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The Principles of Revolutionary Unionism

International Workers Association

January 2020

1. Revolutionary unionism, basing itself on the class struggle, aims to unite all workers in combative economic organizations, which fight to free themselves from the double yoke of capital and the State. Its goal is the reorganization of social life on the basis of Libertarian Communism via the revolutionary action of the working class. Since only the economic organizations of the proletariat are capable of achieving this objective, revolutionary unionism addresses itself to workers in their capacity as producers, creators of social wealth, to take root and develop amongst them, in opposition to the modern workers' parties, which it declares are incapable of the economic reorganization of society.

2. Revolutionary unionism is the staunch enemy of all social and economic monopoly, and aims at its abolition by the establishment of economic communities and administrative organs run by the workers in the field and factories, forming a system of free councils without subordination to any authority or political party, bar none. As an alternative to the politics of State and parties, revolutionary unionism posits the economic reorganization of production, replac-

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ing the rule of man over man with the administrative management of things. Consequently, the goal of revolutionary unionism is not the conquest of political power, but the abolition of all state functions in the life of society. Revolutionary unionism considers that along with the disappearance of the monopoly of property, must come the disappearance of the monopoly of domination; and that no form of State, however camouflaged, can ever be an instrument for human liberation, but that on the contrary, it will always be the creator of new monopolies and new privileges.

3. Revolutionary unionism has a two-fold function: to carry on the day-to-day revolutionary struggle for the economic, social and intellectual advancement of the working class within the limits of present-day society, and to educate the masses so that they will be ready to independently manage the processes of production and distribution when the time comes to take possession of all the elements of social life. Revolutionary unionism does not accept the idea that the organization of a social system based exclusively on the producing class can be ordered by simple governmental decrees and maintains that it can only be obtained through the common action of all manual and intellectual workers, in every branch of industry, by self-management of the workers, such that every group, factory or branch of industry is an autonomous member of the greater economic organism and systematically runs the production and distribution processes according to the interests of the community, on an agreed-upon plan and on the basis of mutual accord.

4. Revolutionary unionism is opposed to all organizational tendencies inspired by the centralism of State and Church, because these can only serve to prolong the survival of the State and authority and to systematically stifle the spirit of initiative and the independence of thought. Centralism is an artificial organization that subjects the so-called lower classes to those who claim to be superior, and that leaves in the hands of the few the affairs of the whole community — the individual being turned into a robot with

controlled gestures and movements. In the centralized organization, society's good is subordinated to the interests of the few, variety is replaced by uniformity and personal responsibility is replaced by rigid discipline. Consequently, revolutionary unionism bases its social vision on a broad federalist organization; i.e., an organization stemming from the bottom up, the uniting of all forces in the defense of common ideas and interests.

5. Revolutionary unionism rejects all parliamentary activity and all collaboration with legislative bodies; because it knows that even the freest voting system cannot bring about the disappearance of the clear contradictions at the core of present-day society and because the parliamentary system has only one goal: to lend a pretense of legitimacy to the reign of falsehood and social injustice.

6. Revolutionary Unionism rejects all political and national frontiers, which are arbitrarily created, and declares that so-called nationalism is just the religion of the modern state, behind which is concealed the material interests of the propertied classes. Revolutionary unionism recognizes only economic differences, whether regional or national, that produce hierarchies, privileges and every kind of oppressions (because of race, sex and any false or real difference), and in the spirit of solidarity claims the right to self-determination for all economic groups.

7. For the identical reason, revolutionary unionism fights against militarism and war. Revolutionary unionism advocates anti-war propaganda and the replacement of standing armies, which are only the instruments of counter-revolution at the service of capitalism, by workers' militias, which, during the revolution, will be controlled by the workers' unions; it demands, as well, the boycott and embargo of all raw materials and products necessary for war, with the exception of a country where the workers are in the midst of social revolution, in which case we should help them defend the revolution. Finally, revolutionary unionism advocates the preventive and revolutionary general strike as a means of opposing war and militarism.

8. Revolutionary unionism recognizes the need of a production that does not damage the environment, and that tries to minimize the use of non-renewable resources and uses, whenever possible, renewable alternatives. It does not admit ignorance as the origin of the present-day environmental crisis, but the thirst for earnings. Capitalist production always seeks to minimize costs in order to get more earnings to survive, and it is unable to protect the environment. To sum up, the world debt crisis has sped up the tendency to commercial harvest to the detriment of subsistence agriculture. This fact has produced the destruction of the tropical forest, starvation and disease. The fight to save our planet and the fight to destroy capitalism must be joint or both of them will fail.

9. Revolutionary unionism asserts itself to be a supporter of the method of direct action, and aids and encourages all struggles that are not in contradiction to its own goals. Its methods of struggle are: strikes, boycotts, sabotage, etc. Direct action reaches its deepest expression in the general strike, which should also be, from the point of view of revolutionary unionism, the prelude to the social revolution.

10. While revolutionary unionism is opposed to all organised violence regardless of the kind of government, it realizes that there will be extremely violent clashes during the decisive struggles between the capitalism of today and the free communism of tomorrow. Consequently, it recognizes as valid that violence may be used as a means of defense against the violent methods used by the ruling classes during the struggles that lead up to the revolutionary populace expropriating the lands and means of production. As this expropriation can only be carried out and brought to a successful conclusion by the direct intervention of the workers' revolutionary economic organizations, defense of the revolution must also be the task of these economic organizations and not of a military or quasi-military body developing independently of them.

11. Only in the economic and revolutionary organizations of the working class are there forces capable of bringing about its liber-

ation and the necessary creative energy for the reorganization of society on the basis of libertarian communism.