

**SOCIALIST
UNITY** A CRITIQUE
OF THEIR PROGRAMME

10p

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INTRODUCTION

The present crisis provides favourable ground for political intervention. If socialists fail to exploit this opportunity, the reactionaries will. Hence the importance of what Socialist Unity set out to do - mobilize the masses around a popular socialist programme.

The emergence of Socialist Unity, at the instance of the International Marxist Group and Big Flame, was a welcome attempt to overcome the isolation and sectarianism of the Left. The call for unity was a recognition of the far Left's failure to make any significant impact on the working class. But the assumption was made that the failure could be remedied by unity itself, without a total reassessment of the positions the Left was advancing - instead of different, more of the same. The programme of Socialist Unity has no hope of success because it herds together all the holy cows of the Left; instead the herd should have been slaughtered.

Communist Formation was attracted to Socialist Unity by the prospect of debate around a popular socialist programme. No such debate took place, however; its absence is an interesting problem in itself, but one that will have to be studied elsewhere. We challenged the principles enshrined in the programme both before and at the conference at which it was adopted. Our opposition, however, went unreported in Socialist Challenge - though it has no press moguls to gag it.

The Left has always been prepared to question everyone's practices but its own. In general, the Socialist Unity programme contains nothing which would be objectionable to other revolutionaries; the critique of it which follows has to be seen as a challenge to the established practices of a major section of the Left.

So far, Socialist Unity has not published its programme, and there appear to be no plans to do so. This is another indication of the way in which its principles are seen as "going without saying". They do not, however; that is why we are publishing both the programme and a detailed critique of it.

Just as the Left never questions its practice, so it trots out the same political formula, no matter the conditions. But this crisis is not the twenty-second "final crisis" of capitalism; it has particular characteristics which have to be understood before any political programme can be developed. If socialists fail to define the way forward, it will be defined for them. In that case there will be no option but to go on the defensive. The Socialist Unity programme already does this. Instead we want to go on the offensive. This pamphlet is an attempt to begin a debate on a popular socialist programme.

A CRITIQUE OF THE IEG/BIG FLAME

DRAFT ELECTION PROGRAMME

FOR SOCIALIST UNITY

by
Communist Formation

2.11.77

we welcome comments on this critique or our previous submission to Socialist Unity
write to:-
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Introduction

In our document "Draft Programme for Socialist Unity", which we circulated two months ago, we argued that a viable programme for socialist unity could only be drawn up as a result of thoroughgoing democratic debate. In the absence of such debate, any document adopted would be no more than a codification of existing dogmas. The draft submitted by IIG and Big Flame bears this out. It was drawn up by the leaderships of the two organisations and presented to their own memberships as a fait accompli. The result is no more than an opportunistic collection of demands from any and every source. It is clearly unsuitable for the winning of significant working class support, which would require the presentation of realistic solutions to the problems that the class faces. Why is it inadequate? To answer this question we have to look at what a socialist programme at the present should include.

Clearly, the present situation is not a revolutionary one. Therefore a programme which calls for the immediate seizure of state power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat would be, to say the least, premature. What is required is a programme that proposes realistic measures which are of immediate benefit to the working class and its allies, and which advances the terrain over which future class struggles will be fought. The programme should not aim simply at building an alliance of left organisations and individuals, but should seek to unite large numbers of the working class and their allies in a popular movement to resolve the current capitalist crisis on working class terms.

In addition, it should go beyond immediate questions by giving an explanation of the nature of capitalism today and of the crisis, outlining what is meant by socialism, and saying what socialist solutions to the crisis are. The programme must form a coherent whole, with particular demands as integral parts and not bits appearing at random from nowhere. How does the draft programme being presented to the conference measure up to these aims?

It clearly accepts the first point by declaring its intention of demonstrating that "action can be taken now to defend the needs and interests of working people". On the other aims the programme does not match up. It consists of several independent sections that address different problems and audiences. These are not linked by any clear idea of what socialism is and how they relate to it. There is no demonstration that the fight for sectional demands can only be won within the context of a comprehensive programme of restructuring under working class leadership. A programme which seeks to unite the working class with other strata must show how such a restructuring would involve the transformation of social relations at all levels - economic, political, cultural and ideological. This requires coherent ideas of what sorts of transformations are possible and worth fighting for, prior to the seizure of state power. The draft fails to provide such an overall perspective, and, instead, resembles a bourgeois electoral 'shopping list'.

The Economic Programme.

The economic demands of the programme are included under the sections; 'For a Guaranteed Decent Standard of Living', 'Stop Unemployment', 'No Public Spending Cuts', and 'The Resources are There'. This set of demands makes a mockery of marxist economic analysis. They are contradictory and impossible to achieve in practice under any economic system, whether capitalist or socialist.

Contradictory nature of the demands

Some of the contradictions are obvious on the most cursory reading. For instance, we read that Socialist Unity demands that prices rents and rates be frozen, but also demands that wages be inflation-proofed by linking them to the cost of living. If you abolish inflation, where is the need for inflation-proofing? Or again, Socialist Unity demands that all jobs be guaranteed, and also that womens' jobs be defended against unemployment. Are women not included in the demand that jobs be guaranteed for all? More serious than these contradictions is the impracticability of the demands. Demands are made for big increases in wages and state expenditure, but no adequate explanation is made of how these increases are to be funded. This can be demonstrated by producing an approximate costing of the demands.

The Demand for a National Minimum Income of £50 pw.

The programme demands a national minimum weekly income of £50 per week for all workers, unemployed, pensioners, the sick and disabled. How much would this cost and how feasible would it be? We will first calculate the total population who would have a right to £50 pw under these proposals.

First we have the total working population	26,014,000
Then we have pensioners	
Females 60-64	1,653,000
Both sexes 65-69	2,838,000
70-74	2,241,000
75-79	1,494,000
80-84	830,000
85+	524,000
	<hr/>
	9,579,000
Then sick and disabled	
males	735,000
females	199,000
	<hr/>
	934,000
	<hr/>
Total	36,570,000
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(Source - Annual Abstract of Statistics 1976.)

Recent government figures (National income statistics 1st qtr 1977) show that total income from employment stands at £96,327 m per annum, which is £1,852 m per week. Shared between 36,527,000 people this would work out at £50.71p per week each. In other words, if all income from employment were shared amongst those entitled to the national minimum income, there would be enough to go round provided that the national minimum income was also the national maximum income. But this is something of an overestimate, since government figures for income from employment include employers contributions to national insurance. If we deduct these, we are left with a total income from employment before tax of £1,657 m pw, or £45.38p each pw for those entitled to national minimum income.

On this basis, it would seem that the £50 pw demand is impossible. However, there remains the possibility of taxing rent, interest, dividends and income from self-employment to meet the cost - why not make the landlords and shareholders pay? The sum total of personal income in these forms is £22,664 m per year or £435 m per week. If this was divided equally between those eligible for national minimum income their weekly receipts would rise to £57.31 pw each.

What conclusion can be drawn from this? If it were possible to completely abolish all forms of property income, it would permit the payment of the national minimum income demanded, but this measure would necessitate a substantial reduction in differentials and the wages of better paid workers. As socialists we could have no objections to such reductions. Unfortunately the draft programme is not honest enough to spell out the implications of the £50 p w demand, since it also demands the abolition of all wage controls and across the board wage increases for all, including, therefore, the higher paid.

What would be the effect of attempting to meet both these demands? To deal with this we now have to know what the total increase in the wage bill would be. This is difficult because it requires some idea of the distribution of wages to see how many workers at present fall below the £50 pw minimum. The estimates that we give for these err on the side of caution. We have obtained them from the estimates of the distribution of income given in Social Trends 1976, after allowing for inflation since then.

Estimate of the increase in the wage bill due to demands in the programme draft

Increase due to £50 pw minimum

Assume that 1m employed men with an average income of £42 pw fall below the minimum	£ 8m
Assume 3.2m women with an average income of £40 pw fall below the minimum	£32m

£ 40 m pw

Cost of living increase

Cost of living increase since 1974 = 83 percent

Wage increases since 1974 = 75 "

Difference = 8 " of £1,657 m pw = £132 m pw

Pensioners, unemployed etc.

There are approximately 11 m pensioners, sick and unemployed.

If we conservatively assume a £25 pw increase for each of them this gives a weekly total of £275 m

The total per week due to £50 pw min., cost of living, pensioners etc £447 m

x 52

Total per year £ 23,244 m p.a.

How adequate are the resources out of which the programme proposes to meet these costs?

The first proposal is to abolish interest payments. We assume this means abolishing interest payments on the national debt - in other words reneging on the National Debt. On latest figures this would mean a saving of £7,320 m p.a. The next demand is for the nationalisation of banks without compensation. The inclusion of this demand under resources shows that those drafting the programme are subject to banal monetary illusions. Banks do not constitute a real resource. At best nationalising them enables the government to exercise tighter control over money supply and credit than it has at present. The next demand is for the abolition of arms expenditures. The idea that a socialist Britain would not need any defense is a typical concession to Labour Party pacifism, but we will let that pass. If we deduct forces pay from the total defense budget we get an estimate for total arms expenditure of about £2,500 m per year.

A further 'resource' listed is the stopping of 'compensation' payments to the former owners of nationalised industries. Since these payments take the form of interest on government bonds, they have already been abolished along with all other interest payments by the first demand.

The total revenue that could be 'saved' from all the sources proposed would amount to £9,820 m p.a. This is £18,500 m p.a. less than needed to match all the demands, on our costings. It is either gross ignorance or sheer dishonesty to claim that the resources listed are adequate to meet the cost of the programme. What would be the effect of these demands in practice?

For every pound spent in Britain, 33pence is spent on imported goods. An increase in personal incomes of £18,000mp.a. would add about £6,000 m p.a. to the import bill. How could this trade deficit be financed? The traditional

way of financing such deficits involves borrowing from the I.M.F. or on the Euro-dollar market for example. If the government reneged on the National Debt this would be impossible, and a massive forced devaluation of the £ would result. This would raise the price of food and other essential imports.

But the programme demands a total price freeze. This could be achieved in one of two ways, either by simply forbidding shops to raise prices, or through government subsidies. In the former case, imported goods would simply disappear from the market, while the latter would involve massive extra government expenditure.

The intended result of this huge increase in the government budget deficit would be a tendency towards runaway inflation, or, where prices were frozen, the flight from money would cause goods to disappear from the shops, leading to shortages, hoarding and a black market. Companies faced with wage increases would go bankrupt and close down. The nationalisation and resultant subsidised running of these companies would lead to still greater government deficits.

What would be the net result? Shortages of food and essential imported raw materials; blackmarkets, dislocation of production, runaway inflation in sectors not covered by price controls, declining real living standards. Any socialist government that actually introduced such policies could not remain in office long in the face of popular opposition that would result.

We challenge those who drew up this draft either to produce alternative figures showing that our analysis is seriously wrong, and that the resources they instance are sufficient to meet the demands in the programme, or to admit that the programme is a deliberate piece of dishonesty, a series of demagogic false promises that they know cannot be met. If such promises were made by bourgeois politicians, Marxists would have no hesitation in denouncing them as pure political tricksterism. We can hardly demand a lower standard of political honesty from socialists than we demand from bourgeois politicians.

It may be argued that it is necessary for socialists to present demands which we know to be impossible, in order to expose to the masses the limits of the capitalist system. But if we want to present impossible demands why stop at giving everyone £50 per week and freezing prices, why not £500 per week and the reduction of all prices to one penny. Obviously, because this would mean that the game was up, nobody would believe the demands were serious, whereas with £50 pw you might just con people into thinking they were. There would only be any justification for putting forward demands that were impossible under capitalism if they were realisable under socialism. But the substance of the demands in the economic section would be unrealisable under socialism since they amount to a demand that society's total consumption exceed its total production. The increase in consumption demanded is greater than the

total surplus value produced in the British economy, and the increase in consumption could only be met by a massive increase in imports. Admittedly, Britain has traditionally consumed more than it produces and met the difference out of imports. But this persistent trade deficit has only been possible because of the imperialist super-profits that flowed into London. A socialist Britain which repudiated imperialism would have to pay for all imports by means of exports.

Populism.

The whole focus of the draft programme is on what Marx termed distribution relations, rather than production relations. Distributive demands of this sort are the classic formula of populist politics. For instance the demand for a guaranteed minimum income of £50 per week is basically the same as that put forward by the populist Social Credit Party in Canada during the depression. They proposed to solve the depression by giving everyone a 'Social Credit' of several hundred dollars a year. Similarly the demands for price freezes, wage increases and more public spending are the stock in trade of the populist wing of the Labour Party. In opposition to populism, Marxism has always emphasised the importance of production relations. Marx held that it was only by transforming production relations, that you could transform distribution relations. A socialist transformation of production relations would certainly lead to a great increase in the material well-being of the working class, but it would do this by freeing the productive forces from the fetters placed on them by capitalist production relations. This would be done in four main ways: 1. abolish the vast waste of social labour that takes place under capitalism in the form of advertising, salesmanship, and the state bureaucracy; 2. make productive work the right and duty of all and abolish both the involuntary idleness of the unemployed and the voluntary idleness of the rich; 3. greatly increase the level of investment in new means of production in order to increase labour productivity; 4. recognise that the greatest productive force is the working class itself, and that, if given free reign, the creative abilities of the working class would lead to vast increases in productivity.

The draft programme makes no mention of any of these basic socialist principles. Where it touches on relations of production, its outlook is not socialist but the narrowest form of trades union consciousness. For instance, it proposes that unemployment be combated by worksharing (35 hour week), and by the state nationalising and subsidising bankrupt companies. These are typical British trades union demands. But, as anyone who has read Keynes, let alone Capital, knows, unemployment results from an inadequate rate of capital accumulation in the economy as a whole.

It is a banal illusion to think that unemployment can be combatted by measures taken at individual factories. Unemployment can only be abolished by an accelerated rate of capital accumulation in the economy as a whole. A socialist economic plan would get rid of unemployment by a massive programme of investment in new industries. The minimum demand that socialists should make now is that the state take control over the movements of capital in order to force the bourgeoisie to invest, and that new nationalised industries producing the most advanced products by the most advanced means be set up in the depressed areas.

Health, housing, education, energy.

The draft programme correctly points out the need to build more houses, schools, hospitals and nurseries. But socialists must not only demand bricks and mortar. We have to fight for changes in the property relations and social relations under which these are provided. Take housing, for instance. The largest sector of the housing market is owner occupied. Many workers, as well as the bulk of the middle class are owner occupiers. It has been the policy of successive capitalist governments to promote owner occupied housing by means of tax rebates on mortgages, provision of cheap credit, etc. The expansion of home ownership is a key element of capitalist political strategy, to which some socialist response is necessary. A socialist housing policy cannot just be a matter of building more council housing, since so long as these continue to be seen as second-rate, and so long as mortgages are comparatively cheap, the Tory slogan of a 'property owning democracy' will continue to have an appeal even within the working class. Communist Formation does not claim to have easy answers to this problem, but we do think that such issues as the nationalisation of the land, abolition of tax relief on mortgages, and tenants' control over council housing should be discussed.

The demand for a free health service controlled by its workers and users goes in the right direction, but it does not go far enough, nor is it sufficiently concrete. We require an all out attack on the burgeoning health service bureaucracy and on the privileges and prerogatives of the medical profession. But the main emphasis of a socialist health policy should not be on cure but on prevention. The increasing mortality from cancer, coronary and degenerative disease (all of which have a higher incidence among the working class) owes much to the conditions of life imposed by industrial capitalism. Exposure to toxic chemicals in the workplace and in the environment, the profitable sale of habit-forming drugs like alcohol and tobacco, an unbalanced and adulterated diet are all means by which capitalism saps the health of the working class. Only by attacking the causes of diseases, rather than their symptoms, can major improvements in working class health be achieved.

"Education is a right not a privilege, stop the fees increase".

What an appalling mockery of an education programme this is! Education in Britain is still very much a privilege. Only a tiny minority of the working class ever get to university or polytechnic. For most workers education is something stopped at 14 (16 nowadays) and taught them little more than basic literacy and numeracy. For a large number of working class children the system doesn't even do that much. Facilities for adult education and retraining in Britain are a joke, even by the standards of other capitalist countries, let alone socialism. In the face of this the IIG and Big Flame only wish to demand the abolition of University fees increases - a demand only relevant to the most privileged strata of the population. Of the classic Marxist demands for the combination of education with productive work, and polytechnical education there is not a word.

In 1973 OPEC pushed through heavy increases in the price of petroleum and precipitated the worst economic recession since the 1930s. They were able to do this largely because of the accelerating consumption of fossil fuels by the capitalist economies, which had outstripped their domestic reserves. The cheap energy which fuelled the post-war boom is now a thing of the past. The world's reserves of fuel are finite and are being consumed at an accelerating rate. One certain prediction that you can make about the world economy is that the energy crisis will grow worse in the 1980s, and that the world prices of fuels will continue to rise. As known oilfields become exhausted, increasing amounts of labour will have to be expended developing new fields beneath the sea and in inhospitable areas like Alaska. The labour theory of value predicts that this will result in fuel becoming more valuable and thus more expensive. What answer does the draft programme give to the energy crisis? "The right to fuel at cheap prices".

To make an absurd demand like this, you have to believe that gas comes from gas mains, petrol from petrol pumps, paraffin from the corner shop, and milk from the co-op dairy. To such a mentality, the cost of fuel is simply the money you pay for it. The social costs - the life and labour of miners, North Sea divers, rig operators, supply ship crews and construction workers - are invisible. Marx had an expression for such idiocy - commodity fetishism!

Are we supposed to believe that the proclamation of an abstract 'right' will suddenly make it possible to obtain fuel with expending any effort? In that case, why not proclaim the 'right' of all to do no work and be supplied free with the necessities of life?

When the Persian Gulf was a British lake, when British garrisons were stationed from Alexandria to Abu Dhabi, and miners worked for starvation wages, then the demand for cheap fuel was realistic. With these conditions gone, such a demand is pure pie in the sky. The idea behind this demand is that

the state should subsidise fuel. This is just one more example of the illusion prevalent on the left that the state is subject to no economic laws or constraints and can do whatever it chooses.

Since the bourgeoisie have no coherent energy plan for the 90s, when North Sea oil starts running out, there is an excellent opportunity for putting forward an alternative socialist energy plan. Such a plan would have to propose practical measures for energy conservation, and the development of alternative energy sources. It seems that the authors of the draft consider that serious attempts to face up to material problems should be disdained by socialists, who should confine their energies to proclaiming the world of abstract rights.

Women's Rights, Population and Racism.

Terms like 'full rights and liberation for women' are misleading. Socialists fight for the liberation of all people from exploitation and oppression and not just for the liberation of women or men. Or is the claim being made that liberation of women is possible within capitalism? Surely not! While it is possible, and quite correct to fight for equal opportunities and treatment of both men and women, the best that can be achieved in this situation is the liberation of women from unpaid domestic labour by bringing them into socialised production. Liberation from housework can only be effected by the socialisation of domestic tasks and the changed inter-sexual relationships made possible by the altered social conditions that working class women and men face. This would represent a great advance, but it is hardly liberation.

Then there is the call for 'full rights' - rights to what? Do men in our society have 'full rights'? Do working class men control production? Do they control the areas they live in? Do they have rights to do so? They do not. Our supposed rights are concessions won by struggle against the bourgeoisie, and are not of an inalienable character. As socialists, what we must demand is that all gains made by the working class, be applied to all members of the class irrespective of sex or colour. Thus we must certainly demand that legislation and official policy, on such issues as social security, do not discriminate. But this must be in the context of a socialist perspective which outlines the sort of society that we aim to build. To take two areas, the family and population control.

On the first, socialists recognise its reactionary effects in fostering individualism and perpetuating the division between the sexes. We must strive to abolish it, and frame our demands accordingly. For example, we

socialised child rearing, eating and other so-called personal services. By coupling this with a population policy which discourages child bearing - provision of freely available contraception and abortion, and fiscal measures - the imprisonment of women in reproductive domestic roles can be strongly attacked. A policy of low, or even negative, population growth would also enable the resources which exist in the world to be better used. With rapidly expanding population, a communist society based on ample material provision cannot be realised. Such an approach involves an attack on the individualistic slogan "a woman's right to choose". We do not exist as isolated individuals but as members of classes, and as such our actions involve others and not just ourselves. A woman could choose to have up to ten children which workers would then be obliged to support, in terms of maintenance, education and health care provisions. While not advocating direct state control of childbearing, we should call for measures which discourage it, and this should discriminate on a class basis to attack the hereditary reproduction of the bourgeoisie. A far better slogan than "A woman's right to choose", is "For the provision of free abortion on demand". The latter is concrete and poses the question in terms of social provision, whereas the former has no content, is moralistic and invites counter-moralising.

Another aspect of population policy is immigration. The draft programme suggests that all the world's people should be allowed to come to Britain - barring the 5-10 percent(?) who are bosses. How would the resultant gigantic collective function, or even survive? In a socialist society, free migration would make a mockery of planning. A policy would have to be adopted which prevented expensively educated and trained people leaving simply to seek individual self advancement abroad, and allowed entry of foreign workers at a rate and under conditions that gave good chances of smooth integration. There should be no question of allowing free entry of supremacists from Rhodesia and South Africa, when their present regimes collapse.

It is true that we do not live in a socialist society, and that present immigration controls are racist, but making proclamations which are simply a mirror image of racialist slogans achieves nothing. That simply leaves the field open to fascists to exploit the fears of the indigenous working class, in the current conditions of high unemployment and insecurity. There seems little point in letting people settle in Britain when unemployment is high and there are shortages of housing and inadequate social provisions. We must demand that all immigrants enjoy the same conditions of work and the same 'rights' under the law as anyone else. Any system of "guest workers" should be opposed as this weakens existing working class organisation and encourages super-exploitation of the "guests".

The only criteria on which we should advocate immigration should be to provide skills and labour that is in short supply, on compassionate grounds, and the granting of political asylum. What this means in substance is a political question. As an example we can take the point made above about not admitting southern african supremacists. A socialist approach to immigration should be in terms of who decides on who should be allowed in, and according to what criteria, not a pro or against attitude to controls in any form.

The draft correctly calls for no discrimination on racial grounds, but, as in the case of women, this tends to be separated of from what should be a general fight for equal treatment of all workers. What we seek is unity of workers of all colours against racism and fascist attacks. This necessitates multi-racial defense groups. Workers' defense groups may be established for many different reasons in many different situations. Our support, as socialists, for any particular defense group cannot be decided on the basis of some mythical 'right', but on whether its objectives were progressive or not. A workers' defense group might be formed to prevent black people moving into an area. To talk of a 'right' to form such a group or not is meaningless - either one is formed or it isn't. If it is, its practice is reactionary and must be opposed.

Racialism is not simply something which develops at an ideological level. Its existence and effectiveness require concrete economic, political and social conditions. In the present situation of rising unemployment, limited training opportunities, inadequate housing (of the right kind in the right place), the working class, in practice, compete against each other for limited, and, even, diminishing resources. In this sense, some of the National Front propaganda is partially true. Our policies will never win mass support unless we can convincingly show how the economy can be restructured and expanded at a pace sufficient to provide productive work, not only for those currently 'unemployed', but for young blacks, women etc., who at the moment are excluded. This rapid expansion of production must also provide the resources for all the class to be well housed, educated and trained, and to enjoy good health and welfare provisions. Unless we have a realistic and credible economic and social programme, our demands for the interests of women, blacks and other oppressed groups will be seen as being at the expense of other members of the working class. They will be seen as demands for sharing deprivation and oppression more equally.

IRELAND

"For the right of the Irish people as a whole to self determination, withdraw all British troops from Ireland now".

What is the substance of this slogan? It is a demand for the separation of the territory of Northern Ireland from the United Kingdom and its incorporation into the Irish Republic. If that is the objective it should be stated as such and not dressed up in the bourgeois ideological guise of "inalienable rights". As Marxists we know that rights only exist where economic and political conditions allow for their enforcement. Under the present economic and political regime, for instance, it is a delusion to believe that there is a 'right to work'. Marching from the four corners of the country to London to proclaim this right does not abolish unemployment. Similarly, the 'right' of the Irish Republic to annex the territory of Northern Ireland has been asserted by articles 2 and 3 of the Republic's constitution since the 30s. The assertion of that right has brought it no nearer realisation. So long as the majority of the population of the North show not the slightest desire to join the Republic that right will remain an illusion.

It may be said that the slogan provides the means by which the right can be enforced by calling for the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun, as Mao observed. In whose hands would the guns be if British troops withdrew? There would be four armed groups the UDR, the RUC, the protestant para-militaries and the IRA. In view of the relative military strengths of these organisations it is clear that the withdrawal of British troops would transfer political power from the hands of the British state to the protestant population. The result would be an independent 'Ulster' not a United Ireland. To enforce its right to annex the North the government of the Irish Republic would have no option but to declare war on 'Ulster' and attempt to invade it. Given the notorious weakness of the Irish army it would have little chance of wining such a war unless it recieved substantial quantities of military materiel and advice from one of the major powers. Therefore to be posed in realistic terms the slogan would have to read something like: 'We call for the incorporation of Northern Ireland into the Irish Republic, this to be effected by the withdrawal of British troops from the North and the invasion of the North by the armed forces of the Irish Republic. We call on the government of USSR/USA/France/WEST GERMANY/ CHINA (delete where necessary) to provide the Irish Republic with the military aid necessary for it to achieve its patriotic duty.'

Posed in non-mystified terms, it can be seen how little the demand has to do with the interests of socialism and the International working class.

For the Defence of Democratic Rights

The measures proposed, while not objectionable in themselves, in no way challenge the basic nature of the state and the apparatuses it uses to exercise control. By this omission the impression is given that the socialist society we seek is the same 'state socialism' of the Labour party, with its concomitant massive bureaucracy. Our conception of socialism must be one which involves an attack on bureaucracy by calling for popular self administration. As well as being in line with our principles this would win immediate popular support, and undermine the image of socialism presented by both the Tories and the Labour party - that of an all powerful state bureaucracy. A gesture is made in this direction by calling for nurseries to be provided by the state but controlled by those who use them. Proposals such as this ought to be developed and argued for in all areas of working class life. We have to develop concrete policies which in the present day give meaning to the socialist objective of smashing the state and creating a classless stateless society.

Conclusion

We started this document by outlining the tasks socialists face in constructing a programme to win popular support at the present time. These tasks are by no means easy, and we would certainly not claim to have all the answers. What we have tried to show is that a programme drawn up without extensive debate will be an inadequate programme. Socialist Unity affords the best opportunity for several years to have this debate. If the chance is lost and the same old slogans are regurgitated, then socialists can look forward to continued existence in the political wilderness, the creation of a new organisation notwithstanding. So we call upon all socialists to begin now to debate the question of a socialist programme; to attend the Socialist Unity Conference on Nov. 19th; and to continue the debate after the conference.

(Delete where necessary) to provide the Irish Republic with the military aid necessary for its recovery its historic duty.

ELECTION PROGRAMME FOR SOCIALIST UNITY *

We stand for a socialist alternative to capitalism which will not be secured by any parliamentary majority but only by the organisation, unity and activity of the working class. This means:

For a Guaranteed Decent Standard of Living

No to all wage controls - for an immediate across-the-board increase to fully compensate for the losses of real wages we have suffered. Wages, benefits and pensions to be made inflation proof by linking them to rises in the cost of living.

A national minimum income of £50 per week for the low paid, unemployed, pensioners, sick and disabled. A guaranteed minimum income of £50 per week for all women.

End the Co-habitation Rule, the married women's rate and 'Head of Household' Rule. Child benefits and social security child allowances to be raised and paid on top of the minimum income to the person responsible for the day to day care of the child.

An immediate price freeze on essential goods.

Stop Unemployment - No sackings, No Redundancies

Fight productivity deals and natural wastage. Replace every job lost.

Guarantee jobs for all by a 35 hour week, with full pay.

Nationalise under workers' control all firms threatening closure.

No unpaid lay-offs. Work or full pay.

Defence of women's jobs against unemployment.

No Public Spending Cuts - For Better Services, Not Worse

Build more houses, schools, hospitals and nurseries. For a crash programme of public works to create more jobs and meet our social needs.

A free health service, controlled by its workers and users.

Education is a right not a privilege, stop the fees increases.

Housing for people not profits. Stop the run down of direct works.

A freeze on rents and rates.

The right to fuel, at cheap prices.

Full Rights and Liberation for Women

Against low pay - for equal pay with no strings.

No discrimination in work or benefits. For legal and financial independence for women. For state-financed refuges for battered women and their children to be provided in every town. These to be controlled by the women who use them and to operate an open door policy.

Free abortion and contraception on demand - A woman's right to choose.

Nurseries for all who want them, controlled by those who use them.

* Since the agreed amended programme has never been published by Socialist Unity, the version appended is constructed from our notes of the voting at the November Conference.

Fight racism, Stop the Fascists - Full Rights for Black People

No to all racist discrimination
No platform for the Nazi National Front to spread their racist poison.
End all immigration controls, there is room for everyone but the bosses.
Full support for the right of black people to defend and organise themselves against racist and fascist attacks.

Support International Struggle of the Working Class - Towards Socialism

For the right of the Irish people as a whole to self-determination, withdraw all British Troops from Ireland now.
For the liberation of the peoples of Rhodesia and South Africa - break all British links with the racist regimes.
Withdraw from NATO - and all Britain's military alliances.
Combat the power of the multinationals, build links between workers of all countries.
Build the independent power of the working class. Don't rely on the politicians in Parliament - our strength lies in our own struggles.

The Resources are there to Meet our Needs

End all interest payments to the money-lenders. Nationalise the banks and finance houses without compensation. Abolish arms expenditure.
Stop all the compensation payments to the former owners of the nationalised industries.

For the Defence of Democratic Rights

End the police harassment of black people. End state intervention in anti-fascist activities. Repeal the PTA. For an end to state attacks on gay people, their organisation and press.

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Full Rights and Liberation for Women

Against low pay - for equal pay with men
No discrimination in work or benefits. For legal and financial independence for women. For state-financed nurseries for battered women and their children to be provided in every town. These to be controlled by the women who use them and to operate on open book policy.
Free abortion and contraception on demand - A woman's right to choose.
Munitions for all who want them, controlled by those who use them.

* Since the revised manifesto programme has never been published by Socialist Unity, the version reproduced is constructed from our notes of the voting of the November Conference.