. The WSA's anarcho-syndicalism rejects this form of union organization. Instead, we favor revolutionary unionism which is directly managed by the rank-and-file members — from the bottom up, not the top down.

The WSA believes there can be no place in the labor movement for entrenched bureaucracies which are self-serving instruments of power, manipulation and control over the rank-and-file worker. Rather, anarcho-syndicalists of the Workers Solidarity Alliance pose the alternative of a labor movement that is composed of organizations where decisions and policy are directly controlled by the workers in the shops and offices.

All workers who are delegated to positions of responsibility must be subject to immediate recall by a majority of those who elected them; and there must be mandatory rotation from office after a short term — unlike now where many trade union officials are in office for life and where the average union member has little or no control over such trade union officials.

In building organizations that are directly managed by the rank and file, we would not only create more effective organizations for fighting the



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bosses, we would also be laying the foundation for a new economy run by working people. This is why we call such unions "revolutionary." Only a movement that is run democratically by working people themselves can create a society in which workers manage industry. In a post-revolutionary, self-managed society, the centers of decision-making would be general meetings, of workers in their workplaces, and in the community. The various facilities in each industry, region and nation, and on the international level, would be linked together in federations, with decisions made at conventions of delegates, uniting the ideas of the whole workforce.

WSA's Program

That's all well and good, you may say, but what about the here and now? Given that it may not be practical to organize such revolutionary unions at this time (particularly if you belong to a reformist trade union), the WSA advocates the following program.

We believe it's possible for rank-and-file union members to form independent shop groups, or action committees, and networks of like-minded workers, where mass revolutionary unions are not immediately possible.

These organizations would act separately from, and independent of, the trade union bureaucracy. Such bodies would draw their own demands, initiate campaigns, settle problems, and act under strict democratic workers' control. These bodies, it is hoped, would coordinate their activities with others in their particular economic sector and with other such organizations in a given reformist union. These bodies would act as a dual power base within the reformist trade unions to fight both the corporate bosses and the trade union officialdom. The WSA sees such rank-and-file bodies as the embryonic revolutionary unions of the future.

Of course, many of us work in places where no unions yet exist, not even of the sell-out variety. In such situations, we favor building new, in-

dependent unions that would be run directly by the rank and file — unions that would fight for workers' concerns through the direct action of the workers themselves, rather than relying on the government or professional trade union leaders.

On the tactical level, the WSA believes in the use of *direct action* as opposed to *indirect action* to win both short-term and long-term goals. Forms of direct action that we favor include "sit down" strikes, where people maintain control over their place of work; "squatting," where people jointly occupy unused buildings for their own use; "hot cargo," where workers continue to provide their labor for the other working people in the community, but deny the revenue or control of their labor to the bosses; and community-wide or nation-wide general strikes, which demonstrate the power that the workforce or general population has when it's united. It's the WSA's belief that a massive general strike (or set of general strikes) along with the occupation of workplaces that will ultimately bring down the capitalist class and government.

On the other hand, a strategy that relies on *indirect action*, such as electing representatives to government office, encourages the divisions between leaders and led, between those who make decisions and those who follow them. Electoral politics leads to State-imposed solutions because it tends to define issues in terms of what government policies a small set of leaders will implement. Because a political party is a vehicle for putting leaders into power, a political party can't serve as a vehicle for people intent on creating a truly free society.

The WSA particularly rejects the so-called "vanguard" party concept of the marxists because it can only serve as the embryo of a bureaucratic State machine, as we have seen in the "communist" or "socialist" countries. Such parties exist at the expense of independent working class movements and they have, once in power, developed managerial elites every bit as fascinated with militarism and squeezing the workforce as their capitalist counterparts.

To say that the WSA stands for workers' self-liberation is not enough. The Workers Solidarity Alliance does not see things simply in terms of on-the-job exploitation.

Since exploitation and oppression take a variety of forms in this society, so must the struggle for liberation. Movements expressing the will of various communities, women, sexual minorities, young people, national and cultural groups, the aged, the disabled, must also be encouraged and supported. We are opposed to all forms of discrimination and oppression that bar people from fully participating in society and realizing their potential as free individuals.

The WSA firmly believes in the concept of working class internationalism. We are proud of the fact that we have supported, and will continue to support, workers throughout the world in their struggles for freedom, whether the struggle be in the Eastern European bloc, the U.S.-dominated bloc, or the so-called non-aligned bloc.

The WSA doesn't practice its internationalism in isolation. We are affiliated with the world body of revolutionary unions and anarcho-

syndicalist groups, the International Workers Association (IWA). The IWA has existed as an explicitly revolutionary unionist international since 1922, although the current IWA traces its origins back to the First International of the 1860s. The IWA is the international expression of revolutionary working class cooperation, coordination, unity, solidarity and struggle.

In this statement, we have merely attempted to highlight some aspects of where we stand on certain questions, and how we differ from others who offer their own solutions to the problems around us. If you have any questions regarding the ideas described here, by all means get in touch with us. We always welcome questions. We hope that you will contact us. And if you agree with our aims and goals, then please join us in fighting for a world free of exploitation, oppression, and domination.

For further information, write to: WSA, PO Box 40400, San Francisco, CA 94140; those in the New York area can also contact the WSA New York Group, 339 Lafayette St., Room 202, New York, NY 10012; those in the South can contact the WSA East Tennessee Group, Box 8436, U.T. Station, Knoxville, TN 37996-4900.

If you like what we say, get in touch

Workers Solidarity Alliance is a national organization advocating rank-and-file-controlled, action-oriented association, in workplaces and communities, as a means to social change. We believe that this strategy — called "anarcho-syndicalism" — is the only way to attain a society where workers collectively control the economy for the common benefit.

Our members are active in a variety of areas, including struggles for rank and file workers' rights, environmental safety, racial and sexual equality; and opposition to militarism/U.S. interventionism.

W.S.A. is the U.S. affiliate of the International Workers Association, a worldwide federation of revolutionary libertarian labor groups.

- ☐ Please send a free copy of "What is the Workers Solidarity Alliance?"
- ☐ Please send a free copy of "What is Anarchist Unionism?"
- ☐ Please send a free copy of the WSA statement of principles.
- ☐ Please provide information about WSA membership.

Name _____

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