

EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

PREPARED BY THE NATIONAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

GUIDE TO MARXIST EDUCATION IV

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Introductory Note

Guide to Marxist Education IV includes six outlines for educational classes on basic Marxist topics. Each outline contains a listing of primary and additional reading plus questions that can serve to enliven discussion groups or be used as a basis for individual reports. Most contain introductory information and key points to be considered in preparing classes.

The primary aim of these outlines is to aid the organization of educational activity by the branches of the Socialist Workers Party. How does this work?

There are three ways or methods of educating socialists in the basic program of Marxism. One is experience--participation in mass struggles against oppression and in building the revolutionary party. Second is self-education, through individual reading and study. Third is organized education which takes many forms, one being a class series.

While the outlines included here (and the thirty-nine others available in Guides to Marxist Education I through III) can be valuable for individual study, their main purpose is to develop organized educational activity.

Discussing the three methods of learning Marxism in "Problems of Education," (Guide to Marxist Education I), Gus Horowitz wrote:

"Each of these methods of education is important and should not be neglected. However, the major concern of the education department of the party, nationally and on a local level, is the third method: organized education.... Organized education is as much a component of party activity as are Militant sales, election campaigns, forums, finances, or participation in the mass movement. To be successful, the organization of education, like any other party activity, must be consciously and adequately led by the party leadership. Classes must be well-planned to insure that the party membership is educated on the most important questions. This must be realistically scheduled so that conflicts with other activities are kept to a minimum. They must be politically motivated to insure maximum attendance and study."

These study outlines are not immutable. They are guides, not descriptive road maps or detailed recipes and should be modified to meet specific needs of party members and sympathizers in each locality. How to achieve the objective of maximizing the educational value of a class series and learning is a decision the party unit organizing the classes must make.

In many guides, such as the outline on Joseph Hansen's Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution, a large array of readings is suggested. Usually, in any given class series, there are one or two reading

references that are the centerpiece of the study. Others are suggested for class participants who want to broaden their study. It is important, however, for teachers or class leaders to do the suggested reading.

The number of sessions in each class series can be expanded or reduced according to need.

A few comments on the class outlines in this volume:

1. Socialism on Trial

Using the court record of James P. Cannon on the witness stand, this series has been designed as an introductory class aimed at prospective members, new members of the YSA, and provisional members of the party who need a clearer understanding of some basic essentials of socialism. Here comrades should also note the additional reading recommended; the last eight chapters of Teamster Bureaucracy by Farrell Dobbs, where readers will find a fuller description of the period when the party fought back against government frame-ups.

2. Origins and History of American Trotskyism

For some time, The History of American Trotskyism has been correctly viewed as one of the best books for a beginner to read. Many SWP members have read this classic.

Coupled with The First Ten Years of American Communism, also written by James P. Cannon, this series is not only recommended for new members but also for those who have studied the books previously. These two books are rich with lessons for revolutionists, and those who take the time to study them again in depth will find that new lessons emerge with changes in historical circumstances and the work of the party.

3. Teamster Series

Based on the four volume history of the Minneapolis struggles by Farrell Dobbs, these guides are reprinted as originally published in 1977 and made available then for socialist summer school programs. Further study and examination of this rich body of experiences helps provide socialists in the labor movement with a basic framework from which to approach developments today.

Branches might want to redo the series in depth or take up parts, focusing on specific sections of the guide as needed. For example, an SWP branch might organize a study of the "Afterword" at the end of Teamster Bureaucracy in conjunction with a class on The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution.

4. Transitional Program

This is a revised version of the outline sent to the branches for use in the 1978 socialist summer school programs. Here, the sessions have been rearranged and additional material and information added on the role of working farmers.

5. Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution

For Trotskyists, a study of the origins, development, and political characteristics of the Cuban revolution is very much on the agenda today. This guide is based on Joseph Hansen's Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution published by Pathfinder Press.

6. Introductory Course on Marxist Economics

This study outline, based on two pamphlets; Value, Price & Profit and Wage Labor & Capital was prepared by Bob Chester and originally published in a July 1966 Education for Socialists Bulletin. Its purpose, then and now, is to begin training party members in Marxist economics. It is reprinted as originally published.

The National Education Department encourages comments on these study outlines from readers and participants in classes. Suggestions on how to improve them are particularly welcome.

Fred Feldman
Paul Montauk
March 1979

Socialist Workers Party
National Education Dept.

Study Guide

The origins and history of American Trotskyism--to 1938

Main Readings:

The History of American Trotskyism

by James P. Cannon
Pathfinder Press, \$4.45

The First Ten Years of American Communism

by James P. Cannon
Pathfinder Press, \$5.45

Supplementary readings:

(There are innumerable texts on early radicalism here. Although the following are recommended, there are many others of value)

On the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW):

We Shall be All: A History of the IWW

by Melvyn Dubofsky
Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969

On the early Socialist Party (SP):

The Socialist Party of America, 1897-1912

by Ira Kipnis
Columbia Univ. Press, 1952 (excellent for statistics and study of SP left wing)

The Socialist Party of America, 1912-1925

by David A. Shannon
MacMillan, 1955

Eugene V. Debs: A Biography

by Ray Ginger
MacMillan (an excellent biography of Debs)

Eugene V. Debs Speaks

Edited by Jean Y. Tussey, Introduction by James P. Cannon
Pathfinder Press (a collection of speeches and articles by Debs)

On the early Communist Party (CP):

The Roots of American Communism

by Theodore Draper
(excellent factual history)

On the Left Opposition and the Communist League of America

The Militant newspaper 1928-38, bound volumes

Sessions:

Although this guide is broken out into six sessions, this class can be organized into more or less than that, depending on factors considered and weighed by class organizers.

Planning class readings:

- a-The First Ten Years of American Communism should be read in its entirety before reaching class session II.
- b-The History of American Trotskyism should be read as indicated in the study guide.

Some suggestions for individual assignments and class reinforcement:

1-Can have a review of any of the listed supplementary readings.

2-Use and discussion of the film:

Eugene V. Debs and the American Movement
Cambridge Documentary Films inc.
P.O. Box 385
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

3-Education for Socialists Tapes
available from Pathfinder Press

- .History of the SWP series
containing six talks by Harry Ring
talks # 1 and 2 are most appropriate here
- .The Minneapolis Strikes series
four talks by Farrell Dobbs

4-Education for Socialists publication

Towards a History of the Fourth International
Part V: Ten Years--History and Principles of
the Left Opposition, by Max Shachtman

5-In Notebook of an Agitator by James P. Cannon, Pathfinder

- .Part I on the International Labor Defense
- .Part II on the Minneapolis strikes

6-Eugene V. Debs Speaks, edited by Jean Tussey, Pathfinder
(selection of speeches and writings of Debs)

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Note: The Minneapolis Teamster strikes are dealt with comprehensively in the four volume Teamster series by Farrell Dobbs. See the guides on this separately listed.

- Readings
- Session
- I-The Industrial Workers of the World
(The contributions and limitations of the Wobblies)
- The First Ten Years of American Communism
"The I.W.W.--The Great Anticipation" pp. 277-310
- II-The Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs & Victor Berger
(Rise and fall of the "all inclusive" party)
- The First Ten Years of American Communism
"Eugene V. Debs and the Socialist Movement
of his time" pp. 245-276
- III-Origins and Decline of the Communist Party
(The contribution of the Bolsheviks to American radicalism:
The continuity of revolutionary socialism from the Russian
revolution to the Left Opposition)
- The First Ten Years of American Communism
pp. 35-244, 311-334
- The History of American Trotskyism
pp. 1-59
- IV-The Regeneration of American Communism
(The Left Opposition)
- The History of American Trotskyism pp. 60-117
- V-The Turn to Mass Work
(From the Communist League of America to the Workers Party)
- The History of American Trotskyism
pp. 118-188
- IV-The Entry into the Socialist Party & Formation of the SWP
(Party building and the fight against sectarianism)
- The History of American Trotskyism pp. 189-256
- International Socialist Review, Jan. 1978
"How the SWP Began," an interview with George Bretiman
-

I The Industrial Workers of the World (Contributions and limitations)

Introduction

In his writings discussing the roots of American Marxism, James P. Cannon makes the following basic points:

The formation of the early communist movement in the United States following the Russian revolution, represented the convergence of (1) American working-class radicalism with (2) the theory of Marxism as demonstrated by the Bolsheviks in the Russian Revolution. The result of this convergence was the creation of the Communist Party as a section of the Communist International. The CP was officially formed in 1919.

The emergence of Trotskyism did not represent the creation of a new Marxist program for revolutionary communists, but the defense and preservation of the original program by a minority that resisted the degeneration of the Soviet CP, the Comintern, and the CPUSA. Defense of Marxism, Leninism, and the gains of the October revolution were decisive factors in the formation of the Communist League of America (Opposition) in 1929.

The early forms of American working-class radicalism represented efforts by American workers to bring together an effective force to transform American capitalism. International events and forces were required to make possible a qualitative forward leap in this process--the Bolshevik-led revolution and the creation of the Communist International.

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Objective

To understand the origin and contributions of the IWW, the degree to which we stand in its tradition, and the effect it had on the development of the early communist movement in America.

Key points to consider in preparing this class:

- * Although there had been some previous efforts to establish mass industrial unions (such as the United Mine Workers and to some extent, the American Railway Union which Debs led in the Pullman strike of 1894), the IWW was the first organization to campaign on a national scale to build a mass union of industrial workers, aimed at overcoming craft divisions.

* Its leadership was a bloc of Eugene Debs (Socialist Party), William Haywood (Western Federation of Miners) and Daniel De Leon (Socialist Labor Party). These together with IWW leaders like Vincent St. John were giants in the history of the working class.

* Although the IWW was a distinct expression of American conditions and American working-class radicalism, it was not simply a product of national circumstances. The Russian revolution of 1905, which saw the rise of Soviets representing all workers, was one inspiration.

* The IWW was a predecessor of the CIO

* It opposed the racism that plagued the U.S. labor movement. It fought for equality when most AFL unions practiced and preached Jim Crow.

* Unlike labor bureaucrats then and now, the IWW did not have any illusions about "partnership" between "labor and capital." One of its stated objectives was the abolition of private property.

* The IWW was more than a pioneer industrial union, it was a revolutionary anticapitalist organization that rested on the activity of committed organizers and agitators.

* For the IWW industrial unionism was a means to an end, not an end in itself. The creation of "one big union" would open the way for the workers to take power and abolish capitalism.

* The IWW had some ultimately fatal flaws, stemming from its basic strategy.

* The IWW tried to be both a union trying to organize all workers for their immediate benefit, and an organization of revolutionists fighting capitalism. It was not possible for one organization to be both. The IWW was never really able to consolidate long-term strength as a union, while the conception of IWW as a union for all workers weakened its political role as a revolutionary organization.

* The IWW viewed the organization of industrial unionism as the sole means to usher in a new social order. Other struggles tended to be passed over.

* The IWW was syndicalist. That is, it believed that the capitalist state should be fought only through revolutionary union organization. The IWW opposed running in elections and forming political parties. This undermined the effort to break workers from capitalist politics, and narrowed the range of IWW influence.

* Although the IWW's successes were based on its capacity to mobilize masses of workers and supporters, the IWW tended to place great store by the tactic of sabotage. The ruling class used propaganda issued by the IWW around this as a means of isolating the IWW (reformists in the Socialist Party did the same).

* The IWW used mass action to good effect in defending civil liberties. It was clear on the importance of democratic rights to the working class and believed in defending every class-struggle victim even if the IWW disagreed sharply with his or her politics.

* Its limitations eventually destroyed the IWW, but not before it trained a cadre of working-class revolutionists who played a big role in leading the Communist and Socialist Workers Parties later. The IWW's irreconcilable anticapitalism, solidarity, defiance of ruling class authority, and devotion to the working class have remained a heritage of American working class struggle.

Suggested topics for discussion or individual reports:

- .Is it possible to be a revolutionist without being a Marxist?
- .Why does James P. Cannon describe the IWW as "neither a union or a party"?
- .What were the IWW's main contributions to the American labor movement?
- .What are the essential differences between Syndicalism and Marxism?
- .How did the question of program prove decisive in the history of the IWW and its demise?
- .Why was the IWW asked by the Bolsheviks to join the Comintern?
- .Why does Cannon characterize World War I as the "turning point" for the IWW?
- .Since capitalism is based on capitalist control of industry, why isn't a battle for control of industry sufficient to accomplish socialist revolution?

Discussion questions

1-The IWW had the slogan, "an injury to one is an injury to all."
How is that viewed and applied today?

2-At the founding convention of the IWW (1905) Big Bill Haywood said:

"It has been said that this convention was to form an organization rival to the American Federation of Labor. That is a mistake. We are here for the purpose of organizing a Labor Organization..."

What did he mean?

II The Socialist Party (Rise and fall of the "all-inclusive" party)

Introduction

The Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs--who went to prison for opposing the first imperialist world war and supported the Bolshevik revolution--was also the party of Representative Victor Berger who believed in white supremacy, ran a political machine in Milwaukee that promised to run capitalism more efficiently, and claimed that "socialism" would be achieved through the ballot.

The SP was built as an all-inclusive party containing within its fold different and increasingly hostile political tendencies, all speaking in the name of socialism.

Despite growth and increasing influence, the SP failed the decisive tests of World War I and the Russian revolution. Issues of strategy and program posed by these events provoked a split.

The right wing, as represented by Berger and others moved towards more open support of capitalism and imperialism. They functioned as propagandists for sections of the union bureaucracy and were the ancestors of the Social Democrats USA and Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee of today.

The left wing was to establish the Communist Party. Some of the leaders of this wing, like James P. Cannon, had previously been in the IWW.

Unit Objective

To understand the "Debsian" concept of an all-inclusive party as compared to Lenin's concept of a democratic centralist combat party, and the national and international forces contributing to the origin and formation of the early CPUSA.

Key Points to consider in preparing this class:

- * A study of the growth and activity of the IWW and the early SP provides today's radicals with an appreciation of the American radical tradition.

- * The forces that built the early Communist Party were largely trained in the Socialist Party of Debs. Many had come from the IWW to the SP because they opposed the IWW's rigid rejection of

"political action"--such as socialist election campaigns.

- * The early socialists had little understanding of the theory and practice of Marxism. Marxist theory was relatively unknown in the U.S. The SP did not have a Marxist leadership and even Debs was not schooled in Marxism.

- * The SP introduced and won hundreds of thousands to socialism through its publications and election campaigns. Its nonexclusive, amorphous character helped make this initial burst of general socialist propaganda possible.

- * The Appeal to Reason, the most popular socialist publication, had a circulation that ranged to over a million copies, distributed throughout the country.

- * The SP helped organize and lead broad struggles to defend class war prisoners, unions, and other workers under attack; it fought for women's suffrage. It included and attracted leading Black figures like W. E. B. DuBois and A. Philip Randolph, even though racists played a powerful role in the SP.

- * The SP, like the IWW, was not simply and purely a national formation though it rose on American soil. It was part of the Second International founded by Engels, among others, and standing formally on Marxist positions.

- * The SP was divided from the start, and the division became sharper between revolutionists and reformists. The reformists controlled most of press, the electoral machines like that in Milwaukee, and trade union posts. They allied with Gompers and the AFL bureaucracy.

- * The majority had no way to control the actions of a minority, so anyone could place the label of socialist on themselves while carrying out any policy in practice, however right wing.

- *The party constitution protected "state's rights" and the autonomy of separate state organizations. The press was either privately owned, or locally controlled, or both. The SP was a federated, not a centralized party.

- * Key to the right wing's ability to control the SP was the attitude of Debs. He defended revolutionary ideas to the working masses, but refused to fight for these ideas within the party, or to attempt to lead the party on the basis of these ideas. Debs

placed unity first and assumed that all socialists, even the most right wing, would eventually pull together for common goals. (Similar assumptions were made in Europe by many leaders of the Social-Democratic parties).

* Non-exclusionism was applied consistently only to the benefit of the right wing which did not believe in it for the left. Thus Bill Haywood was forced out of the Socialist Party in 1912 for failing to adhere to a reformist version of "political action." The all-inclusive concept paralyzed the left, but did not block the right's freedom of action. The 1912 fight indicated that the formless period, when differences of this scope could be contained in a single organization, was coming to an end.

* In Russia Lenin was building the Bolshevik Party, which in 1912 definitively split with the Mensheviks (both had existed since 1903 as hard factional formations in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party). The Bolsheviks were a party strongly rooted in the working class, knitted around a revolutionary program, led by a team of professional revolutionists--unlike the preachers, professors, and ward politicians who often dominated SP councils.

* Lenin's party had a democratic internal life, with debate and discussion leading to unity in action (though not necessarily to agreement, for disagreements could continue to be held after issues had been voted on).

* Militant workers formed the base and guided the course of the Bolshevik Party. The looser conception of the SP in the U.S. divided the party in action and encouraged the power of the union bureaucrats and local political machines.

* Opposing the imperialist war from an internationalist and anticapitalist point of view and hailing the Russian revolution as a model for the world, the SP left wing made big gains and took shape as an organized faction fighting for a new policy. (Its position was strengthened by the desertion of many patriotic reformists who opposed the anti-war position that national SP leaders felt obliged to take on World War I, a position that Debs and the left put forward with enthusiasm).

* The left wing took Marxism as its guide and program and began to promulgate it actively as its adherents understood it. The theorists and leaders of the Russian revolution became the teachers

of American socialists and the line of continuity from the Communist Manifesto took firmer hold in the U.S. than ever before.

* In 1919 the SP left wing, expelled from the SP or walking out, formed the Communist Party.

* The SP, reduced to a shell, declined. The IWW also declined. Both had contributed to the emergence of revolutionary socialism as an organized current and many of their cadres moved towards building a Bolshevik Party in the U.S.

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Suggested topics for discussion or individual reports:

- .The term "sewer socialism" is not defined by Cannon. Can you explain what it means?
- .What was the significance of the removal in 1912 of Big Bill Haywood from the SP National Executive Committee?
- .Why do you think an "all-inclusive party" came into being? Did it have any useful results? Why did it fall apart? Have any efforts to create similar political formations been made in recent years. Does it work today?
- .What was the role of Debs in the SP? How did it differ from the role of Lenin in the Bolshevik Party or from the role of the SWP's leadership today?
- .How does our approach to election campaigns today differ from the approach of most SP candidates then. Did we learn anything from SP election campaigns?
- .Why does Cannon stress the positive contributions of the SP and IWW even while taking up their weaknesses?
- .The IWW was generally more militant and proletarian than the SP? Why did the SP become the main predecessor of American communism?

Discussion Questions

1-Is the federated, all-inclusive structure used by the old SP effective in the class struggle today?

2-Can you explain the difference between an "all-inclusive" party as compared to a "combat party"?

III-Origins and Decline of the Communist Party

(The contribution of the Bolsheviks to American radicalism.
Continuity of revolutionary socialism from the Russian
revolution to the Left Opposition)

Introduction

The American CP was not always a flip-flopping Kremlin puppet. James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the CP, provides a truthful history of its origins, its early struggles, and how it became what it is today.

Cannon describes and compares the Comintern of Lenin and Trotsky, the world party of socialist revolution which advised, inspired, and taught American Marxists with the bureaucratic Stalinist apparatus that imposed class-collaborationist policies on a once-revolutionary formation.

The communist movement first emerged as two separate parties (one composed primarily of foreign-born revolutionists, the other mainly of native American fighters). These fused, with the Comintern's strong urging, in 1921.

The Comintern, led by the Bolsheviks, made available the theoretical and strategic concepts of Marxism as developed and put into action by the Russian revolutionists. This was a decisive factor in the ability of the early communists to build a revolutionary socialist cadre party out of the forces that had fought for a revolutionary course in the SP. The first four congresses of the Communist International provided an education in politics that remains part of our heritage today.

The growth of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR, as a result of the poverty and isolation of the war-wracked first workers state, reversed this progress. Although it was some time before the CP members were aware of it, the CP was directly affected by the struggle between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Left Opposition. The latter defended the Marxist program against the new privileged conservative grouping. The influence of Stalinism helped demoralize most of the cadres of the CP.

A decisive factor making CP degeneration possible was the wave of capitalist prosperity in the United States which made all but the most committed working-class revolutionists suspect that capitalism was here to stay. The loss of revolutionary perspective in the United States softened up the CP leaders for accepting the practices of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the theory of socialism in one country, and class-collaboration.

Blind dead-end factionalism also sapped the cadres' morale. In the beginning internal battles were fought over great political issues and to establish an authoritative leading team. But after 1925 the factions were maintained even though the main differences had been overcome. The result was permanent war between rival factional gangs which fought over power with little in the way of a firm principled basis. The Stalin leadership did everything it could to preserve this conflict until such time as it could destroy the leaders of all factions and find slavishly obedient leaders.

A layer of the CP remained firm revolutionists despite all this. Typified by Cannon, they were ridden by doubts about the drift of the party and the international. When Cannon came upon Trotsky's critique of the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country" at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928, his questions about what caused the movement's problems were answered. Cannon proceeded to organize a group to preserve the continuity of Marxism in the U.S. Expelled from the Communist Party, this became the Communist League of America.

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Unit Objectives

To examine the major contributions of the Comintern to the development of the early Communist Party, and how this development was subverted and reversed by the rise of Stalinism.

To understand the international and national factors contributing to the development of the Left Opposition in the U.S., and how this led to the preserving the continuity of Marxism and Leninism in the United States.

Key points to consider in preparing this class:

- * The Bolshevik-led revolution of October 1917 in Russia was the action that brought the American communist movement into existence. But it took time for the Bolshevik ideas to take root here.

- * The left wing of the SP which formed the Communist Party was influenced strongly by syndicalist and semi-syndicalist theory and organizational conceptions, especially as practiced by the IWW.

* In addition, they reacted strongly against the reformist and pro-AFL policies of the old SP central leaders like Hillquit and Berger.

* They inherited a traditional left sectarianism, characteristic of the IWW, which included the formation of revolutionary unions as opposed to work in existing unions, opposition to participating in elections, and refusal to fight for immediate demands.

* They opposed proposals for a labor party, which they viewed as "the substitution of reform for revolution," advocated the formation of "Red Trade Unions" and called for a boycott of the 1920 elections, even though the SP was running political prisoner Eugene Debs. They remained separate and apart from the mass organizations and struggles of the workers.

* An example of their extreme ultra-leftism cited by Theodore Draper in The Roots of American Communism was this "manifesto" handed out to striking trolley car workers in Brooklyn in 1920:

"Get ready for armed revolution to overthrow the capitalist government and create a Workers Government--as your brothers did in Russia. Stop asking for a little more wages--Overthrow the capitalist government!"

* The early CP activists believed that the U.S. was on the verge of revolution as Russia had been. They projected their own consciousness and enthusiasm onto the class. More, however, they reflected the belief that the Bolshevik-led revolution had been a sudden military blow preceded only by a long period of ultrarevolutionary propaganda. The real process by which the Bolsheviks won worker and peasant support was unknown.

* This ultraleftism was linked to an international ultraleft current which Lenin fought in "Left-Wing Communism".

* The leaders of the Russian revolution through the Communist International, the world party of socialist revolution, made a major contribution to straightening out all these misconceptions. They exercised authority not primarily through directives but through example and education.

- * They fought the CP's fetish that made underground existence--initially imposed by the repression after World War I-- a matter of principle, a misconception based on a garbled version of Bolshevik history and practice.

- * They argued for a realistic policy toward the unions, for participation in elections, for a party-building perspective aimed at preparing a force of cadres for revolutionary activity.

- * They argued for deep involvement in the struggles of Blacks for serious consideration of the right of self-determination, and for recognition of the independent character of the Black struggle and its key role in American politics.

- * They explained that the Bolshevik revolution had not been a minority insurrection and that the party had to win the backing of the majority of workers and farmers to make the revolution.

- * They enriched the internationalism of the CP cadres by laying out an international strategy for revolution, and showing how the struggles in different lands affected the struggle in the United States and vice versa.

- * One result was that the CP quickly won hegemony and consolidated itself despite fierce repression. Its forces were hardened not demoralized by repression because they had a clear perspective and purpose. The IWW and the SP were pushed aside despite the CP's many errors because the CP was superior in its basic internationalist programmatic conceptions.

- * The impact of the Comintern on the CPUSA, key to its progress before 1923, became disastrous in the following years. The bureaucratic gang headed by Stalin systematically suppressed independent thinking and destroyed independent leaders.

- * Internationalism was replaced by socialism in one country, the perspective of revolution in the United States subordinated to supporting the bureaucratic rulers who had usurped the banner of the Russian revolution.

- * The CPUSA was destroyed as a revolutionary socialist formation and transformed into a tool of the Kremlin bureaucracy which no longer aimed at world revolution but only at using the CPs to defend its borders against imperialist intervention.

* The collaboration of cadres in a world party was replaced by Moscow's command. Stalinist politics led to defeats on a massive scale for the working class.

* This occurred in the context of a temporary stabilization of world imperialism which sapped the revolutionary spirit of CP members. Without this the Kremlin rulers could not have won acceptance from those who had wanted to be revolutionists.

* Nowhere was this stabilization more evident than in the United States where economic prosperity gave rise to theories of American exceptionalism. "Socialism in one country" in the USSR gained in attractiveness as a perspective as the possibility of socialism in the United States seemed to grow dimmer.

* There were irreconcilable revolutionists who did not accept this, however, but until they came upon Trotsky's draft criticism of the program of the Communist International (the first chapter of The Third International After Lenin by Leon Trotsky which dissects the theory of socialism in one country) they did not understand the roots of the problem

* With this knowledge, provided once again by leaders of the Bolshevik revolution, Cannon and others set out to salvage whatever could be salvaged for Marxism and Leninism from the CP. They were blocked from carrying out this fight openly at first because the CP and the Comintern no longer had internal democracy.

* They adhered to the Left Opposition led by Trotsky which had been fighting Stalin since 1923, despite the fact that this meant certain expulsion as a small minority from the CP.

* Trotskyism was to continue the struggle to build the revolutionary socialist party in the United States -- carrying on the battle launched in 1919.

Discussion Questions

Suggested topics for discussion or individual reports:

- .The impact and influence of the Russian revolution on American radicalism.
- .The Communist International and how it worked.
- .How the Bolsheviks contributed to the organization and education of the early communists.
- .What were the ultraleftist hangups of the early communists?
- .Was Cannon being racist or anti-internationalist when he called for Americanizing the party at that time? Would such a call be correct today?
- .What is the theory of "Socialism in one country." What were the differences in the Foster, Cannon, and Lovestone factions after 1923?
- .What were the Palmer raids?
- .How did Trotskyism represent the continuity of Marxism and Leninism?
- .This statement by Cannon:

"What happened to the American Communist Party would happen without fail to any other party, including our own, if it should abandon its struggle for a social revolution in this country, as the realistic perspective of our epoch, and degrade itself to the role of sympathizer of revolutions in other countries."

- 1-What do you think of Cannon's statement that "the early movement of Communism demonstrated very powerfully the predominant influence of ideas over everything else?"
- 2-How does this history demonstrate the vital importance of internationalism?

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IV-The Regeneration of American Communism (Building the Left Opposition)

Introduction

Under conditions of extreme isolation, ostracism, and even physical assaults, the initial forces of the Communist League of America (Opposition) focused their main activity on CP members who were the most conscious revolutionary-minded group available. Further the International Left Opposition still hoped to reform rather than replace the Communist Party and the Communist International.

Educated in internationalism and rooted in the American class struggle, the CLA leadership also developed an analysis of the labor movement that contrasted with the CP's new wave of "red union" ultraleftism.

The Militant was key to all this work.

In 1933 the Stalinists, without a battle, allowed Hitler to come to power in Germany. The Stalinists had opposed a united front of the working class parties in Germany, declaring all other working class tendencies (especially Social Democrats) to be "social fascists." This, together with the treacherous policies of the procapitalist Social Democratic leaders, cleared the way for Hitler's storm troopers and immobilized working class opposition to fascism.

When the Comintern parties refused to make any criticism of the line that had produced Hitler's victory, it was clear that the Comintern was finished as a revolutionary force.

Coupled with the beginning of working class upsurge in 1933 and the beginning of leftward movement among groups other than the CP, this led the CLA to adopt the slogan, "Turn to mass work." The Trotskyists recognized that they were no longer a "Left Opposition" to the CP leadership, but the nucleus of a new revolutionary party that would be built in opposition to the once-revolutionary CP.

Key points to have in mind in preparing this class:

* The American Left Opposition, the Communist League of America, faced some big problems. One was a period of working class inactivity as a result of the "boom" of the 1920s. Then they had to confront a situation in which the working class was stunned and disoriented for a time by the impact of the Great Depression.

* On top of that, the Communist League of America faced a CP which was far larger than the Trotskyist movement.

* In the course of fighting to build and extend the role and influence of the Left Opposition in the United States, they frequently had to seek support from the IWW and others for defense against Stalinist hooliganism. Success in this task provided our movement with a model for dealing with such threats both politically and physically.

* The CLA rejected proposals that it concentrate on "mass work" among politically uneducated workers. It realized it could not get around the job of trying to convince the most advanced workers--those in the Communist Party. This was especially true given the small size of the CLA.

* The key was not unemployed organizing or union organizing at this stage, but winning people to a set of ideas, and hardening the CLA cadres in fighting for those ideas. Those who tried to ~~lap~~ jump into mass work without this preparation soon vanished (Weisbord).

* Through five years of patient frustrating, difficult work, the CLA added to its numbers. It trained new adherents in internationalism and in the theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

* The key to all work was the Militant, a weapon in the U.S. and around the world. Without a newspaper giving correct ideas and interpretation of events, no program could be upheld and no propaganda group could become significant. Everything was subordinated to making sure the Militant got printed and sold regularly.

* An index of the CLA's internationalist outlook was the use of meager resources to print and distribute Trotsky's "Problems of the Chinese Revolution," showing how Stalinist policies strangled the Chinese revolution and how it could have won.

* Although focused primarily on the international issues around which Trotskyists internationally came together, the Communist League of America foresaw the coming depression and the eventual radicalization of labor. (The leaders had done this in opposition to the "American exceptionalism" of Lovestone even prior to coming out for Trotsky). They proposed a class-struggle program linked to realistic tactics in the unions.

* A key achievement was gaining support for the International Left Opposition from a group of worker-Bolsheviks in Minneapolis typified by V.R.Dunne and Carl Sloglund.

* The prospects for recruiting from the CP were dealt a blow by third-period ultraleftism, and by the five year plan and anti-kulak campaign in the Soviet Union (the kulaks were rich farmers who rented land to others and employed labor).

* CP members all over the world who had developed doubts were encouraged to believe that now Stalin was correcting opportunist errors. A wave of capitulations hit the Left Opposition internationally, especially in the USSR.

* This was actually an ultraleft turn undertaken in desperation by Stalin (in part, in order to cover up the setbacks caused internally and externally by openly opportunist policies).

* The party campaign to explain the German events and to try to wake up the American Communists to what needed to be done to stop Hitlerism typified the concept of a "campaign party."

* The cadres of the CP didn't challenge the line that blocked a real fight against Hitler. This line meant that the CP as a whole was dead as far as revolutionary action was concerned. Individuals and groups could still be won to revolutionary socialism, but the CP no longer had potential as a revolutionary instrument.

* But the German events shook up many other radicals and provided new openings for the CLA. Stirrings could be noted in the unemployed and union movements as well.

* The German defeat and the response of the Comintern placed a heavy responsibility on the International Left Opposition: building new parties and a new international.

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Suggested topics for discussion or individual reports:

- .Why did the CLA regard itself as a propaganda group? What is the difference between propaganda and agitation? What is the SWP today?
- .Cannon wrote that "the Russian question was dominant....It was the decisive criterion in determining the character of a political group." What are some of the examples of this? Is it still the case?
- .Weisbord, who was not a member of the CLA and opposed its policies, was invited to internal meetings to debate his policies. Might we do the same today? Was this a violation of democratic centralism?
- .What was "the principle of the International Labor Defense which made it so popular and dear to militants...?"
- .What would you say were the important differences on the trade unions between the Communist League of America and the CP in 1929? What are some of the major differences between the SWP and the CP on the unions today?
- .Why did the CP's failure to criticize the policy that led to Hitler's rise to power mean that the CP could no longer be reformed?

Discussion Questions

- 1.-Why was "singlejack agitation" so important in these years?
- 2.-Would it have been better in those first years to do mass work rather than propagandizing around international questions?
- 3.-What does Trotsky discuss in "Problems of the Chinese Revolution."
- 4.-Why did the CLA devote its meager resources to put out this book?

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V-The Turn to Mass Work

(From the Communist League of America to the Workers Party)

Introduction

The beginning of an economic upturn, in the context of a Great Depression led to stepped-up working class activity and the beginning of a working class radicalization.

This meant a change for the CLA, especially in the light of the Comintern's collapse: workers were beginning to radicalize who had not been in the CP, or often in any other working-class political tendency. They radicalized in unorganized industries, unions, and in unemployed organizations over issues in the class struggle in the United States.

That meant the CLA had to take this opportunity to win raw workers and others affected by the radicalization, by participating in the mass struggles and offering a strategy for success.

The years devoted to assembling and educating a cadre in the theory of Marxism and internationalism, armed with a realistic socialist strategy for the working class, enabled the CLA to turn toward mass work with seriousness and effectiveness. The CLA seized on the opportunity to extend revolutionary socialist influence among the American workers.

This did not mean that the CLA ceased entirely to be a propaganda organization. It was still a nucleus of cadres rather than a mass party. The Militant was still the party's central instrument for recruiting and educating.

Three major experiences in broader work (Hotel workers strike, Minneapolis, and fusion with the American Workers Party) left valuable lessons:

- 1-The party refused to subordinate its principles and program, and the discipline that flowed from them, to the "independence" of union functionaries (B.J. Field in the hotel workers strike).

It refused to compromise the idea of a Leninist party in order to be identified with a "mass leader" in the party who was leading the strike astray. Such compromises (the stock-in-trade of many reformist groups like the Socialist Party) would destroy the party as a revolutionary force.

2-In Minneapolis the CLA learned how an educated team of worker-Bolsheviks could take advantage of an opening to win leadership of a workers' mass movement and bring it to victory, given favorable openings-- and how this contributed to building the party.

3-The Trotskyists demonstrated the ability to gain new forces by fusing with a working-class current moving in a revolutionary direction. They didn't allow narrow organizational interests or remaining political differences to block unity that was objectively justified.

Key points to have in mind in preparing this class:

- * Cannon focuses on some key experiences of the CLA in turning to mass work that provide significant lessons about building a Leninist combat party.

- * In the instance of the New York hotel strike, B.J.Field developed the idea that he could be a member of the party and yet ignore the party majority in his work as a strike leader. The Trotskyists refused to grant this.

- * They knew that the "independence" of trade union functionaries from the party was a contributor to the impotence of the Socialist Party before World War I, and contributed to the degeneration of the whole Second International.

- * Instead of trade union officials representing influence of the party program in the unions, the party would become a kind of left cover for the activities of trade union bureaucrats. (Think of those union bureaucrats today who sport their Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee or Social Democrats USA membership cards and say, "I'm a socialist myself".)

- *The CLA recognized that Field's policy was harmful to the workers. It allowed the government to get away with its "neutral" strikebreaking disguised as arbitration. Such a policy threatened to become a blot on the revolutionary socialist movement.

- * Field's indiscipline was one side of the question Another aspect, taken to heart later by the Minneapolis Trotskyists, was the value of consultation, collaboration and teamwork in developing trade union tactics. Field's "one-man show" approach helped defeat the hotel workers.

* After going to great effort to discuss out differences with Field, the CLA provided class-conscious militants with a demonstration of the seriousness and devotion to principle of a Leninist combat party. The CLA expelled Field who mistakenly believed he was involved in something more important than building the revolutionary party that would lead the working class to socialism.

* A more positive example of Trotskyist capacities in the labor movement was provided in Minneapolis, where the lessons of the Field experience were assimilated.

* The effectiveness of revolutionary Marxist leadership in a strike situation was demonstrated. The value of political strategy and collaboration as part of a revolutionary party (challenged by Field) was demonstrated. Trotskyism emerged as a force in the Minneapolis labor movement and beyond as a result.

* In contrast to Field, the Minneapolis Trotskyists understood the necessity of working as a party fraction and seeking the help of the party as a whole.

* They did not launch a power struggle to take over the Minneapolis Teamsters union but showed they could lead it in a struggle, dividing the officialdom over the class issues at stake.

* They dealt blows to the Stalinists, who tried to use an ultraleft stance to stab the strike in the back.

* This showed once again the value of a party that knows how to go on a campaign footing. It exposed what Cannon calls the "absurd idea" that only those directly connected with a union are capable of giving assistance in a struggle.

* The Minneapolis battle was a great predecessor of the rise of the CIO.

* Ultimately, of course, there was no substitute for the experience and judgement of the Trotskyists on the scene in making the tactical decisions. Fortunately they were clear (unlike Field) on basic class questions like the role of arbitration by the capitalist state.

* Cannon's willingness to defer to the Minneapolis leaders when tactical issues were at stake was another lesson. He not only deferred--he took political responsibility for this by supporting their stance.

* This is just one part of that chapter in the history of American Trotskyism and of the American labor movement. The four volumes by Farrell Dobbs on the Minneapolis Teamsters provide rich material for this.

* Minneapolis provided an arena where the militancy of the workers could fuse with revolutionary political leadership. The result was gains for the workers as long as the class struggle remained on the upswing. Cannon points to this as an example of the power that, mobilized on a much larger scale, can lead us to socialism.

* An additional benefit from our success in building class-struggle unionism in Minneapolis was that this put us in a stronger position to approach an anticapitalist tendency that was moving in a revolutionary direction, the American Workers Party.

* At about the time of the Minneapolis struggle, the AWP's working class base and leaders showed leadership capacity in leading the Toledo Auto-lite strike to victory. This proof of the mettle of AWP activists brought the two groups closer.

* Cannon makes an important point about this move:

"In every relationship ever established between the Trotskyists and any other political grouping, the initiative always came from the Trotskyists. We had a clearly defined program and were always sure of what we were doing."

* Our political task was to prevent the Stalinists from swallowing up this movement, with its healthy anticapitalist workers and its talented and dedicated central leader (Muste). At the same time, we had to remove a centrist grouping (a group wavering between revolutionism and reformism) from the field.

* We didn't let organizational obstacles get in our way but made every organizational concession required to achieve the goal.

* We were able to get around those in the ranks of the AWP who wanted to cover up their political opposition to unity by bringing organizational issues to the fore.

* We did not work alone, but as part of a world tendency building the Fourth International. The CLA got the help and advice of Trotsky and the forces of Trotskyism in other countries.

* The fusion of the American Workers Party and the Communist League was achieved with the formation of the Workers Party on Dec. 1, 1934.

Topics for discussion or individual assignment:

- .What was the relation between the German events and the union organizing campaign in Minneapolis?
- .Can you describe the objective conditions that made a turn to mass work correct and what would have been the consequence if it had been delayed for a short or long period?
- .How did a training in Marxism contribute to the accomplishments in union building in Minneapolis? Couldn't a group of militant truckers without Marxist politics have done as well? How about the AWP?
- .The AWP was a centrist group. What is centrism? Did fusing with the AWP mean that the CLA had gone soft on centrism? Don't you think it was going a little too far to offer Muste, who was not a Marxist, the post of National Secretary of the WP? What do you think would have happened to the CLA or the AWP if fusion hadn't occurred. Does that mean that we will always seek fusion with centrist groups?
- .Should we today consider a fusion perspective with the Spartacist League which, unlike the AWP, considers itself Trotskyist? How about the SLP?
- .What is a fraction? Why do party members in trade unions organize a fraction? Are the party fraction members only those working in industry? How did it work in Minneapolis? Why did Cannon not only defer to a decision on tactics made by the comrades in the union but also take the responsibility for what they decided to do. Wasn't he supporting something he disagreed with?

Discussion Questions

- 1-Wouldn't you think that a "Red Trade Union" would be more progressive than an ordinary union?
- 2-Would it be correct to view a party union fraction as the nuclei of a future soviet?
- 3-Is an understanding of Marxist politics enough in order to build a left wing in unions?
- 4-What political tendencies that exist today would you characterize as centrist?

VI-Entry into the Socialist Party and Formation of the SWP
(Party building and the fight against sectarianism)

Introduction

The fusion with the AWP and the formation of the Workers Party was followed by a relatively slow period. The united party did not exert as strong a pull on other radicals and working-class militants as had been hoped. The process of integrating the formerly centrist AWP into the Trotskyist movement was complicated. And the Socialist Party rather than the WP began to attract the new generation of radicals.

The parties of the Second International began to grow rapidly, as workers poured in who had not been through the earlier period that discredited Social Democracy and were repelled by the Stalinists rigidity and ultraleftism. Left wings appeared in the SPs that exercised strong attractive power, including in the American SP.

Trotsky and the leadership of the International Communist League (successor to the International Left Opposition) saw on the one hand a new obstacle to revolutionary socialism and on the other hand a new opportunity to win newly radicalizing youth and workers to revolutionary socialism. They proposed that wherever possible the small Trotskyist parties enter the SPs in order to make contact with this important layer of new radicals and recruit them to Trotskyism. Since Trotsky first proposed this for the French Fourth Internationalists, the idea became known as the French turn.

Some sections did not understand the need for this turn. In Spain the tiny Trotskyist groups stood away from the SP ranks in the name of maintaining organizational independence. The Social Democrats and the Stalinists had a free field with the radicalizing forces in the SP with disastrous results for the Spanish revolution.

In the United States the Trotskyist movement carried out the entry. At that time radical youth in the SP were part of a left wing that predominated in the youth and was growing in the party.

The Workers Party ran into a major obstacle in a sectarian opposition in the leadership and ranks led by Hugo Oehler. He opposed giving up the "independent Leninist party" to join the "party that murdered Luxemburg and Liebknecht and betrayed the

German revolution after World War I."

This was a big test for the cadres recruited from the AWP, many of who didn't want to give up the Workers Party and had gone through the experience of rejecting social democracy in looking for a revolutionary organization.

Many supported Oehler's position, or a modified variant of it that was presented by Martin Abern. Muste, who never grasped internationalism, joined in this opposition. He thought we should build the WP and let the SP go its own way. For a period a majority of the WP opposed the turn. How these difficulties were overcome and the outcome of the entry is the subject of this session.

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Unit Objectives

Cannon, in the first part of Lecture 10 in the History of American Trotskyism discusses how a revolutionary party is built through "a continuous process of internal struggle. Both splits and unifications are methods of developing the revolutionary party".

With this in mind we will take up the entry into the Socialist Party, the sectarian opposition to entry and how the Workers Party was able to overcome it through education and as a result take a significant move towards increasing the size and influence of Trotskyism.

Key Points to consider in preparing this class:

- * In the first three pages of Lecture 10, (pps. 189-191) Cannon looks back on the preceding struggles to build a revolutionary party and presents a summarization on how a revolutionary party historically develops.

- * He states:

"The revolutionary labor movement doesn't develop along a straight line or a smooth path. It grows through a continuous process of internal struggle. Both splits and unifications are methods of developing the revolutionary party. Each under given circumstances, can be either progressive or reactionary in its consequences."

- * Here he answers those outside the revolutionary movement who ridicule the internal struggles that occur frequently in the revolutionary movement.

* Cannon here is also providing a basis from which to approach and understand the emergence of a strong sectarian opposition to the proposed French turn, led by Hugo Oehler.

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* The 1930s was a period of radicalization that was most pronounced on the part of the workers in the industrialized capitalist countries.

* The underlying motor force of the crisis was the depression.

* At the same time, because of the demonstrated bankruptcy of its policies earlier in China, and then in the German events and because of the suffocation of dissent internally, many militant workers were repelled by Stalinism and sought another radical alternative.

* As a consequence of this, the Socialist parties in different countries, including the U.S., attracted young militant who joined these organizations in hopes of finding ways and means of combatting the capitalist crisis.

* This cut off the growth of the newly-fused Workers Party. A certain malaise set in, reflecting a problem of orientation: What to do next? How to build the party under these circumstances?

* This, next to program, is the central question facing a party leadership or an international leadership. Failure to adopt a new orientation when one is called for can be fatal, even if the program remains principled and anticapitalist.

* In October 1934 the Plenum of the International Communist League adopted a policy urging a reorientation of tactics. It proposed that sections of the ICL join Socialist Parties where appropriate to work with the left wings that were growing.

* In proposing this, Trotsky and the other ICL leaders were counting on the cadres being sufficiently steeled to bring Marxist program and policies into the SPs without being absorbed by them.

* The Trotskyist group in Spain didn't carry out this approach. This contributed to the defeat of the Spanish revolution. The Workers Party here turned toward the SP and the result was growth and increased influence for Trotskyism in the United States.

* A left wing existed in the SP. Cannon proposed to orient our propaganda and activity toward it. Entry was one tactic that might be used in the future if needed.

* When proposed, strong opposition to the French turn arose in parts of the leadership and ranks of the Workers Party.

* The opposition to orienting towards the SP in the U.S. was led at first by Hugo Oehler, although Muste and Abern opposed entry for their own reasons. Oehler made a fetish out of the "independent Party." He forgot that the Trotskyists were a party only in their goals and not yet in reality. They had not won any section of the working masses, but only had a nucleus of revolutionaries.

* Part of the party-building process was winning over revolutionists who were in larger organizations like the SP. Entry was one tactic in accomplishing this. The ultra-lefts viewed this tactic as a violation of principle.

* At first the opposition had a majority of the party leadership.

* How this was reversed is a model of democratic centralism in action. The key to consolidating a majority for an orientation to the SP left wing was hard-hitting democratic discussion that continued until the issue was clarified.

* Through education and discussion, the minority became a majority.

* Comrades were educated in principle, tactics, and strategy and the relation between them.

* An opening was won to the ranks of the SP, and the best of the forces won from the AWP were transformed into real revolutionary cadres through this discussion.

* The sectarians couldn't live in a party that had this flexible approach. In reality they revolted against the end of the old ingrown propaganda group existence. They went on a binge of violating discipline. These violations of majority rule, which showed that they no longer believed in this party or its future ended with their expulsion.

* The initial goal was simply to approach the SP ranks with entry as one possible tactic. However the SP left wing grew and finally the extreme right wing of the SP split off. Basing himself on the "all-inclusive" party idea, Norman Thomas called for all left socialists to join the SP.

* Thomas was basically a reformist, but he was riding the growth of the SP at this time and went along as a rule with the centrist leaders of the left wing.

* At this point the Trotskyists decided to enter the SP. They made all necessary organizational concessions to accomplish their political goals including entering "as individuals" and dropping the Militant.

* Of course, they went in to fight for a program, not to just become part of the big Socialist Party of Thomas' dreams.

* By being in the SP at that time, Trotskyists won the bulk of the left wing. They won the Young People's Socialist League. It was even possible that a majority of the party would support the Trotskyists. At this point the Thomas leadership with its centrist allies moved in to expel us.

* This gave a further demonstration of the fraudulence of the "all-inclusive" party. As in the case of the IWW members, the pro-Bolshevik left wing after World War I, undemocratic measures were used to try to silence the left and prevent it from winning a majority.

* The Socialist Workers Party was formed on New Years Day 1938. It had close to 2,000 members.

Topics for discussion or individual assignment

- .What similarities and differences can you see between the fusion with the AWP and the fusion with the RMC?
- .What role have splits and unifications played in the history of Trotskyism? If splits and unifications are inevitable, does that mean they are always positive? Examples?
- .If the WP had not had internal democracy, could it have made this turn? How did that internal democracy work? Was it fair to expel the Oehlerites?
- .Was it justified to give up the "independent party"? Isn't building a party the purpose of our existence? What would you have thought about giving up the party, the Militant and working in the same party as Norman Thomas and union bureaucrats?
- .Why was the entry into the SP a tactical and not a principled question? How was this related to strategy?
- .The social democrats have a long history of betraying the working class. What is the reason for their survival as a force in the world after World War I? Today?
- .What are the main lessons from this chapter of The History of American Trotskyism?

Discussion Questions

- 1-What lessons from this class can you apply to the SWP's present turn to industry?
- 2-Or, on building the Fourth International?

Socialism on Trial

Readings:

Socialism on Trial by James P. Cannon, Pathfinder Press, \$2.25
Teamster Bureaucracy by Farrell Dobbs, Pathfinder Press, \$4.45,
 (chapters 10-18)

Sessions Outline

I. The Minneapolis Smith Act Trial

How the SWP defends itself against frame-ups...the attack against Teamsters local 544...FDR in cahoots with Tobin...the imperialist war and the labor movement...the role of the Communist Party in the Smith Act trials...using the courtroom as a rostrum...origins of American Trotskyism.

II. What is capitalism and why isn't it working?

Is it just "human nature"?...what did Karl Marx say?...the class struggle.

III. Exploitation

What is surplus value and how does it work?...what causes crisis.

IV. What is the capitalist State?

War and wars...imperialism...colonial conquests...the Constitution and the Bill of Rights...role of the State...what causes war?

V. The revolutionary socialist position on the role of "force and violence" in establishing socialism.

The first and second American revolutions...how capitalism arose...the Russian Revolution...the majority...the socialist view of individual terrorism...capitalist lies.

VI. What is Socialism?

The labor movement...the labor bureaucrats...example and lessons of local 544's class struggle leadership...how the role of the capitalist state was exposed...why the struggle against the war was a principled and correct one...class struggle leadership today...Socialism...is Stalinism socialism?...history of Trotskyism...how Trotskyists view the USSR...a socialist U.S.A.

Introductory note

Socialism on Trial does not cover all the important aspects of the class struggle. It was restricted in this by the social

conditions of its time and also by the legal requirement that courtroom testimony be "relevant" to the case being tried.

The modern civil rights movement was just beginning when the trial took place, with A. Philip Randolph's call for a march on Washington for equal employment opportunity. Since 1939 the SWP had become more deeply involved in the struggles of the Black community. It also began to analyze the role of the Black struggle in the American class struggle in greater depth. Before his death in 1940, Leon Trotsky played a major part in educating the SWP on this question. (See the Pathfinder book, Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination for Trotsky's discussions with SWP leaders on the Black struggle.)

However, the party's activity in the Black movement was not taken up in the trial testimony. The government's charges focused on the party's most general concepts, on its policy toward World War II and on its activity in the Minneapolis Teamsters Union.

The women's movement had been in abeyance, with minor exceptions, since the right to vote was won in 1920. The SWP was in full support of the unconditional right to abortion, child care, equal hiring opportunity, and equal pay for equal work. A fuller estimate of the significance of the women's movement for the socialist revolution required the impact of the development of the women's liberation movement of the 1960s.

Socialism on Trial was first published in 1942 and has had four English editions since then.

With the publication in 1977 of Teamster Bureaucracy by Farrell Dobbs (the last of a four volume history of the Minneapolis Teamster struggles) a fuller and more detailed study of the political battles and events that led to the arrest, conviction, and imprisonment of eighteen SWP and Teamster leaders under the Smith Act became available.

In the last eight chapters of this book, Dobbs describes how the indictments came about through the collusion of Tobin and Roosevelt seeking to stifle union democracy and opposition to the imperialist war. He describes how the defendants fought back after imprisonment and provides the reader with important lessons for struggles ahead.

Readers of Socialism on Trial will find Teamster Bureaucracy to be an indispensable companion volume in the education of today's generation of anti-capitalist fighters.

Session I. The Minneapolis Smith Act Trial

Background

The Smith Act, sponsored by the late Virginia Democratic Congressional Representative Howard Smith and signed into law

by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, violates the Bill of Rights.

Article 1 of the Bill of Rights states:

"Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble...."

In 1941, twenty leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and Minneapolis Teamsters Local 544 were arrested (eighteen were eventually convicted). They were charged with "conspiring to overthrow the government" and "advocating the overthrow of the government by force and violence." The prosecution's evidence consisted of leaflets, books, and newspapers that were publicly available--the aim being to show that advocacy of Marxism constituted a criminal conspiracy.

Franklin Roosevelt and Dan Tobin

The liberal Democrat Roosevelt acted in cahoots with Teamsters President Dan Tobin, a conservative bureaucrat who wanted to rid his union of opponents of war and advocates of union democracy. Roosevelt and Tobin used the Smith Act to crush a class-struggle current in the unions.

Role of the Communist Party

The defendants had to confront the government, Tobin, and a hostile press. A further blow was dealt by the Communist Party which supported the indictments and convictions. Two considerations led them to throw out of the window the working class maxim of "an injury to one is an injury to all."

As supporters of Stalin's dictatorial regime in the Soviet Union, they supported measures to wipe out Trotskyists all over the world, including the Moscow Trial frame-ups. The Smith Act trial was a way, in the Stalinists' eyes, of getting rid of those who advocated workers democracy in the Soviet Union.

After Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June, 1941, the Stalinists became slavish supporters of Roosevelt's policies. They not only advocated jailing Trotskyists, but also advocated imprisoning Socialist Party leader Norman Thomas for criticizing the war and United Mine Workers head John L. Lewis for leading a miners' strike. They defended the imprisonment of Japanese-Americans in concentration camps, and later hailed the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

When relations between the U.S. government and the USSR worsened after World War II, the Stalinists were victimized under the Smith Act. Their refusal to defend the SWP members against government frame-up made it easier for the government to frame them up at a later date. The SWP defended the CP against government attack.

Broad Support for the Defendants

The defendants helped organize the Civil Rights Defense Committee headed by figures like philosopher John Dewey and novelist James T. Farrell. This body won support for the defendants from about 150 unions and union locals, representing five million members against the unconstitutional prosecution. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) also denounced the trial. Although Roosevelt managed to get eighteen convicted, the breadth of support for the defendants forced him to allow their release after one year in prison.

The Courtroom as Rostrum

The eighteen defendants decided to turn the tables on the government which wanted to use the trial to ostracize socialist ideas. They decided to use the trial as a rostrum from which to explain basic ideas of socialism to the American working class. By doing so, they would explode the government's lies about what socialism represented. The defendants chose SWP National Secretary James P. Cannon as their major spokesperson for this purpose.

Origins of American Trotskyism

Cannon touches on the beginnings of 20th century labor radicalism in the United States as represented by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the Socialist Party of Eugene V. Debs. Contemporary Marxism in the United States, (also called Trotskyism after the coleader of the Russian revolution who continued to develop and defend Marxism after Lenin's death) represents a convergence of the American radical tradition with Marxism, particularly with the example and contributions of the leaders of the Russian revolution. American revolutionary socialism (like capitalism) is thus not a purely native product.

This is more fully described in two other books by James P. Cannon: The First Ten Years of American Communism, The History of American Trotskyism, both available from Pathfinder Press.

Discussion Questions

1. Why did FDR, characterized by many as a lover of democracy, use the Smith Act against a small party?
2. How was Teamsters Local 544 a threat to FDR and Tobin?
3. The very same "evidence" used then to convict the eighteen leaders of the SWP and Teamsters, (Marxist literature available from Pathfinder and other publishers) is still available today. What conclusions do you draw from that?

4. What other examples of "conspiracy trials" are you familiar with?
5. Where did the maxim "an injury to one is an injury to all" originate and what is our view of that?
6. Is there any instance where Lenin supported the frame-up of his opponents (Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries) by Tsarist police?
7. How can you explain why the Communist Party supported the indictments and convictions?
8. Why did the SWP defend and support the CP leaders when they were framed up later for violating the Smith Act?
9. Just by reading the testimony, what is your impression of James P. Cannon on the witness stand as a defendant?
10. Considering the fact that eighteen defendants were convicted and imprisoned, does that indicate their methods of defense were wrong?

Session II. What is Capitalism and why isn't it working?

Is it because of "human nature"?

Many say that the problems we have today (and before) are caused by human nature, which is said to be violent, greedy, and power-hungry. Racists even say that there is a genetic basis for "intelligence." Marxists disagree with that and similar assertions.

When a child is born, it is not a sexist, a racist, or a socialist. It is a child whose growth and thought, to a large degree, are shaped by the social system it lives and grows up in, in this case the capitalist system. The child has one primary concern: the need for food and security. How it is taught to fill those needs largely shapes its character, and what it is taught is determined by the social and economic order.

The basic motor force of human nature is the quest for a secure existence and expanding freedom. But the basic motor force of capitalism is the drive for profit. The governing law for the capitalist is what will produce profit--not what will meet human needs. Capitalism and its evils is not a product of "human nature" but rather is in fundamental conflict with our natural needs.

Where did capitalism come from?

Capitalism has not always existed and the idea that capitalism is an expression of human nature is related to another misconception: that it has always been here and always will be here.

Human beings have existed for a long time. As people have developed their capacity to produce the necessities and luxuries of life, societies have changed. Ancient society rested on slavery which in turn was replaced by feudalism. Capitalism replaced feudalism relatively recently.

Capitalism came to power in some of the most important countries by violent upheavals, including revolutions and civil wars. This was the case in the United States, the Netherlands, France, England, Japan, and Italy (to name a few). The reason why capitalist revolutions were violent was that the feudal lords violently resisted giving up their privileged position even though the great majority wanted to live in a new way. Similarly the slave owners here fought to hold on to their slaves.

Today we face the same kind of situation. The capitalist class uses violent methods--the army, the police, the CIA, and so forth--to hang on to its positions even though a growing majority of the world's people want socialism. The capitalists' record indicates that they will not feel bound by the rules of democracy when the majority of the American people decide for socialism.

Nonetheless, capitalism is destined to be replaced just as feudalism and slavery were, because the productive forces have developed beyond it. To accomplish this transition, however, there must be a working-class socialist party to lead the workers to power.

What did Karl Marx say?

The Communist Manifesto was written by Marx and Frederick Engels in 1848. It pointed to the historical progress of humanity and showed how different social systems evolved, became outmoded, and were replaced.

Marx did not discover the class struggle--many observers had noted the bitter daily conflict between the propertyless masses and the wealthy, between the workers and the capitalists. Marx was the first to understand it. His contribution was so important that the Manifesto became a classic, read by tens of millions.

The Class Struggle

Today, the capitalists (and their supporters and apologists) try to create the impression that there are many different classes. They speak of the lower class, the lower middle class, the upper middle class, the middle middle class, and so on, determining class by income level. Marxists do not determine class this way. In reality there are two essential classes:

One class lives by owning the giant means of production (the factories, machinery, land): this is the capitalist class.

One class lives by working for the capitalists or their government: this is the working class.

A decreasing number of people constitute the middle class, people who own their own means of production like shop-owners, or professionals like lawyers and doctors. The middle class doesn't play an independent political role and comes under the influence of one of the two major classes. Some (like working farmers in particular) play a vital role in the economy and can become important allies for the workers.

The capitalist class represents a tiny part of the population while the working class represents the overwhelming majority.

There is a constant and growing conflict between the owners of the means of production and the people who work for them. The cause of this conflict is the contradiction between the quest for profits and the quest of the majority for a secure and more fulfilling life.

Discussion Questions

1. How come a tiny minority, the capitalist class, rules us?
2. How did this come about?
3. Do you think it is possible to get socialism by elections?
4. How do Marxists determine class?
5. If coal miners and small-scale farmers are in different classes, why do they support each other's struggles?
6. Can you give an example of where the drive for profits conflicts with human needs?
7. What do you think of the statement by a former General Motors chairman that "What's good for GM is good for the country"?
8. Do you think the middle class is declining?
9. If socialists are correct, why are there so few of them?
10. How do those in the working class become class conscious?

Session III. Exploitation, how it works

Surplus value

Marx did not discover the class struggle, but he did discover how workers are exploited by capitalists--through producing "surplus value" for the capitalists.

In ancient society people produced goods for consumption--by slaves or latifundia (Roman plantation) owners, by serfs of feudal lords. Today working people produce commodities for the market--goods to be sold.

The capitalists own and control the most important commodities, the major means of production like factories, mines, and giant farms. This gives the owner the legal right under capitalism to own and dispose of all the commodities produced by the means of production, even though labor does the actual producing.

The only salable commodity the worker usually owns is his or her own labor power. The worker sells that commodity for wages.

When workers hire out to an employer, they don't sell what they produce; they sell their ability to produce. What they produce belongs to the factory owner.

The employer is not paying the workers for the product of eight hours' or more work; the employer pays the worker to work eight or more hours.

A worker is paid roughly what it takes to get by, more or less, depending on whether there are a lot of unemployed competing for jobs or a strong union, or other circumstances.

In four hours, for example, the worker may produce enough goods to equal in value his or her wages. The product of the remaining four hours is surplus value. For those remaining four hours, the worker produces solely for the capitalists.

Today the capitalists don't think the workers are spending enough time producing for the capitalists and they are trying to step up the exploitation of labor in various ways.

They are trying to increase productivity and therefore increase surplus value. Workers are being forced to work harder and get less in return.

Marx's analysis of how workers were exploited showed why the class struggle intensifies and why capitalism doesn't work in the long run.

Overproduction, capitalist crisis

Capitalist competition (along with gains made by the workers in working hours and so forth) compels the capitalists to continually increase productivity through introducing new machinery and techniques. At certain points productivity expands to such a point that the capitalists are unable to sell enough goods to make a satisfactory profit.

When this occurs, it is called a crisis of overproduction. This does not mean that more is produced than people need, but that more

is produced than can be profitably sold on the market. (The fact that workers cannot buy back all that they produce--although they are the ultimate market for consumer goods--contributes to this.)

When "overproduction" develops, capitalists reduce or shut down production. Massive unemployment results. Wages are slashed and working conditions worsen. The crisis continues until capitalist profits rise sufficiently to get a new cycle going again.

Capitalist depressions

Historically these crises (depressions) have tended to get more and more severe. Frequently they are "resolved" by wars. The Great Depression of the 1930s ended with World War II--a war in which tens of millions of people died and vast amounts of resources were destroyed.

Today we are entering another long term crisis, although there has not yet been a crash on the scale of the 1930s. Recessions get deeper and more severe while recoveries are relatively feeble. Unemployment remains high, and combines with the scourge of inflation.

These crises stem from the fact that the forces of production (the workers and the means of production they work with) have become too effective and too productive for the capitalist system--although they are far from meeting as yet the real needs of human beings. This is the foundation of the socialist view that capitalism is irrational and outmoded.

Discussion questions

1. How do Marx's economic ideas help us to understand what is happening to the economy today?
2. The Constitution enables us to elect a president every four years. Why can't we also elect a new head of Standard Oil?
3. Can the workers replace the capitalists and run an industry, such as Standard Oil; don't we need the expertise of a Rockefeller?
4. Many workers believe that if their wages go up, prices need rise too? Is that true?
5. Would it be correct to say that all babies, when born, are not racists, sexists, or socialists, but a few are capitalists?
6. What is wrong with the argument that class divisions and wars are products of human nature?
7. Is a member of the Rockefeller family entitled to a fair return for providing the factories and machinery that workers use?

8. If the Second World War and "defense" production also ended unemployment, how come we have unemployment today when billions are spent on armaments?

9. Why is there no unemployment in Cuba or the USSR?

10. What is the difference between a "recession" and a "depression"?

Session IV. What is the Capitalist State?

The Constitution

The Constitution of the United States protects the capitalists in the ownership of their "private property"--the means of production with which workers produce all necessities and luxuries.

The Constitution also lists, in the Bill of Rights, some rights due to all citizens--freedom of speech, press, assembly, association, right to a fair trial, and so forth.

Socialists oppose capitalist ownership of the means of production but support the guarantees of democratic rights in the Bill of Rights.

The Constitution was written by merchants and slaveholders to protect their property interests--to establish a government that could protect capitalist interests in the days when capitalist expansion was progressive. It expresses the "inherent rights" of capitalists.

The Bill of Rights

The Bill of Rights was added because of pressure from working farmers, artisans, shopkeepers, and their political representatives. It was a concession made by the ruling class to the mass of the population in order to get them to acquiesce in the Constitution. The Constitution was adopted in 1787. The Bill of Rights was adopted in 1791.

It took the second American Revolution--the Civil War--to add a prohibition against slavery to the Constitution. To accomplish this the Southern states that defended slavery had to be defeated militarily and new governments placed in power that reflected a changed social order.

Revolutionary socialists call for a Third American Revolution to secure socialism--the abolition of exploitation, the achievement of basic rights, real equality, and well-being for all people.

Those who fight to win a majority to support this run into a major obstacle in the capitalist state just as the abolitionists found the slavecratic state to be an obstacle.

The State

In his famous book, The Wealth of Nations, Adam Smith wrote:

"Civil government, so far as it is instituted for the security of property, is in reality instituted for the defense of the rich against the poor, or of those who have some property against those who have not at all."

Smith, who supported the capitalist state, gave a good definition of that state.

Lenin, following Marx, characterized the state as a repressive force--bodies of armed men (police, army). These armed men are used to protect the property of the ruling minority--the capitalist class, including carrying out a capitalist expansion through war.

Lenin exposed the fallacy of the liberal view that the state acts as an impartial arbiter among classes. The state defends one class against another. It does this whether the form of government is democratic, military dictatorship, or fascist.

Who Carter represents

The coal strike provided an example of the fallacy of the liberal view. Carter presented himself as a representative of all the people. In reality all his actions and threats of force were aimed at the striking miners. Using his "impartial" image as cover, he took sides in the class struggle.

The Socialist view

Socialists point out that the capitalist state upholds the oppression of one class by another, of the great majority by a minority. It is a class dictatorship in this sense even if there are relatively free elections.

The misconception that Carter is fair to all classes, or even a friend of the workers, is fading fast. Unemployed workers don't get bailed out by Carter but failing businesses do. People are beginning to realize that the Republicans and Democrats both represent the capitalists who own these parties lock, stock, and barrel.

Why a Workers State?

Revolutionary socialists participate in all struggles to defend political rights against the capitalist state. They often take the lead in these struggles. However they know that any victories for human rights are temporary as long as the capitalist class and its agents rule. Capitalism in its decline has to restrict democratic rights more and more.

That is why socialists propose the establishment of a workers state that would represent working people--the great majority--just as determinedly as the present capitalist state defends the capitalist minority. By eliminating want, a workers state will lay the basis for the disappearance of classes and the end of state repression.

Cannon points out that the workers regime will be more democratic than capitalism at its most democratic. It will represent the interests of the great majority and they--the working people--will make the decisions through their democratic councils.

War

Movies and TV teach that war is caused by "bad," violent people--above all "bad" foreigners--who attack "good" nations, the United States in particular.

Marxists have learned that the root cause of war is the capitalist system. There are many pretexts used by different gangs of capitalists to justify a war and war preparations, but these are propaganda ploys aimed at persuading working people of the need to kill and die in war.

Imperialism and war

Lenin studies the transformation of capitalist society from its early progressive period to its advanced and decaying state. He characterized modern capitalism as imperialist because it replaced the competition by many capitalist firms in each country with large-scale monopolies based on a vast expansion of productivity. These monopolies were increasingly fused with and dominated by the big banks and other financial institutions.

Expanded productivity means intensification in the struggle between capitalist states--representing competing gangs of monopolies--for control of the market. The capitalist rulers not only needed new markets for goods, but they were accumulating huge amounts of capital that demanded new and more profitable arenas of investment.

Colonial Conquests

One answer to this was the conquest of the colonies in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Different imperialist powers divided up these continents--and in fact the whole world--into spheres of direct rule or dominant influence. They were able to exploit the cheap labor of the people in these continents, making vast super-profits from mining, agriculture, and other aspects of raw materials production.

In addition, they increasingly used this cheap labor in factories. They transformed these regions into markets for imperialist goods--often closed to all imperialist powers except the one that dominated the given area.

Today most colonies have won independence, but few have broken the economic domination of imperialism. China, Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba are exceptions.

When the imperialist powers had completely divided the world, each began to fight fiercely for a new division that would be more favorable to it. The drive to expand could never be stopped. This was the basic cause of World War I and World War II. This need of the imperialist powers to find ever-new markets for goods and capital is the driving force behind the arms race and the threat of World War III today.

These wars were not fought "to make the world safe for democracy" or to "fight fascism." Fascism was itself a product of the imperialist drive to super-exploit the workers and expand internationally under desperate conditions.

The productive machinery created under capitalism is so powerful that it tends to produce more than can be sold at an adequate profit for the capitalists. Periodic depressions and wars are both results of this.

This was understood by the revolutionary socialists who faced jail in 1941 in Minneapolis.

War doesn't settle anything permanently for the capitalists. It only lays the groundwork for new and more destructive wars as the battle for world domination continues. When one war ends, alliances shift and regroup in preparation for the next battle--a battle which is inevitable as long as capitalism exists.

Discussion questions

1. Adam Smith was very frank about the tasks of the capitalist state. Why don't the capitalists talk that way today?
2. Why are we in the fight to add the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution?
3. Why does imperialism require ever-expanding markets? Is this true for the USSR?
4. What is the Marxist approach to seeking justice through capitalist courts?
5. What is the difference between the U.S. sending troops to a colonial country and Cuba's military presence in Africa?
6. If a workers state will be more democratic, why do socialists refer to it as a "dictatorship of the proletariat"? How can it be both a dictatorship and democratic?

7. When Northern troops occupied the southern states after the civil war and instituted a military dictatorship, was that democratic?

8. What is the difference between a workers government and a workers state?

9. If the USSR is a workers state, how do you explain the absence of democracy there.

10. Why is it not realistic to try to reform the capitalist state?

Session V. The revolutionary socialist position on the role of "force and violence" in establishing socialism.

The First and Second American Revolutions

The American rebels who had to fight King George's army in 1776 to achieve independence would certainly have preferred a peaceful road instead. The reasons for this are obvious. Violent situations are dangerous and unpleasant, and people try to avoid them where possible.

Similarly, Lincoln tried to resolve the conflict between the slaveocracy and Northern industrialists (allied with the farmers) through relatively peaceful and legal means. He was forced to resort to arms when the Southern rulers showed they would go to the limit to defend slavery.

How Capitalism arose

The rise and assumption of power by capitalism was accompanied by violent upheavals. This proved necessary to tear power out of the hands of the feudalists. The bourgeois forces tried for a long time to settle matters peacefully. In England under Cromwell and France under Robespierre, they were compelled in the end not only to fight civil wars, but to execute kings. The reasons for this was that beneficiaries of the old order used bloody violence to hang onto their positions.

A law of history that Marxists (among many others) recognize is that ruling classes refuse to give way to a new order peacefully, even when the majority of the people desire such a change.

American imperialism uses violence to maintain or extend its power (Vietnam is an example). Yet this violent government denounced eighteen socialists as advocates of force and violence.

This is part of a two-pronged campaign aimed at building a wall around socialists and isolating them from popular support:

1. the rulers claim that socialists are terrorists; and
2. the rulers claim that socialists plot to use force and violence in order to impose their views on everybody else.

Related to these slanders is the claim that the October 1917 revolution in Russia was a "coup", a minority takeover, a conspiracy--rather than a popular revolution.

The Russian Revolution

In The History of the Russian Revolution, Leon Trotsky demonstrates with facts and figures that the Bolsheviks secured the support of a majority of the workers and peasants of Russia. It was with this support--registered in the Bolshevik majority in the elections to the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets (the most democratic and authoritative body in all of Russia at the time)--that the Bolsheviks led the Petrograd Soviet in removing the provisional government of Kerensky.

The Kerensky government had (1.) refused to seek an end to World War I, despite overwhelming antiwar sentiment among the peoples of Russia; (2.) refused to distribute the landlords' property; and (3.) attempted to prevent elections to a Constituent Assembly and undermine the democratically-elected soviets of the workers, peasants, and soldiers. When attempts were made to end the war, procapitalist forces initiated violence--not the Bolsheviks.

The majority

It is a principle of revolutionary socialism that the majority must be won in order to assure victory for the socialist revolution. Socialists have no desire or need to take power as a minority. The capitalists use bloody repression because they are a minority and seek to maintain minority rule (even if with a thinner and thinner democratic cover). The socialist revolution is a movement of the vast majority in the interests of the vast majority.

The socialist view of individual terrorism

Revolutionary socialists oppose terrorism. They know that working people can only be liberated through their own mass actions and not through the acts of individual would-be liberators. Attempts by small groups to substitute themselves for the masses in making revolutionary change have always ended in defeat and demoralization.

Revolutionary socialists in Marx's time (the 1800s) polemicized with the followers of Louis Blanqui. Blanqui believed in minority revolution for France. He thought a small, well-trained group could seize the French government in a sudden coup, proclaim revolutionary objectives, and count on the masses to hail them. Blanqui, a very dedicated revolutionary, spent more than half of his life in jail for his efforts to accomplish this. However he never posed a decisive threat to French capitalism. There is no substitute for mass actions in achieving socialism.

Capitalist lies

Terrorism is a product of frustration, anger, and desperation at the evils of capitalist society, combined with disbelief in the ability of working people to change things.

The capitalist press makes a big outcry about the violence of small groups that kidnap individuals, bomb buildings, or hijack airplanes. They do this to cover up the massive violence they carry out every day. This violence occurs on such a scale that it dwarfs the actions of terrorist groups. For the capitalists the kidnapping of a public figure in Italy was "the crime of the century," but the massacre of thousands in the streets of Iran or Nicaragua is just "law and order." Capitalism is the real source of violence in this society.

When the capitalists express outrage at terrorism, they are like burglars who try to divert attention by yelling "Stop thief!" in order to make a clean getaway.

Capitalists play on the negative reaction to terrorist actions by spreading the lie that revolutionary socialists are terrorists and using terrorist actions as pretexts for repression.

While the capitalist press gives big play to the "need for action against terrorists," it gives next to no publicity to the work of socialists like those in the Socialist Workers Party who participate in the defense of workers' daily interests, while educating about the need to fight for a workers government and socialism.

Discussion questions

1. Why did Cannon predict that the ruling class would use violence to maintain its rule if a majority favored socialism?
2. How was this illustrated in the Civil War--or in Vietnam?
3. Or in South Africa?
4. Is a fascist government an example of ruling class violence against the majority?
5. Was the kidnapping of Christian Democratic leader Moro in Italy an effective way to fight capitalism?
6. How does the socialist view of violence relate to self-defense?
7. What were the main differences between Lenin and the Bolsheviks with the Social Revolutionaries on this question?

8. Why is it necessary to have majority support to make a socialist revolution?

9. How is it possible for a small party such as the SWP to think of achieving the support of the majority?

10. What are the essential differences between socialists and pacifists on the question of violence?

Session VI. What is Socialism?

The labor movement

The unions are the primary defensive organizations of the workers in this country. In fact they are the only mass organizations of the working class in this country. The decisive section of the union movement is the industrial unions. But they are crippled by a class-collaborationist leadership.

The labor bureaucrats

Most union officials today support the capitalist system. They hope that the capitalists will agree to regular wage increases and generally provide enough benefits to keep the leaders in the good graces of union members--so that these officials can keep their jobs.

When an economic crisis develops, the capitalists try to save their profits at the expense of the workers. They insist on concessions, or "givebacks."

Union officials who accept the idea that capitalism is the only workable system adapt to this. They see their job as helping to save the system by making the workers understand the need for "sacrifices." The first contract recommended by the mine union leaders in their strike (which was voted down by the ranks) was an example of this.

Class struggle leadership

Because they understand that the capitalists and workers have irreconcilable, opposed interests and that it is not possible to achieve a compromise that is beneficial to both sides, Trotskyists stand for a class struggle leadership in the union movement and try to build one.

The methods of the Minneapolis Teamsters leaders exemplified this class struggle leadership: reliance on democratic decision making and militant mobilization of the ranks.

In order to impose collaboration with the bosses that does not benefit the workers, union bureaucrats have to suppress both union democracy and the mobilization of the rank and file.

Part of the bureaucrats' strategy is supporting capitalist parties--especially the Democrats. The capitalists are a small minority and they rule by convincing the majority that their parties and government represent "everybody"--not just one small group. The Democratic and Republican parties are a key part of this operation.

Revolutionary socialists advocate that the unions break out of this trap, and create a labor party that will be controlled by and defend the interests of working people--as an important step toward making a socialist revolution.

Lessons of the 1930s

Both Cannon and Dobbs demonstrate important lessons. The Trotskyists in the 1930s were a small minority not only in the working class as a whole, but among the organized political forces contending for the leadership of the working class. However, because they were armed with a fighting class struggle program, they were able to play a major role in forging a democratic union in Minneapolis that defended the working class. In doing this they helped build the revolutionary party.

In his "Afterword" to Teamster Bureaucracy Dobbs describes the different relationship of forces on the left that existed then as compared to today. Today Trotskyists enter into a new phase of radicalization with close to equal forces relative Stalinists and Social Democrats. This puts us in a far stronger position in contending for workers' allegiance than was the case in the early period.

The key to the strengths of Local 544 in the last analysis was the role played by the organized revolutionary socialist forces. In turn, the key to the eventual defeat was the numerical weakness of these forces.

That is why, today, facing the growing capitalist crisis and deepening radicalization, the key to the party's capacity to win the support of the working class is the recruitment of more members in the basic industrial unions and elsewhere.

What is Socialism?

Can the factories and farms and railroads and airplanes function without capitalist owners?

This question, with different wording for different times, has been asked before. Once it was, "How can humanity exist without kings and feudal lords?" Others asked, "Can society function without slaveowners and imperial courts? Who will keep things running?"

The capitalists would like us to believe that the production and distribution of the necessities and good things of life would collapse without them, but it just isn't so. They don't produce or distribute anything. Workers and working farmers do. This irrational competition for profit of the capitalists is an obstacle to progress. Their private appropriation of what workers produce cooperatively introduces disruption all along the line--from unemployment to environmental decay to the horrors of war.

We have reached the point where it is necessary for human survival to replace production for profit with production for human needs. And that means replacing capitalist ownership of industry with social ownership and the capitalist profit motive with democratic planning by the people who do the work, consume the goods, and know the factories and fields inside and out--the great majority.

Workers know more about how industry runs than the owners do (many owners never see the inside of a factory). Just like the owners, workers can find and hire competent managers and technicians who will be subordinated to the democratic decisions of the workers just as capitalist managers are today subordinated to the stockholders.

Is Stalinism Socialism?

The capitalists are not the only obstacle to establishing a just social order, although they are the most fundamental one. There is also the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR, China, and Eastern Europe.

Although the prosecution had some success in preventing Cannon from citing the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism, a few points do come through in the trial testimony.

One of the most common arguments of opponents of socialism is that it is the same as Stalinism. The suppression of democracy in the Soviet Union and China is pointed to as an example of what socialism will be like.

The same argument could be used to discredit unions, for democracy is suppressed by the privileged bureaucrats in these organizations as well. Workers learn from experience however that the solution to that is to create a new leadership that will serve their interests, and not to return full control of wages, hours, and working conditions back to the boss.

How Trotskyism began

The Trotskyist movement began with resistance in the early 1920s to the elimination of all forms of workers democracy in the Soviet Union after Lenin's death in 1924. The USSR was poor, isolated, shattered by war and civil war. A tiny proportion of the population was working class.

After the Bolshevik Party--a working class revolutionary party--had decisively smashed Czarism, landlordism and capitalism, a bureaucracy arose because of the backwardness of the economy. In a struggle with the Left Opposition which represented the working-class program of Lenin's Bolshevik Party, the bureaucracy won out. This outcome was not a natural result of socialism, but a defeat for the working class and the socialist movement.

How Trotskyists View the USSR

In spite of the bureaucratic dictatorship that now exists in the USSR, we support the overthrow of capitalism that took place there, the elimination of private ownership of the means of production, and the introduction of economic planning. These have resulted in big economic strides that could not have happened any other way.

The economic development that has occurred in the Soviet Union, China, and the other workers states despite bureaucratic rule has given the lie to the capitalist claim that capitalists are indispensable for economic progress.

Socialists don't think that the Soviet Union should go back to capitalism--that would not lead to more human rights but to a right wing dictatorship. Socialists favor an anti-bureaucratic revolution to drive out the parasitic rulers and establish democratic workers control of political and economic decision-making.

A socialist revolution in the United States will not face the same problems that the USSR--the first country to take this step--had. The United States has the most powerful economy in the world--not a backward economy like the USSR had. It has a huge and relatively educated working class. A revolution in the U.S.A.--the center of world capitalism--would inspire virtually the whole world to follow suit (including the workers of the Soviet bloc who would be inspired to fight for socialist democracy). It would be almost impossible to carry on the kind of foreign counterrevolutionary intervention against an American revolution that the USSR faced.

Discussion Questions

- 1-Why do revolutionary socialists participate in unions?
- 2-What are the essential differences between a class collaborationist and a class struggle leadership?
- 3-Is it realistic to think of unseating the powerful labor bureaucrats?
- 4-If we establish a socialist society here, is there a good chance it will become corrupt like the Stalinist bureaucracies in the USSR, China and Eastern Europe states?
- 5-Why do we contend that the Communist Party does not advocate or fight for communism?
- 6-How does the theory of "socialism in one country" harm socialism?
- 7-Is that theory advocated by the Castro leadership in Cuba?
- 8-Can a committee of workers run the vast General Motors empire?
- 9-If you can vote a Rockefeller out of office can you also vote him out of power?
- 10-What examples of what socialism will be like can we point to today?

Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution

A five-class series

The following class outline is based on Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution: The Trotskyist View by Joseph Hansen (Pathfinder, \$5.45).

In addition to Hansen's book, a number of other readings are suggested in the outline. Following is a complete list of these suggested readings:

Class I

"History Will Absolve Me," by Fidel Castro, a speech given at his 1953 trial for leading the July 26, 1953, assault on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago (Lyle Stuart, \$1.00, out of print); also in Revolutionary Struggle 1943-57: Volume One of the Selected Writings of Fidel Castro edited by Rolando Bonachea and Nelson Valdes (MIT, \$12.50).

"Results and Prospects" in The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects by Leon Trotsky (Pathfinder, \$4.45), pp. 36-122.

Class 2

Class, Party and State in the Eastern European Revolution, Education for Socialists, (Pathfinder, \$1.25).

Workers and Farmers Governments Since the Second World War, by Robert Chester, Education for Socialists, (Pathfinder, \$1.35).

The Workers and Farmers Government by Joseph Hansen, Education for Socialists, (Pathfinder, \$1.00).

State and Revolution by Lenin (many editions).

"The Class Nature of the Soviet State," by Leon Trotsky in Writings: 1933-34 (Pathfinder, \$5.45), pp. 101-122

Class 3

The Second Declaration of Havana by Fidel Castro (Feb. 1962), (Pioneer, \$.25), also in the March 5, 1962 Militant and in Fidel Castro Speaks, edited by Martin Kenner and James Petras (Grove Press, \$1.45).

Vietnam and World Revolution, by Che Guevara (Pathfinder, \$.25, out of print); also in Che Guevara Speaks (Pathfinder, \$1.95, out of print; Venceremos: The Writings of Che Guevara, edited by John Gerassi (Simon and Schuster Clarian Paperbacks \$2.95); and in Che Guevara on Revolution edited by Mallin (University of Miami, \$7.95); and in April 28, 1967 issue (Vol. 5 # 17) of World Outlook (predecessor of Intercontinental Press /Inprecor).

"Address to the OLAS Conference", by Fidel Castro (November-December 1967 ISR).

"Those Who Are Not Revolutionary Fighters Cannot be Called Communists," by Fidel Castro in March 31, 1967, issue of World Outlook (predecessor of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor), and in Fidel Castro Speaks, edited by Martin Kenner and James Petras (Grove, \$1.45).

Guevara's Guerrilla Strategy: A Critique and Some Proposals, by Peter Camejo (Pathfinder, \$.60); also in November 1972 ISR.

"Self-Criticism on Latin America," by the Steering Committee of the International Majority Tendency, in International Internal Discussion Bulletin Vol. XIII, No. 8 in December 1976, \$.50.

Draft Resolution on Latin America for the Eleventh World Congress to be published in an upcoming International Internal Discussion Bulletin.

Class 4

The Revolution Must be a School of Unfettered Thought by Fidel Castro (Pioneer--predecessor of Pathfinder--\$.25, out of print); April 2, 1962 issue of the Militant.

Against Bureaucracy and Sectarianism by Fidel Castro (Pioneer, \$.35, out of print); excerpted in the April 16, 1962 issue of the Militant.

On the Events in Czechoslovakia by Fidel Castro, published in English in many editions by the Cuban government; also in the September 2, 9, and 16, 1968, issues of Intercontinental Press.

The Revolution Betrayed, by Leon Trotsky (Pathfinder, \$4.95).

Class 5

Upsurge in Africa by David Frankel (Pathfinder, \$.75).

"The Social Upheaval that Ended Haile Selassie's Regime," and "Meaning of the Somalian Military Attack," by Ernest Harsch in the September 25, 1978, and October 2, 1978, issues of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor. Soon to be a Pathfinder pamphlet.

Some Recommended books on Cuba

Joseph Hansen's Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution centers on the key political questions that have faced the Cuban revolution and the Trotskyist movement since the Cuban rebels conquered power. It does not deal in depth (except for "The Truth About Cuba") with providing extensive factual data on the history of the revolution.

The following books may help fill gaps in knowledge in this area (the first two are out of print but available from libraries, used book stores, or comrades).

The Struggle Against Batista

Fidel Castro, by Jules DuBois, an admiring factual account written in 1959 by a Chicago Tribune reporter who later became a rabid foe of Castro. (Bobbs-Merrill, \$5.00).

M-26 by Robert Taber, an account of the guerrilla war beginning with the assault on Moncada barracks. Taber was a CBS cameraman who accompanied the rebels in many of their battles. (Lyle Stuart, \$4.95).

The Overturn of Capitalism

The Anatomy of a Revolution by Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy. Full of valuable descriptions of economic transformation. The authors' pro-Stalinist bias gives special interest to their critique of the Cuban CP and its policies. (Monthly Review Press, \$3.95).

Listen Yankee by C. Wright Mills (Ballantine paperback). An accurate presentation of the thinking of Cuban revolutionists in 1960.

Cuba Since the Overturn

Guerrillas in Power, by K.S. Karol. Karol, a radical journalist, gives good data on the role of the Stalinists in the Cuban revolution. His criticisms of developments in Cuba, while useful, should be viewed with his bias as an admirer of Mao's "cultural revolution" in mind. (Hill & Wang, \$3.95).

Revolution in Cuba, by Herbert L. Matthews. A thorough history, published in 1975 by a veteran New York Times correspondent who became an admirer of Castro and sympathizer of the revolution in 1957, and remained so the rest of his life. He visited Cuba on ten different occasions. (Scribners, 1975, \$15.00).

Class I-The Cuban Revolution

Reading:

Dynamics, pp.20-62.

Other Reading:

History Will Absolve Me by Fidel Castro. A speech given at his trial for leading the July 26, 1953, attack on the Moncada barracks in Santiago. (Lyle Stuart, \$1.00, out of print); also in Revolutionary Struggle 1943-57: Volume One of the Selected Works of Fidel Castro, edited by Rolando Bonachea and Nelson Valdes (MIT, \$12.50).

"Results and Prospects," in The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects by Leon Trotsky (Pathfinder, \$4.45).

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Introduction

Joseph Hansen's 1960 pamphlet "The Truth About Cuba" places the revolution in the context of U.S. exploitation and national oppression of Cuba. It exposes the hypocrisy of U.S. imperialist claims to be defending independence and democratic social reform in Cuba. Beginning with the Spanish-American War of 1898 Cuba's subjugation to the U.S. ruling class deepened with the growth of imperialism.

To uphold imperialist control, the U.S. and its Cuban puppets developed a large, repressive army and police.

The revolution of 1933 against Machado, betrayed by the Cuban Communist Party, culminated in defeat with the rise of Batista who was backed by U.S. imperialism. The Communist Party portrayed Batista as a "man of the people" and Stalinists such as Rodriguez and Roca even served in his government.

A bourgeois-democratic interlude in Cuba (1944-52) produced little real change. The Grau San Martin and Carlos Prío governments left the masses in poverty while bourgeois politicians raked in bribes and kickbacks. To smash growing nationalist and anti-imperialist sentiment, Batista took over again in 1952 and received full U.S. backing.

This is the background for the emergence of the July 26 Movement as a distinct current in the nationalist-democratic movement. It rejected all collaboration with the regime--repelled by the passivity and corruption of the top bourgeois liberals and the pro-Batista record of the Cuban Stalinists. It insisted on the need for armed struggle to destroy the old regime. Although actions like the Moncada attack were military adventures costing many lives, they were motivated by a desire to bring the Cuban masses into action against the regime. The bravery and selflessness of the July 26 Movement leaders made them heroes to the restive masses looking for determined and uncompromising leadership against Batista.

The July 26 Movement began a guerrilla war in 1956. The Stalinists opposed the July 26 Movement.

The July 26 Movement recognized the corruption and incompetency of previous "democratic" governments in Cuba. Real democracy, it held, would require a revolution--new institutions, a sweeping land reform, and measures to increase the living standard and educational level of the masses. This program won wide support, especially among peasants and agricultural workers.

The deepening radicalization in Cuba brought the July 26 Movement mass support. Batista's army disintegrated and his regime fell. A mass upsurge fostered by Castro swept the country as the victorious Rebel Army marched toward the capital.

After the fall of Batista, Castro and the July 26 Movement set up a coalition government including some of the bourgeois liberals who had taken strong stands against Batista. But the Castro leadership was determined to carry out the program of radical reform it had promised the masses. The bourgeois liberals quit the government in opposition to the radical land reform. Imperialism became more open in its hostility, taking measures aimed at economically crippling and militarily crushing the regime. But the Castro government answered blow for blow.

Questions for individual reports and group discussion.

- 1-Was the July 26 Movement different from other bourgeois-nationalist currents?
- 2-What lessons did the July 26 Movement learn from the 1933 revolution? From the 1954 coup in Guatemala?
- 3-Why did the coalition government break up?
- 4-Could the July 26 Movement program be carried out under capitalism in Cuba?
- 5-What was the role of the Stalinists (Popular Socialist Party-PSP) in Cuba?
- 6-Has the U.S. been a force for democracy in Cuba?
- 7-Castro promised to uphold the bourgeois democratic constitution in Cuba but ended up establishing a completely new one. Was this a betrayal of the revolution?
- 8-Take a look at the comments of El Jacobino on pages 55 and 56 of Dynamics, and discuss them in the light of what Trotsky says in Chapter III of Results and Prospects. Does Cuba confirm the theory of permanent revolution?

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Class 2-The Class Nature of the Cuban State

Reading:

Dynamics, pp. 65-208

Other Reading:

Education for Socialists publications:

Class, Party, and State in the Eastern European Revolution, \$1.25.

Workers and Farmers Governments Since the Second World War, by Robert Chester, \$1.35.

The Workers and Farmers Government, by Joseph Hansen, \$1.00

State and Revolution by Lenin.

"The Class Nature of the Soviet State," by Leon Trotsky in Writings, 1933-34, (Pathfinder, \$5.45), pp. 101-122.

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Introduction

The breakup of the coalition government in 1959 marked the emergence of a workers and farmers government. The character of this government was indicated by the sweep of the agrarian reform, the reliance on mass mobilizations including militia, its antagonism to imperialism and local capitalists, and the deepening of its anticapitalist course.

Such a government is in contradiction to the continued existence of a capitalist state. But the radical-democratic program of the Castro government left open how that contradiction would be resolved.

As imperialist pressure and military threats (from terrorist bombings of crowded department stores and movie theaters to the gathering of CIA-backed invasion forces) grew, the regime moved to nationalize all capitalist interests "down to the nails of their shoes."

Cuba had become a workers state in the fall of 1960 but the leadership was not in the hands either of Leninists fostering democracy based on workers and peasants councils (soviets), (which would have meant the establishment of a healthy workers state) or of a Stalinist bureaucratic caste (which would have meant a deformed workers state requiring a political revolution). Leadership was in the hands of the Castro grouping which sought to defend worker and peasant interests, but did not understand the need for democratic institutions of workers rule. The result was "a workers state, although one lacking as yet the forms of democratic proletarian rule."

In making this analysis, the SWP extended the analysis used earlier in the cases of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Soviet-occupied Eastern Europe and China. In all these, the overturn

of capitalist property relations and the establishment of a new state committed to the defense of planned economy represented the decisive criteria for establishing a workers state.

This analysis met opposition from two sides. On one side, Gerry Healy of the British Socialist Labour League argued that Cuba could not be a workers state, since there was no revolutionary party. On the other hand, some who agreed with Hansen on the character of the state argued that the formation of the militia in late 1959 was sufficient to mark the creation of a workers state, not the nationalizations of August-October 1960.

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Questions for individual reports and group discussion.

- 1-What is a workers and farmers government? Why is this concept politically important? Does a workers and farmers government automatically lead to a workers state?
- 2-Why was it important to link the analysis of Cuba to the analysis of the other workers states?
- 3-Why is the transformation of property relations so important in determining the class character of a state? Why not some other event?
- 4-Discuss this argument made by the Healyites in "Trotskyism Betrayed":

"Does the dictatorship of the proletariat exist in Cuba? We reply categorically NO! The absence of a party squarely based on the workers and poor peasants makes it impossible to set up and maintain such a dictatorship. But what is even more significant is the absence of what the SWP euphemistically terms 'the institutions of proletarian democracy' or what we prefer to call soviets or organs of workers power."
- 5-Or this argument, also from the Healyite document:

"Cuba has witnessed...a political revolution which has transferred power from the hands of (the capitalist) class to another section of that same class....Where the working class is unable to lead the peasant masses and smash capitalist state power, the bourgeoisie steps in and solves the problem of the 'democratic revolution' in its own fashion and to its own satisfaction. Hence we have Kemal Ataturk, Chiang Kai-shek, Nasser, Nehru, Cardenas, Peron, Ben Bella,--and Castro (to mention a few)."

How do the actions of the Castro regime and the characteristics of the Cuban state compare with the government and state headed by the figures mentioned by the Healyites? What does this conception mean for the theory of permanent revolution?
- 6-Does the Cuban revolution mean that Leninist parties aren't needed to make revolutions?
- 7-How would a regime based on workers councils advance the Cuban revolution?
- 8-What does Hansen mean when he says that we fight "for the soul of the Cuban revolution"?

Class 3-The Cuban Strategy for Extending the Revolution.Reading:

Dynamics, pp. 209-248

Other Reading:

The Second Declaration of Havana, by Fidel Castro, February 1962 (Pioneer, \$.25, out of print); also in the March 5, 1962, Militant; and in Fidel Castro Speaks, edited by Martin Kenner and James Petras, (Grove, \$1.45).

Vietnam and World Revolution, by Che Guevara (Pathfinder, \$.25, out of print); also in Che Guevara Speaks (Pathfinder, \$1.95, out of print); in Vencemos: The Writings of Che Guevara, ed. by John Gerassi (Simon and Schuster Clarian paperbacks, \$2.95); in Che Guevara on Revolution, edited by Mallin (University of Miami, \$7.95); and in the April 28, 1967, issue (Vol 5, No. 17) of World Outlook, predecessor of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor.

"Address to the OLAS Conference," by Fidel Castro (November-December 1967 ISR).

"Those Who Are Not Revolutionary Fighters Cannot be Called Communists," by Fidel Castro, in the March 31, 1967, issue (Volume 5 No. 13) of World Outlook, predecessor of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor; and in Fidel Castro Speaks, edited by Martin Kenner and James Petras (Grove, \$1.45).

"Self-Criticism on Latin America," by the Steering Committee of the International Majority Tendency (International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Vol. XIII, No. 8 in December 1976).

In addition a draft resolution on Latin America for the Fifth World Congress Since Reunification (Eleventh World Congress) of the Fourth International will be published shortly.

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Introduction

From the beginning of the Cuban revolution, the Cuban leaders were aware that their revolution could not stand alone.

Even prior to launching guerrilla struggle in Cuba, Castro had become involved in struggles in Colombia and the Dominican Republic, while Guevara had been active in anti-imperialist movements in Argentina and Guatemala.

With the overturn of capitalism in Cuba, the internationalist outlook of the Castroists deepened. They took a special interest in Latin America, since their isolation in the West-

ern Hemisphere was a constant threat.

However the Cubans conceived of extending the revolution by applying their version of the model of the Cuban revolution, which became commonly known as Guevarism. This projected the opening of guerrilla warfare against a repressive regime by a small group of militants in the countryside. Such a struggle would gradually break up the repressive forces and enter the cities with mass support. The guerrillas' military victories were seen as the spark that would eventually lead to mass mobilizations of the workers and peasants. This was, in actuality, a misconception of the role the masses played in the Cuban revolution. The key to Castro's success was not simply military victories, but the masses' recognition of the July 26 Movement as an uncompromising alternative leadership to the Stalinists and bourgeois liberals.

The idea that the role of guerrilla warfare in the Cuban revolution could be repeated successfully throughout Latin America ignored the fact that the imperialists were now keenly aware of the socialist potentialities of such revolutionary movements and were prepared to take immediate and decisive measures against insurgents. It also ignored the possibilities that existed for even broader mass mobilizations centered in the cities. And it ignored the political role of the Stalinists, projecting instead that they could serve as the base for an anti-imperialist struggle provided they accepted the guerrilla warfare strategy.

In addition, the Cubans had no revolutionary strategy to propose for workers in the advanced capitalist countries--leading to the indifference in the Cuban press toward the French upsurge of May 1968 (although they have supported struggles of oppressed nationalities in the U.S.).

The need for a revolutionary Marxist party, program, and strategy was brushed off in favor of a strategy of guerrilla warfare. Support to this form of struggle was presented as the sole test of a revolutionist. This made it easier for Castro's Stalinist opponents to score points by hypocritically stressing the need for a Leninist party, the importance of the urban workers and the dangers of adventurism.

The Cubans did not always put their internationalist convictions into practice. In the case of the Mexican government, which retained diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba in contrast to the blockade imposed by the U.S. and its Latin American puppets, the Castro regime took an uncritical line. It even passed over in silence the murder of hundreds of Mexican student demonstrators in 1968. Further, the Cubans entertained illusions about bourgeois governments that adopted leftist rhetoric and took anti-imperialist stands (ranging from Goulart in Brazil in the early 1960s to the Manley government in Jamaica today).

Unlike the Soviet and Chinese bureaucrats, however, the Castroists have never offered their services to imperialism against the world revolution in exchange for economic and commercial deals. The stands they have taken on Africa and Puerto Rico, even while expressing a strong desire to normalize trade and diplomatic relations with the United States, are an example of their adherence to an anti-imperialist course.

The Vietnam war heightened the Cubans' internationalism. They demanded that the workers states unite for decisive action in defense of Vietnam. On their own part, the Cubans decided to back guerrilla movements throughout Latin America in an effort to create a new front against the imperialists. The OLAS conference in 1967 was a public demonstration in favor of this course.

Guevara left Cuba to go to Bolivia in 1966 to put this line into action. He launched a guerrilla front in the mountains, with a small band including several other members of the central committee of the Cuban Communist Party. They counted on help from Bolivian Stalinists but got sabotage instead. Unable to quickly win massive peasant backing as they had hoped, the guerrillas were hunted down by counterinsurgency forces specially trained and directed by the U.S. imperialists.

The Cubans failed to win any major victories. They therefore pulled back from large-scale support to or encouragement of guerrilla warfare. They have never made a political critique of this strategy and continue to back guerrilla struggles where the opportunity offers.

The Cubans' advocacy of guerrilla warfare in direct opposition to the Stalinist "peaceful coexistence" line had brought the Cubans into sharp conflict with the Soviet bureaucracy and the pro-Moscow CPs. They saw Castroism as a threat to their collaboration with imperialism.

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Questions for individual reports and discussion

- 1-How does the internationalist outlook of the Cuban leaders differ from the Stalinist line of "peaceful coexistence"?
- 2-How does the international outlook of the Cuban leaders differ from Leninist internationalism?
- 3-What were some of the aspects of the Cuban pattern that later guerrilla fronts couldn't repeat?
- 4-Is a universal strategy of guerrilla warfare in contradiction to building a Leninist party?
- 5-How would you evaluate the Cuban attitude toward Vietnam? Toward the prospects for socialism in the U.S. and other imperialist countries?
- 6-Since foreign policy is basically an extension of domestic policy, what does the international course of the Cubans indicate about the domestic regime?

7-One of the points in the document, "For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement" adopted by the Reunification Congress of the Fourth International in 1963, states:

"Along the road of a revolution beginning with simple democratic demands and ending in the rupture of capitalist property relations, guerrilla warfare conducted by landless peasant and semiproletarian forces, under a leadership that becomes committed to carrying the revolution through to a conclusion, can play a decisive role in undermining and precipitating the downfall of a colonial or semicolonial power. This is one of the main lessons to be drawn from experience since the Second World War. It must be consciously incorporated into the strategy of building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries."

In view of the Cuban revolution, the subsequent failure of Guevarism, and struggles in Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Angola, and Mozambique, do you think that this position is valid?

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Class 4-The Castro Government and Stalinism

Reading:

Dynamics, pp. 249-378

Other Reading:

"The Revolution Must be A School of Unfettered Thought," by Fidel Castro (Pioneer, \$.25, out of print); also in the April 2, 1962, issue of the Militant.

Against Bureaucracy and Sectarianism by Fidel Castro (Pioneer, \$.35, out of print); also excerpted in the April 16, 1962, issue of the Militant.

On the Events in Czechoslovakia, by Fidel Castro, published in English in several editions by the Cuban government; also in September 2, 9, and 16, 1968 issues of Intercontinental Press.

The Revolution Betrayed by Leon Trotsky (Pathfinder, \$4.95).

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Introduction

The Castro regime has been under heavy pressure due to its extreme dependence on aid from the Stalinist rulers of the Soviet Union and its isolation in the Western Hemisphere. This has fostered concessions to Stalinism inside and outside Cuba including: the absence of public debate in the press; attacks on cultural freedom such as the brief imprisonment in 1971 of the poet Padilla followed by his "recantation"; the establishment of ranks in the army; the existence of some privileges for many officials; persecution of homosexuals; support to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

At various junctures such developments have led to discussion of whether the Cubans have capitulated to Stalinism, whether in the form of complete submission to the Moscow bureaucrats or in the form of the consolidation of a ruling bureaucratic caste in Cuba. Capitulation would be involved since the Cuban leaders won power and overturned capitalism independently of the Stalinists and against their class-collaborationist orientation. Conflict both with Cuban Stalinists like Escalante and with the Soviet rulers has marked important stages of the Cuban revolution.

Stalinism in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, and North Korea is a political system that defends and fosters a crystallized caste of bureaucrats who possess substantial material privileges at the expense of the working masses, while resting on the economic foundations of a workers state. An anti-bureaucratic revolution is required to overturn such regimes and establish workers democracy while preserving the progressive economic foundations.

Internationally, Stalinist leaderships seek deals with imperialism at the expense of the world revolution, in line with the myth that they are building "socialism in one country."

Counter-revolutionary collaboration with the imperialists is not only aimed at blocking imperialist attacks on the workers states (at which it is strikingly ineffective as in the cases of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam). It stems from the bureaucrats' fears that revolution anywhere in the world will stir the masses at home into antibureaucratic struggles.

The basic social measures of the Cuban revolution were aimed against privilege and in defense of the workers and poor farmers; among the most striking were the measures taken against racism. These contrast sharply with the policies of the Soviet and Chinese bureaucrats on the national question (or the attitude of the Polish bureaucrats toward Jews or of the Rumanian bureaucrats toward the Hungarian minority). The bureaucratic castes in these cases use national chauvinist prejudices to divide the working masses and reinforce privileges.

The international policy of the Cuban revolution has been directed against imperialism and toward extending the revolution.

The Cuban masses remain the popular base of the regime, and not privileged sectors of the population.

While there have been ups and downs in the level of popular morale and mobilization, there has not been demoralization and demobilization of the Cuban masses on the scale of what occurred in the USSR at the time of Stalin's rise. Such demoralization and demobilization played a critical role in making possible the consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

The Cuban current remains distinct from Stalinism, even in some of the worst positions of the Cuban leaders as in the case of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Of course if institutions of proletarian democracy are not established and the revolution remains isolated, the defeat of the Cuban revolution is inevitable. In this case, the Stalinist degeneration or Stalinist overturn of the leadership would be a more-or-less prolonged phase of the counterrevolutionary process.

However neither the isolation of the revolution, nor the complete exclusion of the working masses from political power is inevitable. Events can take an opposite course. That is why we continue to fight "for the soul of the Cuban revolution."

The Trotskyist program for Cuba is one of reform along Leninist lines rather than political revolution as in the Soviet Union and China.

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Questions for individual reports or group discussion

- 1-What do we need to know to determine that a hardened bureaucratic caste rules in Cuba? Are violations of democratic rights, attacks on Trotskyism, or the absence of soviets enough?
- 2-Compare the characteristics of the Castro regime with those of Brezhnev and Mao; the Vietnamese leaders; Tito; Kim Il Sung.
- 3-What were the fundamental errors in Castro's speech on Czechoslovakia? What did it show about Cuba's attitude toward the Kremlin?
- 4-Why do Stalinist bureaucrats need deals with imperialism at the expense of the world revolution? Has Castro's effort to gain diplomatic relations and end of the economic blockade from the U.S. rulers had this character?
- 5-Give some examples of the Castro regime's attitude toward the Cuban masses.
- 6-Is the triumph of Stalinism inevitable in Cuba?
- 7-What program would you consider advancing to combat bureaucratism in Cuba?
- 8-How can Trotskyists outside Cuba best advance the Cuban revolution?

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Class 5-Cuba's Role in the African Liberation Struggle

Reading:

Dynamics, pp. 5-17.

Other Readings:

Upsurge in Africa, by David Frankel (Pathfinder \$.75.)

"The Social Upheaval that Ended Haile Selassie's Regime" and "Meaning of the Somalian Military Attack," by Ernest Harsch in the September 25, 1978 and October 2, 1978 issues of Intercontinental Press/Inprecor.

Introduction

The Cuban intervention in Africa escalated at a time when it appeared Cuban-U.S. relations were improving. Seeing an opportunity to advance the anti-imperialist struggle, the Castro leadership chose this point to intervene first in Angola, and then in Ethiopia to block imperialist plans. Now they are beginning to become involved as military advisers to the guerrilla movement in Rhodesia.

Thus the Cubans chose to confront imperialism in this sensitive area thousands of miles away rather than reach a "detente" with the imperialists. This reflects the priority the Cuban leaders put on extending the revolution.

The political side of the Cuban intervention has been profoundly flawed. They give political support to petty-bourgeois leaderships like the MPLA and the Dergue in Ethiopia. Such political commitments lead the Cuban leaders to verbally attack the Eritrean liberation movement even though the Cubans have avoided military involvement in that conflict.

Is Cuba intervening as a Soviet pawn? This is not the first Cuban participation in African struggles. Che Guevara fought in the Congo when he was still a top government leader, and Cuba sent troops to aid the Ben Bella regime in Algeria against an attack from Morocco. No evidence indicates that Cuba's role is any more dictated by the Kremlin than its actions in earlier cases (including the formation of the OLAS and the attempt to foster guerrilla war on a continental scale in Latin America). Such willingness to take big risks to advance the struggle against imperialism has never been shown by the Soviet bureaucrats.

The characteristics of the Cuban leaders--the placing of revolutionary struggle against imperialism above all other considerations, the desire to extend the revolution, the unwarranted subordination of political to military considerations, and the absence of a clear proletarian line in the struggle--continue to be evidenced in Africa.

At the same time, their ability to deal blows to imperialism and provide aid for liberation movements has tremendously strengthened the African liberation struggle and therefore also the Cuban revolution.

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Questions for individual reports and group discussion

- 1-What role did the Cubans play in Angola?
- 2-Why was the Somalian invasion of Eastern Ethiopia reactionary?
What about the right of the Ogaden Somalis to self-determination?
- 3-How has imperialism reacted to the Cuban intervention in Africa?
How have the liberation movements reacted?
- 4-Why would intervention on the side of the Dergue in Eritrea be harmful for the Cuban revolution?
- 5-Are Cuban actions in these instances consistent with "peaceful coexistence"?
- 6-Are the Cubans acting as Soviet pawns in Africa? If they are not, what accounts for the fact that the Soviet rulers seem to be going along with the Cubans in these instances?
- 7-Why did Cuba intervene in Africa?
- 8-Discuss Hansen's statement that, "Cuban belief in the pre-eminent role of armed force in and of itself--a belief that discounts the power of a correct political program--is being tested in an even clearer way than in Latin America."

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Important note:

Shortly after this study guide was developed, Pathfinder Press was able to make available the Selected Speeches of Fidel Castro in an Education for Socialists publication, Pathfinder Press, \$4.00. Containing 134 pages, these are invaluable in studying the origins and history of the Cuban revolution.

Contents of the publication are:

- ."Twenty Years of the Cuban Revolution" by Jack Barnes
- .by Fidel Castro:
 - ."Speech to the United Nations", 1960
 - ."The Revolution Must Be a School of Unfettered Thought", 1962
 - ."Against Bureaucracy and Sectarianism", 1962
 - ."The Road to Revolution in Latin America", 1963
 - ."Those Who Are Not Revolutionary Fighters Cannot be Called Communists", 1967
 - ."On the Events in Czechoslovakia", 1968
 - ."On Somalia/Ethiopia", 1978
 - ."The Twentieth Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution", 1979

Also available from Pathfinder Press in pamphlet form is The Second Declaration of Havana, by Fidel Castro, 90¢.

TEAMSTER REBELLION

Two Classes

Class I--The Background

Required Reading: Teamster Rebellion, by Farrell Dobbs (New York: Monad Press, 1972, \$2.25 paper), pp. 17-105.

Supplementary Reading: "The IWW--The Great Anticipation" in The First Ten Years of American Communism, by James P. Cannon (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973, \$3.35 paper), pp. 277-310; Labor's Giant Step, by Art Preis (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972, \$3.95), pp. 3-33; American Labor Struggles, by Samuel Yellen (New York: Monad, 1974, \$3.95 paper), pp. 327-58.

Objective

The objective of this first class is to place the Minneapolis events in their proper context, showing the kind of situation in which the building of a union on revolutionary class-struggle principles became possible. This way we can bring out the important parallels between that period and ours, as well as clarify the distinct characteristics of our own period. We can begin to draw the essential lessons from this experience in revolutionary leadership in the trade unions so as to be able to apply them creatively in the situation we currently face.

A. Economic Background

The strikes occurred under conditions of a deep economic depression. These conditions had existed for more than four years. In response, a certain amount of activity took place among the unemployed, but very few strike struggles occurred. The reason for this was the vast numbers of the unemployed and the fear of unemployment among those who remained employed. However, the depression had had a deep radicalizing effect upon the thinking of millions of workers. When activity once again occurred among employed workers, this activity took on a bitter explosive form within which revolutionists could quickly come to the fore.

Today we have entered the first stage of a worldwide capitalist economic crisis that can in time produce conditions as bad as those of the 1930s. In the first stage of this crisis once again the rise of unemployment, the shock of the crisis, and the incapacity of the union leadership have had a dampening effect on labor struggles, producing setbacks and retreats. But we can see a radicalizing impact on the thinking of workers, a search for an approach to fighting back.

At this stage it is the capitalists who are on the offensive--reducing the real wages of the mass of American workers, driving up productivity, cutting back on social services. We are beginning to see the development of a fight-back movement within the working class. Steelworkers Fight Back is the first major sign of this trend. The issue is who will bear the brunt

of the economic crisis. As this struggle develops, and as the economic crisis continues and deepens, events here will take on an explosive character.

B. The Political Background

The 1932 presidential election produced a Democratic Party sweep around Franklin Delano Roosevelt. This produced illusions among the working class about the new government, but also spurred hopes for a way out of the horrible bind of depression. By 1934 workers were no longer willing to wait for the government to somehow solve their problems. They were prepared to fight for their own interests.

There was a special peculiarity in the Minnesota political scene with the existence of the Farmer-Labor Party, which had captured the governorship. This party was quite distinct from the two major capitalist parties, being formed out of an alliance of trade unions and farmer organizations. Yet it did not have an anticapitalist program and, under Governor Olson, was helping to administer and uphold a capitalist state. On the national level, it supported Roosevelt.

However, the election of Olson as governor encouraged the working class in its independent actions, while the worker and farmer base of this party somewhat limited Olson's ability to carry out fully the dictates of capital. This was why the Minneapolis employers sought for as long as possible to utilize the local police and private thugs rather than state police and military forces.

This contradictory situation opened up a great opportunity for revolutionists in Minneapolis to expose the bourgeois-oriented leadership of the party while politically educating its working-class following.

Today Carter has also raised both illusions and aspirations of workers, though on a far more modest scale than FDR. These illusions are beginning to disappear just a few short months after the election. This is an indication of the vulnerable position of the reformist union bureaucrats in a period when their methods cannot provide gains or even hold the ground won previously.

We do not now have anywhere in the United States a mass workers party, even a reformist one like the Farmer-Labor Party. This is why we stress propaganda efforts, as well as searching for openings, to promote the formation of a labor party.

C. The Situation in the Trade Unions

The only existing trade-union movement in 1934 was the small, craft-oriented, and conservative American Federation of Labor, which had only three million members. For this reason, the central task facing the working class was the organization

of the mass of the working class into industrial unions. All the great class battles of the 1930s centered on this.

The United States has followed what can be called the British variant of class organization as contrasted to the German, or general European, model. In Germany, and elsewhere in Europe, including Russia, the working class developed political class consciousness and joined mass socialist parties. Then these parties built trade unions. This has affected the structure of the trade-union movement to this day with Social Democratic-controlled unions and Stalinist-controlled unions,

In England the workers first organized trade unions. Then, as these trade unions came into increasing conflict with the government, the unions established the Labour Party to represent the unions politically.

The main thrust of American working-class struggle has followed the British pattern. Revolutionists achieved considerable influence to the extent that they were part of the battle to establish unions, while socialist political organizations have had a more difficult time getting a following.

The second major task facing American workers in the 1930s still faces us today--the creation of a mass political party of the working class. We do not imply by referring to it as the "second" task that it was of less importance than the organization of mass industrial unions. Only that this task could only be accomplished through confronting the first task. Workers in that period could become aware of the need for their own party only as part of mass struggles to create unions. These struggles pitted workers not only against the capitalists but against the government and raised both the consciousness of workers and confidence in their own strength as a class.

There was also another important factor in the American working class. American workers had experienced a widespread labor radicalization especially prior to World War I. The Industrial Workers of the World was the major, but not the only, manifestation of this radicalization. These early revolutionary attempts to create militant class-struggle industrial unions had made their mark on the consciousness of workers and had left an important layer of class-struggle fighters within the working class.

The struggles of 1934 thus did not begin from nothing. They rested upon a pioneer tradition that contributed to these struggles as well as to the development of the CIO. Also, class-struggle fighters existed within the labor movement who could come forward in the new battles.

The situation we face today is distinct from that in 1934--in fact it has been created in part by the success of those early struggles at least on an organizational level. We do not face the task of organizing the unorganized as the main axis of

mass struggles. Of course, there remain massive layers of unorganized workers everywhere, and big struggles will be waged around this demand in the South, among agricultural workers, by layers of unionized workers faced with the growth of nonunion labor (construction, printing), etc. But basic industries like auto and steel are overwhelmingly unionized, and union organization has grown even among traditionally nonunion areas like teachers and government employees.

These existing unions are dominated by class-collaborationist privileged bureaucrats who are accustomed to acting as mediators between the bosses and the workers--and often act as policemen for the bosses over the workers. This privileged layer can carry out such functions, and protect their own positions and economic privileges, only by strangling union democracy and tying down the rank and file with contract limitations on their right to strike and with various forms of government intervention.

The main task we now face is the return of these unions to the control of the workers, combined with a return to the policies of struggle in the interests of those workers against capital. This recapturing, so to speak, of the unions by the working class will require revolutionary leadership of the caliber of Minneapolis, and offer us opportunities for our growth in the unions.

Methods developed in 1934 to express the interests of the rank and file and to develop its strength directly against capital in struggle will therefore become a necessity to meet the new tasks the working class faces today in fighting against the capitalist offensive. At the same time, there will be some differences, coming precisely out of the new situation workers face. The question of union recognition will not be as central an issue, although at a certain stage the employers will begin to challenge the very right of unions to exist. The issue will be how workers can defend their living standards and jobs under conditions of deepening economic crisis. Whole sections of the Transitional Program will become fighting issues for masses of workers: the shorter workweek as a way of defending jobs under conditions of growing unemployment and the sliding scale of wages (escalator clauses) to defend living standards under the impact of growing inflation.

Just as in the 1930s political tasks could be posed only through confronting the task of organizing the unorganized, so today the need for a labor party will become real for millions of workers in the course of their struggles to transform their unions into instruments of class struggle against the employers.

There does not now exist a layer in the trade unions exactly comparable to the ex-Wobblies who were present in the 1930s. Almost forty years have passed since that period. However, the radicalization of the 1960s, which took place largely outside the unions, has had its impact on many young workers of the present. Thus many Black workers will come forward who were

cadres in the Black nationalist organizations of the 1960s or influenced by their ideas. The same is true for the effects of the women's liberation movement on women workers, and of the general student radicalization and antiwar movement on young white workers.

D. The Importance of and Strategic Outlook of the Trotskyists

The events of 1934 on the streets of Minneapolis were prepared in an important fashion by international struggles that go back to 1928 and earlier. Trotskyists were able to play the role they did because of the principled position they took, along with Leon Trotsky, in opposing Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country" and the degeneration of the USSR. Because of this, they were firmly convinced of the revolutionary capacities of the American workers and poised to respond to the first stirrings.

This international struggle aided the Trotskyists in two other, related ways. They did not begin from the defense of the Soviet bureaucracy and its narrow interests but rather from the defense of the working class and its conquests, including the first workers' state. Thus their policies did not change on the basis of the diplomatic twists and turns of the Kremlin as did those of the Stalinists--who zigged and zagged quite independently of the needs of the workers.

The Trotskyists could utilize the immense capital of Marxism as related to questions of tactics and strategy developed to its highest point during the first five years of the Communist International (the tactic of the united front, the need for work within existing unions, etc.). Stalinism, however, meant a break with this tradition and a deep distortion of its lessons.

This can be seen clearly when we contrast the Communist Party's disgraceful role in these events to the Trotskyists' role. It was not just background in the trade-union movement or a feel for the mood of the workers that was decisive. It was this combined with the proper Marxist theoretical training and program. The three Dunne brothers who were Trotskyists played a central role in creating a revolutionary union, while the fourth, Bill Dunne, a skilled trade-union activist who was a supporter of Stalin, played an extremely negative role.

The Trotskyists understood that the mass of American workers, in the first stages of their renewed struggle, would turn to the existing labor movement with its prestige and resources, the AFL, and seek to transform it into an instrument of struggle. This required that the Trotskyists place themselves in the AFL prior to the time of mass struggles and begin work there. Since the class-collaborationist AFL bureaucrats played a generally negative role in struggles, the problem was to find openings for the movement of the masses despite the incompetence of the AFL leadership.

It was not possible to go around this process, as the CP,

then in an ultraleftist phase, attempted to do. Workers would not rally to the type of CP-controlled "revolutionary" unions, outside of and opposed to the AFL unions, the CP tried to develop.

There is a lesson in this for us today. We cannot expect the masses of workers, as they seek a way to fight the stranglehold of the labor bureaucracy, to rally in significant numbers to little radical caucuses in unions (which are little more than an updated version of the old ultraleft "red union" idea, posed within a union). We must instead seek to become part of broader movements, which develop naturally out of the real life of the trade-union movement, though they may have important inadequacies when judged against our full program. Within such formations we will be the ones who will know concretely what to do next based on the real needs of the working class. This is what will attract forces in such formations toward our full program and movement. This is the heart of our strategy in relation to Steelworkers Fight Back.

Questions

1. Contrast the differences in the economic and political situation in 1934 and 1977. What similarities are there and what do these mean for our work?

2. What was the Farmer-Labor Party? What role did it play negatively and what potential did it express positively?

3. Why did the struggle to organize unions precede mass independent political action of the working class in the United States? What meaning does that have for our work today?

4. The main task in 1934 was the organization of the unorganized into industrial unions, while today it is wresting the control of these unions away from the bureaucrats and returning to class-struggle policies and methods. What role can revolutionists play today compared with 1934? To what extent are our tasks similar and to what extent different?

5. Why was it necessary for the Trotskyists to work within the conservative AFL? What was wrong with the "dual unionism" practiced by the CP? What tactical lessons can we learn from this about our present tasks?

6. What is the relationship between Trotsky's struggle against Stalin and the success of the Minneapolis strikes?

Class II--Mass Strategy

Required Reading: Teamster Rebellion, by Farrell Dobbs (New York: Monad Press, 1972, \$2.25 paper), pp. 108-190.

Supplementary Reading: "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" in Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1969, \$1.45 paper), pp. 68-75; The History of American Trotskyism, by James P. Cannon (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972, \$2.95), pp. 139-168.

Objective

This second class will assess the lessons of the three Teamster strikes taken as a whole. The details of the events of the strikes should be brought into the presentation and discussion. However, our aim is to go beyond a mere chronicling of events to get at the essentials of revolutionary unionism in practice, at how union power was mobilized to break down all obstacles to victory. This way we can learn how we can again apply these principles in the present day and in struggles that will develop in the future.

A. Nature of the Labor Bureaucracy

The trade-union bureaucracy is the governing and administrating layer within the union movement with its own privileges and power. Whatever the social origins of individual bureaucrats, it is essentially petty-bourgeois in social outlook and role. It acts to preserve its privileged position at the expense of the working class and in collusion with the capitalist class. Throughout this whole struggle this layer in the unions tried as best it could to prevent the struggle, to compromise the basic issues in the battle, to rely on the government while opposing the mobilization of the working class.

At the same time this bureaucracy rests upon the trade unions, which are working-class organizations. It needs these unions for its own survival. This contradiction had to be played upon time and time again in the effort to get the necessary support from different unions to make the strike successful. At each point the pressure of the masses in action was brought to bear upon this layer.

The layer is not completely homogeneous. It comes in part out of the working class, and different individuals are more responsive than others to the initiatives of the working class, especially on the lower levels. Exploiting these differences became crucial for the struggle.

Essentially, the Minneapolis Trotskyists used a flanking tactic. The revolutionists were not strong enough to lead

the class in a direct onslaught on the bureaucracy. Therefore the Trotskyists had to move carefully with whatever forces would permit movement, pressing the bureaucracy for action on the basis of each concrete need of the class as the struggle unfolded.

B. The Independent Mobilization and Democratic Decision-Making Role of the Rank and File

Key to the success of the strikes was the direct participation of the workers themselves in conducting the strike and deciding its course. The main vehicle used for this purpose was an organizing committee composed of and elected by rank-and-file workers. This permitted the development of a new leadership, not formalized in any way at the beginning, in the union. This way revolutionists eventually achieved formal leadership of the union as well.

At every key stage the decisions were made by the mass of striking workers themselves, all problems and difficulties discussed out in the open, and any necessary compromises explained clearly as just that--compromises.

It must be stressed that union democracy cannot be tolerated by union bureaucrats. Precisely because these bureaucrats have interests separate from and opposed to the interests of the rank-and-file worker, they can only survive in the long run by distorting and throttling union democracy. Union democracy and class collaboration are mutually exclusive in the long run. Conversely, revolutionary socialists have no interests separate from the mass of workers; we need to encourage the spread of union democracy as widely as possible.

C. The Role of the Government

From the very beginning the struggle was endangered by the pernicious role of government mediation and intervention. The bosses found they could not win against the workers by brute force alone. They sought to take advantage of popular illusions in the "neutrality" of the government.

The strikes succeeded because the Trotskyists understood that the government was the instrument of the ruling class and not some kind of impartial arbiter. This remained true even though a Farmer-Labor leader was governor of the state. Of course, this did not mean that the strikers refused to deal with government mediators. But it meant that they used every incident to expose to the workers the true nature of the government, and relied at all times on the independent mobilization of the working class.

D. The Role of Allies

The struggle to establish unions was a social struggle. It was a struggle for the basic human dignity of the worker, the

right to a bearable living standard and work conditions, and for control over the job. Without the union, the workers had no rights on the job.

To win a social struggle, over the bitter opposition of the capitalists, much more than negotiations and "pull" with capitalist politicians or government administrators -- the methods today's union officials think can solve all problems -- is needed. It requires the mobilization of massive forces to confront the bosses. Similar social struggles will be needed to defend the gains of the union movement in the developing economic crisis.

Such struggles require allies, and the struggle of the Minneapolis Teamsters provided many examples of the struggles for such allies. Today, the union bureaucrats view the bosses and capitalist politicians as their allies, and the Blacks, women, youth, undocumented workers, unemployed, etc., as potential enemies who threaten to undermine their authority and cut into their share of the pie. This is a course that can only produce disaster for American labor.

The Trotskyist leaders of the Teamsters struggle made the opposite choice. They unhesitatingly mobilized the fighting spirit of women in the women's auxiliary, at a time when the organization of women as a militant fighting force was most unusual.

They sought to ally with the small farmers, presenting the union as a considerate ally and a powerful fighting force against the ruling rich.

Instead of ignoring the unemployed or simply rejecting them as potential scabs as the AFL bureaucrats were wont to do, the Minneapolis Teamsters organized them, mobilized them, and fought for their interests.

All these actions were expressions of labor's potential as the leadership of all the oppressed in the battle against all forms of oppression, and it bound the unemployed, the farmers, and others firmly to the Teamsters in the struggle for unionization. It showed the capacity of the unions to come forward as the leadership of a broad social movement, an embryonic and localized form of the struggles that will be needed to replace capitalist rule with working-class rule and accomplish a socialist revolution.

Although there were few Blacks or Chicanos in Minneapolis at this time, and although the role and weight of women in the work force and of the women's movement in politics have changed substantially, the basic approach and attitude of the Teamsters toward the mobilization of allies remains a model.

E. The Role of the Party

The way in which the national party leadership participated in the struggle was important. At the decisive moment, James P. Cannon and several other leaders came directly to the scene to assist the local comrades in the struggle. At the same time not only were the strike activities reinforced, but the party itself was strengthened. It was recognized that the purpose of our trade-union work was not only to advance the working class in the immediate sense of building the union movement but simultaneously to recruit to the party the best militants who came out of the heat of the class struggle. These politically conscious workers would then be the best guarantee of preserving the gains made by the working class, making new conquests, and constructing the leadership needed for a socialist revolution.

F. The Role of Self-Defense

The Trotskyists were more than willing to see the working class answer blow for blow the attacks of the police and the deputized thugs -- and with appropriate weapons. But they approached this question with great caution, never substituting the violence of a minority for the efforts of masses to protect themselves, and even disarming workers at a critical point when such actions might cause a loss of popular support for the strikers and set the strikers up for greater repression. Political considerations were given first place in organizing defense of the strikes.

G. The Role of the "Organizer"

A significant innovation of the strikes was the appearance of a paper, which for a period was daily, produced by the union to counter the lies of the capitalist press. This paper was also a popular way of raising the workers' political consciousness by drawing out the meaning of each concrete experience in the strikes.

H. Lessons for Today

Today we face a far more powerful, corrupt, hardened, high-living, and reactionary labor bureaucracy than existed in 1934 (though Tobin came close to today's model). Our task is not only to continuously expose this bureaucracy but also to seek ways to bring about fissures within it, and through mass pressure create openings for the actions of the working class despite it. To limit oneself to verbal denunciations of it is sterile sectarianism. To rely upon it and not the masses is opportunism of the order of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) and such groups.

At every point we rely upon and build our base within the rank and file. We fight continuously for the ranks' democratic rights within the unions. We also seek openings in strike situations, in internal union movements like the Sadlowski campaign, and other situations where the mass of workers themselves can play the central role in the struggle, determine its course, and gain confidence in their power.

We are also very conscious of the relationship between the trade unions and the mass of the working class and oppressed groups that may not be in the unions. The ability of a union in struggle to reach out to these layers can be decisive to victory in the particular struggle as well as in developing the union movement as a truly social movement.

Today this means specific attention to women, and to the oppressed nationalities. The level of consciousness in these layers is far beyond what it was in the 1930s and is one of the positive aspects of the present situation when contrasted to the 1930s.

Examples of this should be given, such as our perspectives in the anticutbacks struggles; our struggle for community support to the District 1199 hospital workers' strike in New York City; our opposition to Shanker's racist policies, including the 1968 N.Y.C. teachers' strike; our call for modifications in the seniority system to bar discrimination; our stand on undocumented workers; etc.

The role of the party is decisive in all our trade-union work. We seek to combine the immediate struggle in the interests of the union membership, such as throwing ourselves into building Steelworkers Fight Back, with activity to win steelworkers to the party, strengthen the influence of the Militant among steelworkers, and generally increase the weight of our party in the working class.

One striking fact about the history of American labor is the degree to which American workers in their actions are willing to fight class battles in an uncompromising, thorough, and at times even violent, manner. Such battles take on at times almost the characteristics of civil war. Minneapolis in this respect was part of a long tradition that included the 1877 railroad strike, the Molly Maguires in the Pennsylvania coalfields, the Pullman and other strikes of the 1890s, the great battles at Lawrence and Paterson led by the IWW, the bitter Western miners' strikes, and many, many others.

And yet these masses of workers in their thinking remained a good distance away from socialist concepts. Thus masses would fight it out in bloody battles yet still vote Democratic.

Recognizing this weakness in the consciousness of American workers, the capitalists have always sought to break such actions through red-baiting. The Minneapolis Trotskyists were able to counter this red-baiting because rank-and-file workers respected their leadership abilities and supported their trade-union policies.

The workers at times will advance more quickly in concrete class action than in political consciousness. However, American workers will have to go into the political arena as a class opposed to the capitalists in order to defend the gains won on a union level. That is why we propose and fight for a labor party, while building the combat party that is needed for the decisive struggle against the capitalist class and its outmoded social order.

Questions

1. What is the labor bureaucracy? What was its role in 1934 and what role does it play in 1977?
2. Is the bureaucracy completely monolithic? How do we fight it? How does our approach contrast to that of the DSOC? Of the Spartacist League?
3. How can the rank-and-file workers be brought forward in the unions of today? How has their activity and initiative been shackled in the unions? Why are union democracy and class collaboration incompatible?
4. What is the nature of the government and the state? How was this nature shown in the 1934 events? How is it expressed today? How do we act in relation to the government in our trade-union work?
5. What do we mean when we speak of the labor movement becoming a social movement? How did this happen in 1934? In what similar and in what different ways will this happen today? Explain concretely in terms of Steelworkers Fight Back, anti-cutbacks struggles, and other union struggles today.
6. What changes have taken place among the oppressed nationalities to give them a different role in union struggles today than in 1934? What changes does this require of us to make in our approach to union work? How does the changing consciousness of American women affect our approach to trade-union work? Did the work of the Minneapolis Teamsters offer any indication of how to approach other oppressed groups?
7. The greatest contradiction of the American working class is the contrast between its capacity for militant union struggles and its persistent backwardness politically. How can we act to resolve this contradiction in the next period?

TEAMSTER POWER

Two Classes

Class I--A Fight for Democratic Rights in the Unions

Required Reading: Teamster Power, by Farrell Dobbs (New York: Monad Press, 1973, \$2.95 paper), pp. 8-132.

Supplementary Reading: "The Making of a Union Bureaucrat," by Marvel Scholl, and "Steel Union: Case History of Bureaucratism," by Farrell Dobbs, appendices I and II of SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 35, No. 2 in 1977; The Fight for Union Democracy in Steel, by Andy Rose (New York: Pathfinder, \$.50) and A Struggle for Union Democracy, by Ed Heisler (New York: Pathfinder, \$.75).

Objective

This class should provide an introduction to the problem of building a class-struggle left wing in the unions, the problem of relations with the union bureaucracy, and the need for union democracy.

A. Union Democracy

Tobin saw the existence of Local 574 and its class-struggle practices as a challenge to his position and his concept of unionism. As Tobin saw it, he "represented" a small body of workers in establishing wages, hours, and working conditions. In his dealings with the bosses, he sought peace and collaboration in the solution of "common" problems. In return for these services, he expected to be assured of a substantially higher standard of living than the workers he represented and a chance to hobnob with the high and mighty.

A union encompassing tens of thousands of militant workers endangered this cozy existence, but a democratic union of that type could destroy it. Union democracy means the workers have the power to use the union power in their own interests. This inevitably leads away from class peace and toward sharper confrontations with the bosses.

It also, of course, reduces the possibility for the leadership to develop close ties with the bosses and the government, for officials who did that would soon be out on their ear. And it cuts across the accumulation of material privileges through holding union office.

Union bureaucrats much prefer to keep union politics as the business of an "official family" of bureaucrats who really "understand unionism" unlike, for instance, thousands of young, Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and/or female workers who are still "wet behind the ears" and can't be expected to grasp the "complicated" problems of "labor-management relations."

In relatively prosperous times, workers are usually content

to leave the unions to the bureaucrats. Thus in the 1940s and 1950s they consolidated their positions, grew used to unchallenged rule, and carried out class collaboration with minimal interference. Since the state of the economy made concessions relatively easy for the capitalists and didn't rule out continually rising profits, the workers looked to personal and individual solutions of their problems.

However, when the capitalists were compelled by the economic crisis to take the offensive against the workers, the workers found themselves saddled with an incompetent leadership that paralyzed their struggle. At the same time, the workers had need of the broadest defensive organizations to fight back--and that meant the unions. That makes the problem of union leadership a practical problem for the workers--a problem of assuring jobs, safe working conditions, and decent pay. That is why we today begin to see challenges to the bureaucracy like Steelworkers Fight Back. The workers need the unions, and therefore they have to get them back from the bureaucrats who regard them as private property.

B. Flanking Tactics and Creating a Left Wing

The nucleus of a left wing in the Teamsters union did not take shape over the issue of opposition to the leadership. Socialists did not have the strength in the ranks to make such a challenge. Further, such a challenge could be seen by workers used to bureaucratic infighting as merely another case of the outs against the ins. The socialists took the course of mobilizing around the main tasks facing the union--what it had to do in order to grow and serve the membership: organizing Minneapolis, later organizing the eleven-state region, and fighting against the undemocratic attempt to destroy 574.

This is often called a "flanking tactic." On the one hand, it tries to generate enough class-struggle pressure within the union to allow working-class needs to be fought for despite the obstacles presented by the bureaucracy; secondly, it can have the effect of splitting sections of the bureaucracy who decide, for one reason or another, to respond to these pressures; and third, it educates the workers about why they need a class-struggle leadership and trains new layers of class-struggle leadership among the union ranks.

C. Divisions Within the Bureaucracy

These divisions played an important role at each stage of the Teamsters union struggle. First, there was the winning of Bill Brown, president of Local 574, to the perspective of a militant union-building campaign. This was important in helping to keep the hardened bureaucrats around Cliff Hall on the executive board on the defensive.

The most striking instance was the winning of the leaders of Tobin's fake Local 500--Corcoran, Murphy, Wagner--to the class-

struggle union policies advocated by the socialists.

Finally, there was the instance of winning Tobin's support to the eleven-state campaign.

Each of these instances was different. Brown became a revolutionary socialist who didn't formally join the party for personal reasons. Corcoran was not won to the party's overall perspectives, but became a real fighter for its class-struggle union policies. Tobin saw simply a chance to build up his power and his personal privileges through expanding the union along the lines Dobbs proposed.

Such breaks in the bureaucracy are inevitable in a period of rising class struggle. Different officials have different backgrounds, different degrees of closeness to the ranks--and even different levels of character and moral fiber can make a difference.

Some people become bureaucrats because of devotion to the labor movement combined with a lack of deeper class consciousness. Becoming an official seems a logical way to devote oneself to building the union. Of course, such people are likely to be corrupted into bureaucrats of the most rotten type, but under the pressure of the ranks, a more favorable development can also take place.

The Sadlowski campaign represents an example of such a break. Whatever the future development of the group of officials around Sadlowski, we can be certain it will not be the last such break. Some sectors of the officialdom will respond, to varying degrees, to the growing dissatisfaction of the ranks and the desire to win some victories.

However, these breaks--while they can provide important tactical openings, and, on occasion, even solid supporters of the revolutionary movement like Bill Brown--are not the key to building a class-struggle left wing--much less the party--in the unions. The key is the ranks. If there are stirrings in the officialdom, it is because of much more powerful stirrings in their base. The ranks will be the driving force in the class-struggle left wing as they were at every single stage of the Teamsters struggles described by Dobbs--and they are the forces who will produce revolutionary leadership for the unions and cadres for the party.

Questions

1. How do the Steelworkers union leaders think about the union movement? What is their attitude to union democracy?
2. Give some current examples of "flanking tactics."
3. Why do divisions occur in the bureaucracy? Why did Steelworkers Fight Back have the program it put forward rather than a more typical "union oppositionist" program like the one

Abel put forward in 1965?

4. What are some of the starting points for a class-struggle left wing today?

5. Why didn't a class-struggle left wing fully develop in the 1930s?

6. Why can't left-wing officials be the base of a class-struggle left wing?

7. What was the role of the ranks in the Teamsters struggles?

8. Why are further developments like Steelworkers Fight Back inevitable?

Class II--Union Power

Required Reading: Teamster Power, pp. 132-250.

Supplementary Reading: "Perspectives and Tactics in the Unions," by Farrell Dobbs, Appendix III of SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 35, No. 2 in 1977.

Objective

This class should seek to instill into those attending the classes a sense of the power and potential of the union movement, and its capacities as a combat organization when competently led. Secondly, it should stress the role of revolutionary principles in union work, and some of the reasons why a left wing did not fully develop in the Teamsters or other unions.

A. Union Power

The building of the eleven-state Teamster organizing drive is one of the most impressive exhibitions of union power seen in this country. The union was organized in a disciplined fashion for a decisive fight with the bosses. Union power--the organized power of the working class--was brought to bear in the Omaha strike to slowly choke off the capacity of the bosses to resist. Tobin said the organization of the campaign reminded him of a military campaign, and he was right. The workers' power was the power of their role in production and their numbers. Organized and militantly led, it was hard to beat.

While a union is not like a party in having the right to require its members to support a political line in their public activities--although the union bureaucracy has often tried to do

this--it does have a right to impose the strictest military discipline in struggles with the bosses. A common line has to be carried out in such situations. If the union strikes, all members, including those who--for good or bad reasons--consider a strike inopportune, must participate, etc.

The Teamsters organizing campaign, like the Minneapolis strikes, demonstrated the existence of working-class power that can transform the country. The people who can make production stop are the same people who can make it start and guide it democratically. This, of course, requires stepping beyond economic struggle to the struggle for political power. It means that the workers must contend with the capitalists not only for control of the job, for for control of the country.

Our trade-union strategy is aimed at mobilizing this union power to the maximum. Today it is hog-tied by the union bureaucrats, but it can and will break free. Union democracy will not weaken or lessen or dilute union power but maximize it, centralize it, and direct it at the capitalist enemy.

The power of the Teamsters was such that only one hard-fought strike was needed to win the eleven-state contract--the bitterly fought battle in Omaha. Tobin appreciated this, but he was not alone in this. Workers, from their own point of view, want to see leadership acting responsibly, seeking to win each battle with a minimum of sacrifices. When a leadership shows a capacity to do that, the workers are more ready to follow them in tenses situations where the stakes may be higher. Workers look for signs of good judgment and effective leadership. When workers see these qualities, they become interested in considering seriously the socialist ideas that lie behind them, given a class-struggle situation that radicalizes the workers. Ultra-left currents--who think they make an impression by shouting "strike" and "wildcat" and "sellout" on every conceivable occasion--ignore this basic fact.

B. The Role of the Contract

Dobbs's advice to local union leaders on how to treat contracts is very important. They don't end the class struggle. They simply codify a certain stage in it. Unions need the right to strike and take other forms of job action in order to defend the gains made, and to lay the groundwork for others. Today, the right to strike over grievances has been eliminated in many industries, thus returning decisive power over the job to the boss--while grievances bog down in red tape. This is the product of the view that the contract is a sacred compact between workers and employers. Employers know better.

C. Leaving the Teamsters

Farrell Dobbs left his post on the organizing staff of the Teamsters to devote himself to internal party work for a variety of reasons. One was the fact that the party itself was under-

going an internal crisis and had urgent need of his help. A second reason was changes in the political situation.

War was approaching. Tobin was fully committed to support of the war. In Minneapolis, there was a highly conscious union, educated in the need to take class-struggle positions as issues arose, but this was an isolated phenomenon at the time in American labor. In most areas, the bureaucrats with their class-collaborationist, progovernment perspective were supporting Roosevelt and readying for war.

Dobbs could only retain his post if he would support the war. Given the objective situation, there was no chance of organizing a revolt on a scale that would reverse the national union's course in time. Therefore he gave up his post, while retaining membership in Local 544.

His conversations with Tobin and Sandy O'Brien show the difference between the outlook of a revolutionary socialist in the unions and a class-collaborationist bureaucrat--even a rather militant one like O'Brien. The latter approach the issues from the point of view of their careers, their families, their incomes, and Dobbs's outlook was incomprehensible.

Dobbs realized that he could not use a high post to build up an opposition around himself. Talent was not enough to overcome political difficulties and political differences. If he had remained in his post, he would have had to adapt to the bureaucrats even if he had deluded himself that he was maintaining his revolutionary course. (The bureaucrats themselves were willing to live with this illusion for a time.) Dobbs never considered this course.

The key to building a left wing is not individual talent--although this can make a contribution--but party strength in the unions and the organization and strength of the militant ranks.

Questions

1. Why was Local 544 an isolated phenomenon in American labor? Did this have anything to do with the relative strength of the Stalinists and Social Democrats compared to that of the Trotskyists?
2. How could union power be exercised to fight the cutbacks?
3. Some currents have called for strikes to protest the ENA in steel. What do you think?
4. Did the failure of a national left wing to appear mean that the work of the Trotskyists had been in vain?
5. What is the relationship between the union bureaucracy and union power? Between union democracy and union power?

TEAMSTER POLITICS

Two Classes

Class I--The Struggle for Independent Working-Class Political Action

Required Reading: Teamster Politics, by Farrell Dobbs (New York: Monad Press, 1975, \$2.95 paper), pp. 47-126, 161-74.

Supplementary Reading: From Aspects of Socialist Election Policy (Education for Socialists, \$1.35): "Campaign for a Labor Party!" "Election Policy in 1948," by James P. Cannon, pp. 12-34. From Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974, \$2.45 paper): "Discussions With Trotsky," 113-36, 153-61.

Objective

This class should aim to explain our basic reasons for advocating a labor party, the origins of this policy, and its relevance for today. An important area to take up is how revolutionists fight for their program inside a labor party.

Secondly, the class can take up the policy of the Stalinists in the unions, including the basic similarities and differences between the policies of the Stalinists in the 1930s and the policies they follow today.

A. Why Independent Political Action?

A central problem of the American working-class struggle is the fact that the workers, however militantly they fought in direct struggles with the bosses over the right to unionize, wages, hours, and working conditions, continue to support the parties of the bosses in the elections, voting to keep political power in the hands of their deadly enemies. This reflects the illusion that the needs of the workers can be met without challenging the capitalists for governmental and state power.

The crippling effect of the capitalist-party political monopoly was already evident in the 1930s, through the decisive role of government intervention in strikes--from police and National Guard attacks to the National Labor Relations Board to the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. Capitalist politicians followed policies in time of depression--such as 1937-38--that put the burden of the crisis on the workers, and effectively canceled out or undermined some of the gains won on the industrial battlefield.

Workers need a party to defend their interest in the political arena, just as they need unions to defend their interests in the economic struggles within a plant or industry. Without it, they are the political prisoners of the bosses.

This is even more evident today when workers in industry after industry come under strong government pressure to settle for less; when a powerful web of legal restrictions have been set up to keep the working-class struggle within bounds acceptable to the capitalists; and when huge sections of the working class--government employees, railroad workers--confront the government immediately as an opponent in the initial phases of the most modest job actions.

Government intervention into the economy in the interests of the capitalists has become so pervasive that gains won on the economic arena can be wiped out overnight by cutbacks, monetary policies, etc. The government is coordinating and driving forward the offensive against workers' living standards. This process is made much easier for the capitalists when the workers vote for capitalist parties.

Revolutionary socialists, from the time of Marx, advocated independent political action of the workers and aimed to build a mass workers' party. At times, this simply meant posing the revolutionary party as the real alternative. Ultimately, this is the only kind of party that is truly independent of the capitalists. This was the policy of the Trotskyists in the early 1930s. At that time, they were not convinced that a working-class radicalization would pass through any intermediate form like a party based on the trade unions--a labor party.

B. The Labor Party

However, in the 1930s, revolutionists confronted a big problem of tactics. Labor militancy far outstripped the growth of the revolutionary party. Workers began to see the need for a party to represent their interests before they had clarified many other important questions of program. As they poured into the unions, their natural impulse was to use these working-class organizations as the basis for a party to uphold their needs.

This was reflected in the 1936 UAW convention's vote calling for the formation of a labor party.

Another factor was the role of the trade-union bureaucracy. They did not favor the labor party demand. They wanted to channel labor support into the Democratic Party, in order to control the militancy of the upsurge and in the hopes of getting concessions from the Democratic Party in return for their vote-getting efforts.

But they had to maneuver with the rank-and-file sentiment for a labor party. So they formed Labor's Non-Partisan League--to get votes for Roosevelt. This was the first large-scale political operation by organized labor--a break with the formal "antipolitics" stand of the old AFL unions. In New York, they formed the American Labor Party--to get votes for Roosevelt from workers who couldn't bring themselves to vote for a capitalist ticket. In Minnesota, they sought to forge an alliance of the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party with the national Democratic Party.

Socialists had to decide whether to demand a real national labor party, opposed to the Republicans and Democrats, even though they probably would not agree with the initial program of such a formation. The workers were trying to press in this direction. The socialists could use this stand to educate them in the nature of capitalist politics and politicians, to expose the class collaborationism of the labor leaders, and to fight for revolutionary programmatic planks and class-struggle activities. If they simply posed the revolutionary party as the alternative in opposition to the demand for a labor party, their stand could seem ultimatic to the workers.

So they decided to propose calling for the labor party, for independent political action of the organized labor movement, as the logical needed next step. Within such a formation, revolutionists would fight for the program of revolutionary socialism, giving no support to class-collaborationist ideas and practices. They would seek to recruit to the revolutionary party.

Revolutionists would support independent labor candidates in elections, while criticizing the programs they ran on if these fell short of the needs of the working-class struggle. They would reserve the right to run their own candidates whenever this seemed appropriate.

Under no circumstances would they support a capitalist candidate supported by a labor party or labor-party-type formation. Thus the Trotskyists campaigned against Roosevelt in 1936, even though the American Labor Party and the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party endorsed him. In that election, we supported the Socialist Party candidate, Norman Thomas. (Not until 1948 were the Trotskyists able to run their own presidential campaign).

C. The Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party

This formation was founded in 1919 as an alliance of farmers' groups and labor unions. Although not a "pure" labor party formation, it was dependent on union support and represented

an impulse toward independent political action against the capitalists.

The party's program was thoroughly reformist and class-collaborationist, reflecting the strength of professional politicians, middle-class liberals and labor bureaucrats inside it.

In 1932 Olson was elected governor on this ticket. This was a capitalist government, even though it was elected on the Farmer-Labor ticket, because it defended capitalist property relations, the capitalist state, and stood on a program of reforming capitalism. (In a similar way, the Labor Party government in England is a capitalist government.)

While Olson defended the capitalist system, a Farmer-Labor government was a less reliable defender of capital in labor struggles than was a government headed by a capitalist party. The capitalist class in Minnesota never gave support to the Farmer-Labor Party.

Olson's strategy was to link the FLP to Roosevelt and the Democrats. He and his successors fostered all-party committees, strengthening capitalist party influence in the FLP. They fought against efforts to strengthen labor influence in the FLP. His successor as governor, Elmer Benson, followed the same policy relying on Stalinist support.

At the heart of the faction fights was the question of whether the Farmer-Labor Party was to become an independent labor party based on the unions or to head back into the Democratic Party.

The Trotskyists fought for the independence of the party, a fight that was strengthened when the change of tactics enabled them to put forward the perspective of a national labor party based on the unions.

This became a key issue for the left wing in the unions.

Because the highest point of the labor upsurge had actually passed by mid-1937, and because of the success of the bureaucracy and the Stalinists in putting over the line of supporting Roosevelt, this was generally a rearguard battle against the consolidation of the class-collaborationist course sought by the bureaucracy.

The Farmer-Labor Party experience is important because the fight for independent working-class political action will again be at the heart of the coming battles in the labor movement. Not every potential left-wing formation will start with a

correct position on this, but ultimately failure to break with the Democrats leads to retreat before the bosses and reconciliation with the bureaucracy.

D. The Role of the Stalinist Communist Party

The Communist Party began with a sectarian line of building its own unions independent of the "fascist" unions--the CP designation of the AFL at the time.

This was taken in response to Stalin's declaration of a "third period" requiring a turn toward ultraleftism by all Communist parties regardless of their circumstances.

The ultraleft "third period" was replaced in 1935 by the openly class-collaborationist "popular front." The object in Stalin's view was to establish "collective security" against Hitler by offering political support to capitalist governments in exchange for diplomatic agreement.

With this policy, the CP went back into the unions--not to fight the class collaborationism of the bureaucrats, but to support their orientation toward Roosevelt and the Democrats.

Because of their readiness to help guide the labor upsurge into capitalist political channels, the CP was useful to the union bureaucrats. With the sponsorship of John L. Lewis, they played a powerful role in the CIO, winning the leadership of several powerful unions, and playing a central role in many CIO councils. They became, in fact, an important section of the union bureaucracy. The Communist Party organized the fight to minimize labor influence in the FLP, and to move it toward fusion with the Democrats.

The class-collaborationist policy of the CP did not exclude organizational sectarianism and adventurism. Their campaign against the AF of L in Minneapolis, and their work in the unemployed movement showed this. They were quite capable of indulging in adventurism and sectarianism for class-collaborationist objectives. This remains true today.

Of course, it saw revolutionary socialist influence in the Minneapolis labor movement as a deadly threat, and fought against it with no holds barred. In the end, they supported the Smith Act prosecution of the Trotskyist and Teamster leadership.

The pivot of CP policy at any point was the foreign policy of the Soviet bureaucracy. They thus changed their position on Roosevelt no less than four times. During the "third period" he was a "fascist." During the "popular front" period, he was a friend of labor. When Stalin signed a pact with Hitler in 1939, Roosevelt again became a reactionary (the CP gave backhanded support to the Republican Willkie in the 1940 elections). When Germany invaded the Soviet Union and Stalin again became

an ally of Roosevelt, he became "our Commander in Chief" in the CP press. Ultimately, these unprincipled twists and turns helped to isolate the CP.

Today the Communist Party is much weaker but the class-collaborationist policy (tied to the Soviet Bureaucracy's "peaceful coexistence" strategy) remains the same. The CP continues to seek to channel working-class militancy into the capitalist parties. Ultimately, it claims to favor a new "anti-monopoly" party that will include some bourgeois forces, but presently they are still oriented to the Democrats. Lately, they have begun to put forward the slogan that "working-class candidates" should seek office. Like their calls for "Black candidates," this is aimed at keeping labor political action inside the two-party system.

They tend to abstain from building Steelworkers Fight Back (although influential in some areas) and to oppose its continuation, because they fear the emergence of working-class struggles outside their control that might not easily be turned toward class-collaboration.

Questions

1. Why is political independence of the working class a key issue? Why do workers need their own government?
2. What is a labor party? Why do revolutionary socialists call for such a party? Will calling for such a party cut across building the revolutionary party?
3. Was the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party a labor party? Was it principled to give it critical support? Why?
4. Why is a labor party likely to start out with a reformist program? Is this inevitable? What program do we advocate for a labor party?
5. How do we struggle for independent working-class political action today? What part do our calls for Black and Chicano parties play in this?
6. Does the appearance of Steelworkers Fight Back point in the direction of a labor party?
7. What underlies the political shifts of the Communist Party? The Communist Party was very influential in the unions in the 1930s and 1940s. How and why did it lose this influence?
8. Why is the revolutionary socialist party the only fully independent workers' party?

9. What conditions made the fight for independent political action **in the** 1930s often a rearguard battle? What changes are likely to create a different situation in the coming working class radicalization?

10. Has the Trotskyist position on the labor party always been the same? How and why did it change?

Class II--Defending the Union Movement Against Attack

Required Reading: Teamster Politics, pp. 15-46, 129-59, 177-239.

Supplementary Reading: "Discussion With a CIO Organizer" in Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions (New York: Pathfinder, 1975, \$1.45), pp. 62-68; The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder, 1974, \$2.45), pp. 76-88; Recent Trends in the Labor Movement, by Farrell Dobbs (Education for Socialists, \$.50); Counter-mobilization, by Farrell Dobbs (Education for Socialists, \$.75).

Objective

This class takes up the role of the government toward the labor movement--a role that stems in the last analysis from the class nature of the capitalist state. The different approaches to defense of the movement of the union bureaucrats and socialist militants in the unions should be taken up and applied to today.

Secondly, the class deals with the revolutionary approach to the problems of the unemployed, and how the organized labor movement should relate to the unemployed.

A. Government Attacks on the Unions.

The labor movement, especially its militant sectors but often its bureaucratized and class-collaborationist sectors as well, frequently faces prosecutions and other forms of government harassment. These are aimed at breaking the most militant sectors and assuring the good behavior of class collaborationists through intimidation.

The workers are taught to believe that the government is a neutral and fair-minded arbiter of social conflict, which cracks down only on those who initiate violence. The government **takes** advantage of this illusion and tries to place its attacks on the workers' movement in that light.

The FBI, the Justice Department, the jury system, and all other aspects of the criminal justice apparatus are often brought into coordinated play in such attacks. The selection of biased juries has become a fine art.

The responses of revolutionists and bureaucrats within the labor movement to such attacks reflects the general differences in their orientation. Revolutionists sought to build broad labor campaigns against the prosecution of the Sioux City Teamsters. Tobin, on the other hand, preferred to operate through pulling Democratic Party strings and asking for repayment of electioneering "favors."

Tobin could not view the attacks as part of a firm government antilabor policy aimed at taming and restricting the unions in preparation for war--a policy that would not have stopped at destroying the unions had that proved practically possible. Roosevelt's prosecutions were not an accident, but a conscious effort to intimidate militant unionists and bureaucrats who might be tempted to support them.

Other examples of the same effort can be seen in the ruthless smashing of the Washington Post strike and the prosecution of the Post workers. The current attacks on the United Mine Workers ranks have the same objectives.

B. Antilabor Laws

Having failed to successfully prevent unionization, the ruling class turned to a policy of government regulation aimed at harnessing the union to government--that is, ruling-class--policy.

This was the purpose of labor legislation, then and now--whether it took the seemingly benign form of the Wagner Act, passed in 1947, or the openly antilabor character of the Kennedy-Landrum-Griffin law, passed in 1960.

In the latter law, provisions supposedly assuring democracy were formally included for the union members--but were never intended to be enforced. They were window dressing for the real police and strikebreaking objectives of the laws.

While in one or another case it may be useful to take advantage of such government provisions, union democracy can never be won by relying on the government. The U.S. government has a life and death interest in blocking the democratization of the unions in order to assure union backing for capitalist policies, and union officials' suppression of workers' struggle capacity. The attitude of the government and the ruling class to the recent election in the United Steelworkers demonstrated that.

The bureaucrats response to antilabor legislation in Minnesota was to propose less restrictive government regulation, instead of opposing government controls and fighting for the

independence of the unions. Once again, the revolutionists based themselves in the ranks, mobilizing union power to fight the reactionary law. Under this pressure, many of the officials countenanced a more militant struggle against the "slave labor law."

The AFL-CIO response at the time of Landrum-Griffin was similar to that of the Minnesota officialdom. They expelled the Teamsters from the AFL-CIO on charges of "gangsterism" in the hope of placating the government. They made no attempt to mobilize the Teamster ranks for a democratic union since that would cut right across the interests of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy.

They figured a Democratic congress, elected by a landslide with labor's help in 1958, would save them. So they backed a more moderate bill submitted by Sen. John F. Kennedy. But Kennedy merged his bill with the more openly antilabor Landrum-Griffin bill. The result was a fusion of the most antilabor parts of both bills.

The bureaucrats quickly adjust to living with such restrictions. As long as dues flow in, government restriction and government arbitration are even of some use to the bureaucrats, since they can be pointed to as reasons for accepting inadequate settlements and opposing militant struggles.

C. The Struggle Against Fascism

The tactics Dobbs described are a model of the struggle against fascist attempts to smash the union movement. No reliance was placed on the capitalist government and police, and instead the fascists were answered with a broad mobilization of the union ranks through the formation of the Workers Defense Guard. Note that the fascists' legal rights were not challenged, but that stress was placed on putting a decisive stop to their threatened attacks on the unions in the most effective way.

We have entered a period of polarization now in which fascist as well as revolutionary ideas can be expected to spread. The ruling class will provide greater assistance and backing to fascist formations as the class struggle intensifies. Dobbs's concepts of how to meet them in combat--not merely with a few radicals, but with workers mobilized as a class--will take on increasing importance.

D. Organizing the Unemployed

Today the unions show little interest in the plight of the unemployed. "Job security" programs are aimed at assuring the support of older, male, white workers for the officialdom, as in the case of the current steel contract.

Lip service is given by officials like the UAW's Fraser to the shorter work week as "inevitable," but no struggle to win it is mapped out.

Meanwhile, we have entered another period when the existence of a massive pool of unemployed creates a big problem for the working class. Unemployment is one of the ways the bosses make the workers pay for the crisis. The unemployed are then used to pull down the living standard of the employed section of the class--the fear of unemployment puts a damper on workers' demands -- struggles, and increases the vulnerability of the class to the employer offensive.

The unemployed, hard-pressed economically and forgotten by the unions, can become demoralized. In the battles that established the unions, it was not uncommon for the bosses to try to use the unemployed as scabs. The success of such efforts depends, among other things, on the attitude of the unions toward the unemployed.

The revolutionary socialists propose several demands that workers should raise to deal with unemployment. They are based on a central concept: The bosses are responsible for the crisis, not the workers, and therefore the bosses and not the workers should pay for the crisis. The preservation of the health and well-being of the working class is a key to the future of humanity: the decay and demoralization of sectors of the working class due to chronic unemployment is a setback for humanity.

Thus we propose: a sliding scale of hours (concretized at the present time in the demand for the shorter work week). This means dividing the available work among the available workers with no reduction in total daily pay for the shorter workday. After all, the workers are willing to work. It is the bosses who claim to be unable to provide it. Why should the workers pay for the incapacity of the bosses?

An additional demand is the proposal for a massive public-works program, with the participants paid full union wages. We hold that there are a lot of things our society needs--schools, housing, health facilities, etc. Since the bosses refuse to carry these necessary tasks out on the grounds that they are not profitable, the government is duty bound to provide employment for workers to fulfill these needs. These public-works projects should pay union-scale wages and be under workers' control.

The union movement is the key to winning these demands and it has a life-and-death interest in eliminating unemployment. Only the union movement can provide stable organization and powerful support to the unemployed--given their unstable status and their weak economic power.

Full support to the unemployed and readiness to lead them in struggle was central to the victories the Teamsters won in Minneapolis.

The capitalist government's maneuvers with the unemployment issue in the 1930s show its basic attitude. Fearing social explosions and struggles by organizations of the unemployed like the Federal Workers Section of 574, the government established make-work projects where unemployed workers were kept busy at low wages and in poor working conditions at projects that would not compete with private business--thus they did not carry out the kind of tasks that a massive public-works program of the type we favor would accomplish.

Once government war orders were stepped up, the unemployed were simply dismissed. The priority was given to profitable war spending rather than to meet the needs of the unemployed, who were consigned to the role of providing a pool of cheap labor for big business as war approached.

The Communist Party's role in this flowed from its support to Roosevelt. Any militant movement that challenged Roosevelt or threatened to undermine his working-class support had to be stopped. Hence, the CP's opposition to the strike of the federal workers.

Questions

1. Why aren't capitalist governments, armies, and police neutral in the class struggle? Why don't they just "keep the peace"?
2. How did Roosevelt "solve" the economic crisis of the 1930s? How is Carter trying to solve this crisis?
3. Why is it disastrous for the unions to ignore the unemployed? What are the difficulties of organizing an unemployed movement without strong union backing? What difference did the backing of 574 make in the unemployed movement in Minnesota?
4. Why should the employers and not the workers pay for the economic crisis? What kind of arguments are used today to justify making the workers pay and how do we refute them?
5. How does the approach of the Minneapolis Teamsters under Trotskyist leadership to the fight against fascist attacks differ from the approach of liberals and ultralefts? What is fascism? Under what conditions do fascist movements grow?
6. How do the union officials propose to solve the problem of unemployment today? Discuss these proposals. What planks would a socialist program to fight unemployment include?

TEAMSTER BUREAUCRACYTwo ClassesClass I--Imperialist War and Union Democracy

Required Reading: Teamster Bureaucracy, by Farrell Dobbs (New York: Monad Press, 1977, \$3.95 paper), pp. 13-163.

Supplementary Reading: "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," by Leon Trotsky, in Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions (New York: Pathfinder, 1975), pp. 68-75.

Objective

This class should seek to present the basic themes of Leon Trotsky's "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" and show how they were expressed in the final conflict with Tobin. It should present the revolutionary attitude to imperialist war and government intervention in the unions, and explain why the bureaucracy adopts a different attitude.

A. The Fight Against Imperialist War

Capitalist powers are driven to war by the need to compete with other capitalist powers in seeking new markets for goods and investments. The workers have no interest in supporting any imperialist war, even when (as in World War II) some of the imperialist powers are under a fascist government while others are under a bourgeois-democratic government. Capitalism is the cause of the rise of fascism and dictatorship, and wars are a related aspect of the decay of the system.

The capitalists tried to take advantage of World War II to increase their profits at the expense of the workers and to compel the workers to give up their right to fight back--all in the name of patriotism. It was vitally important, from the bosses' point of view, to have the trade unions support imperialist foreign policy and subordinate the workers' interests to the war.

The trade-union bureaucrats were more than willing to go along with this. As a privileged layer, they saw their future tied up with the expansion of U.S. imperialism, which made it possible for the capitalists to provide some concessions to certain sectors of the working class. These sectors then provide a social base for the bureaucracy.

Further, the bureaucracy tried to court the favor of the government by proving their patriotism and their readiness to suppress antiwar and anti-imperialist sentiment in the ranks.

Even when the majority of workers are patriotic, this policy leads to suppression of union democracy. That is because the union bureaucrats have to suppress the workers' struggles in order to support wars, while the workers (despite the fact that they may support a given war) are forced into conflicts with the capitalists

over wages, hours, and working conditions.

The Minneapolis conflict stemmed from these factors. The rulers could not tolerate a class-struggle labor movement in Minneapolis opposed to the war. Even though isolated at that moment to one city, such a union movement could become a pole of attraction for other class-struggle forces at a later date. Tobin also could not tolerate this, but he could not defeat 544 with his own forces. Full and active backing from the government was required, and this was obtained.

The result was the end of union democracy in the Minneapolis Teamsters movement and the subordination of the union to the interests of the bosses and their government.

With the war, the unions adopted a no-strike pledge, agreeing to accept speedup, etc., for the war efforts. While the unions agreed to limit their wages, the bosses made no such concessions about their profits. They recognized that the war was aimed at advancing the interests of their class against those of the workers, and they made full use of the situation.

Supporting the war inevitably led the union leaders to act as police for the ruling class over the workers movement. It led them to become more integrated into the government, subordinating the workers to government goals, and placing the union movement under the discipline of a network of government boards.

With the end of the war, the imperialists began preparations for a new third world war against the Soviet Union. Most of the union leaders who had supported Roosevelt in World War II quickly lined up behind the new expansionist drive.

This time, however, the Stalinists found themselves out on a limb. They had supported World War II, hailing the U.S. imperialists and their leaders as genuine fighters for democracy. They had called for jailing the Trotskyists for opposing the war. They had called for workers to subordinate everything to the war effort. But, since they were linked to the bureaucrats in the Soviet Union, they could not accept the new counterrevolutionary war drive.

The prowar trade-union bureaucrats then gave the CP leaders a taste of the same medicine that had been given the Trotskyists. They were witch-hunted out of the labor movement on the charge of opposing U.S. foreign policy. The result was a further reduction in union democracy--already largely suppressed in the course of the war.

The basic policy of the union bureaucrats has not changed. They still view their fate as linked to the expansion and prosperity of U.S. capitalism, and therefore to its policies abroad. That is why the bureaucrats were often last-ditch supporters of the Vietnam War (Abel was an example of this). However, this time

they confronted not a small, militant union in the Midwest under Trotskyist leadership or a discredited bunch of Stalinist bureaucrats, but a mass antiwar movement that would not be silenced.

The superpatriotic views of Meany, etc., came to be rejected by more and more union members. This changing outlook is one of the factors that made the development of Steelworkers Fight Back possible.

B. The Fight to Win the Independence of the Unions From the Government

When it became clear that the unions could not be defeated in a head-on confrontation with the workers, the rulers adopted the course of pressuring, policing, and influencing them through the capitalist state.

The union bureaucrats themselves adapted readily to this course. They view the state as an arbitrator where they and the capitalists contend for "influence" within the context of capitalism. Through willingness to "cooperate" and through campaign contributions, etc., they hope to earn favors from the government that will help them retain their base.

A vast network of legislation has been established that restricts the right of workers to organize, strike, bargain collectively, and elect their officers.

The example of Minneapolis shows how such legislation can be used to chop a militant but isolated union to pieces. Such measures can, in fact, be even more effective against a bureaucratized union that gets on the outs with the government (the case of the Teamsters under Hoffa, or, even more, the Communist Party-dominated unions after World War II are examples).

The only road to defeating this web of regulations is the conscious mass actions of the members. These can cut through the whole spider web of laws and boards, establishing the real strength of the ranks and the real relationship of forces. But the national situation in the labor movement, and the changing political situation in the labor movement as a whole, made it impossible for the Minneapolis Trotskyists to mobilize forces on the scale needed.

In many cases, when antilabor restrictive legislation is passed, provisions are included to guarantee certain "union rights" or "membership rights." These are cover for the antilabor purposes of the bill. The ruling-class politicians hope to win acceptance for antilabor legislation by providing it with a "democratic" aura.

This was true in the Stassen antilabor law. It purported to protect workers against various forms of intimidation and to guarantee them the right to choose the union to represent them.

The Trotskyist Teamster leaders unhesitatingly made use of these provisions, even though they had no illusions about the real purposes of such legislation.

Sectarians argue that by appealing to these laws, the Trotskyists were guilty of involving the state in the affairs of the union. (Similarly, sectarian groups have charged that Sadlowski's appeals to the courts for certain democratic rights are the "main" problem facing the United Steelworkers.)

Actually, it was the union bureaucrats who were subordinating the Teamsters to the state by seeking to suppress the rank and file, just as it was Abel-McBride who represented state controls through their support to the government and the Democratic Party and their attempts to stifle the sentiments of the membership. By attempting to make use of provisions in the laws that claimed to guarantee membership rights, the Trotskyists were seeking to limit, not strengthen, government control of the unions. Union democracy and government control of the unions are mutually incompatible.

The Trotskyists were not successful in getting these provisions enforced. They had not been enacted in order to be enforced but simply to prettify antilabor legislation. However, in the course of the current radicalization, the courts have sometimes found it necessary to provide some cover for their generally anti-labor stance by enforcing one or another of these provisions--for instance, barring union officials from stealing an election from the members. While continuing to oppose antilabor legislation (whether or not it includes "democratic" provisions), we do not reject such concessions. However, we do not believe that the courts or any other government agency can be an ally in the fight for union democracy. The capitalist government's role is to suppress union democracy, because union democracy and class collaboration are incompatible in the long run.

Ultimately, the only alternative to deepening capitalist governmental control over the unions, and the transformation into police agencies over the workers instead of fighting organizations of the workers, is the revolutionary trade-union policy followed by the Trotskyists. Only unions committed to opposing class collaboration at every level can effectively combat the historic forces that press the government to submit the unions to its control.

Questions

1. Why don't workers have an interest in supporting imperialist wars?

2. How do revolutionary socialists and trade-union bureaucrats differ in their approach to capitalist foreign policy? How was this expressed in World War II, the cold war, Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, and Angola?

3. Would it have been better for the Minneapolis Trotskyists

to have put less emphasis on their opposition to the war?

4. How were the trends described in Trotsky's "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" expressed in the struggle in Minneapolis? How are they expressed today?

5. Sectarians argue that Steelworkers Fight Back and Miners for Democracy were "spearheaded by the Labor Department" because they appealed for help in getting a fair election. Were they justified in doing so? Does that make them government-controlled?

6. What are the goals of "labor legislation"?

7. What is wrong with the view that the government is a neutral arbitrator between capital and labor?

8. Why must a democratic union be a revolutionary union?

Class II--The Role of the Party in the Union Movement

Required Reading: Teamster Bureaucracy, pp. 169-298.

Supplementary Reading: "Trade Unions in the Transitional Epoch," by Leon Trotsky, in Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions (New York: Pathfinder, 1975), pp. 59-62--also in The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution (New York: Pathfinder, 1974), pp. 77-80; "Defense Policy in the Minneapolis Trial" in Socialism on Trial (New York: Pathfinder, 1975), pp. 116-77.

Objective

This class should seek to summarize the key lessons of the Teamster experience, above all the central importance of the relationship of forces among working-class tendencies in the unions, and therefore the importance of building up party forces in the unions through recruitment.

A. Reasons for the Defeat of Local 544

The key factor in the defeat was the changing objective situation: the approach and arrival of war, the beginning of the end of the depression through war contracts, etc. Patriotic sentiment assured support for the government in wartime even though workers felt squeezed by probusiness policies.

However, the reason why American politics had not been more fundamentally shaken in the preceding period of radicalization lies in other factors as well.

One of the most important was the relationship of forces

among the tendencies in the workers movement. Both Stalinism and Social Democracy entered this period with many more cadres than did the Trotskyists. (The latter made some gains relative to the Social Democrats during the next few years.) The role of the Stalinists was especially important in tying workers to the Democratic Party, because they were identified with the socialist revolution in Russia in the mind of many workers. They could give their class collaborationism a more radical aura than could the Social Democrats.

Thus the Trotskyists were a small minority not only in the working class as a whole, but among the organized political forces contending for leadership of the working class.

Many of these conditions have changed considerably, and will make it more difficult for the ruling class to successfully channel the working-class radicalization that has now begun.

We are not at the end of a depression, but at the beginning of a long-term economic crisis. The capitalists--despite upturns that will occur--are not going to be able or willing to provide jobs for those who need them. They are not going to be able or willing to grant concessions on the scale of previous decades. Instead, they are pressing the workers for more concessions. This process, as it continues, makes a massive fight back by the workers inevitable. The task is to build a party strong enough to win leadership in that inevitable battle.

The relationship of forces in the union movement has changed. The trade-union bureaucrats, who were tolerated or even accepted as militants by many workers in the thirties, have had forty years to prove their incapacity as leaders.

The relationship of forces on the left has changed so that Trotskyists enter onto the new phase of radicalization with a rough equality of cadres relative to the Stalinists and Social Democrats. This puts us in a far stronger position in contending for workers' allegiance than we were in in the 1930s, and that means a lot more difficulty for the bureaucrats in stifling the class-struggle impulses of the workers as these build up.

The instruments of war, racism, sexism, patriotism, etc., used to whip up working-class support for ruling-class policies, have been profoundly undermined by the earlier phases of this radicalization.

B. Defense Against Frame-ups

Teamster Bureaucracy gives a vivid description of the methods used to frame up the Socialist Workers Party and Teamsters union leaders.

They fought back by explaining their ideas, patiently and in an understandable manner. They exposed the government claim that

socialists are advocates of violence. Above all, they built a massive movement to defend civil liberties. This had a real impact in preventing Roosevelt from carrying out still more sweeping repressions during the war.

The Communist Party played a particularly treacherous role during the trial, openly supporting the government and subsequently seeking to block labor support to the defendants. Nonetheless, overwhelming sympathy was won in the ranks of the CIO. The Communist Party's role helped discredit them, so that after the war, labor bureaucrats used the Stalinists' role in the Minneapolis trial as an excuse for refusing to defend Stalinists being tried under the Smith Act.

C. 544--A Revolutionary Union

A union cannot be built around the full program of the revolutionary party. Its basic function is to organize all workers--regardless of their views on political questions--who see the need for an organization to defend them in the day-to-day conflict with the bosses on the job.

What differentiated 544 from other unions was that its leadership recognized--and educated the ranks to understand--that defending the interests of the workers was incompatible with class collaboration in politics. As political issues arose, they educated the members to adopt a class-struggle course on the unemployed, on the fascists, on the war, on the labor party. They did not leap way ahead of the membership but acted as leaders to explain class-struggle concepts and bring the membership along. As a result, they had real support in the union, and radical stands taken by the union were not mere paper resolutions but were backed up by action.

D. The Role of the Party

The key to the strengths of 544 in the last analysis was the role played by the organized Trotskyist forces. The masses of workers cannot spontaneously go beyond militant class-struggle actions on a spontaneous basis. The transformation of the Local 574 that existed in 1933 under Cliff Hall's domination into a revolutionary formation required the active and organized participation of conscious revolutionists out to win the ranks to a class-struggle policy in the course of union battles.

A central factor in the eventual defeat of Local 544 was the weakness of the Trotskyist forces in the organized labor movement, particularly as compared to the Stalinist Communist Party and the Social Democratic formations.

That is why the key to the party's capacity to win the working class in the course of the radicalization is the recruitment of more forces in the union and the consolidation of more cadres. This is our central goal today.

Questions

1. Why can't workers spontaneously develop a revolutionary program?
2. What is the role of the party in the trade-union movement today?
3. How does the relationship of forces between radical tendencies affect the course of the workers movement?
4. Why can't unions substitute for a revolutionary party? Why then do we say that unions must become revolutionary?
5. The Trotskyists were defeated in Minneapolis by a combination of the Teamster bureaucracy with the federal and state governments. Could they have prevented this?
6. In the June 13, 1977, issue of Intercontinental Press, Bob Pearlman quotes Chris Knox, a leader of the Spartacist League, as saying, "When Tobin began to line up behind the war effort, the Trotskyists in Minneapolis opposed the war and won over the Central Labor Union, but they lacked the basis for a factional struggle in the union as a whole that a political caucus orientation might have provided." What do you think of this? Why don't we build caucuses around our full program in the unions? What kind of caucuses might we support?

The Transitional Program

Note: Although this study guide consists of six sessions, this does not mean that the number six is arbitrary. The entire study could be done in less or more. How many is a decision that can only be made by the class organizers.

Texts

The centerpiece is The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution (third edition), by Leon Trotsky. While it is just cited in the first class session, its use, along with other texts, continues through the series.

All the texts indicated are available from Pathfinder Publishers with the exception of SWP Discussion Bulletins, the Party Organizer and the International Internal Discussion Discussion Bulletins. These should be ordered directly from the SWP national office.

The complete listing of texts is provided to aid in preclass planning. Note that in some instances all or a large part of the reference texts should be read; in other instances just an indicated section or chapter.

SessionsTopics & TextsI- The Method of the Transitional Program

Main Text: The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution
(third edition), by Leon Trotsky
Pathfinder Press \$3.95

parts of: Prospects for Socialism in America
Pathfinder Press 3.95

"The Impending Catastrophe..."
What is To Be Done?
by V.I.Lenin
available in pamphlets
or Collected Works of Lenin
Vol. 25

The Communist Manifesto
by Marx & Engels
(Introduction by Leon Trotsky)
Pathfinder Press .95

Rosa Luxemburg Speaks
Introduction by Editor, M.A.Waters
Pathfinder Press 5.95

II- The Importance of Democratic Demands

Main Texts: SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol 33, #5
"The Ludlow Amendment" by George Breitman
Education for Socialists Bulletin,
"Aspects of Socialist Election Policy" .35

III- Trade Unions and the Capitalist Offensive

- Main Texts: Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions
 Pathfinder Press \$1.95
- Party Organizer, Vol 2 # 2, 4/78
"Leading the Party into Industry"
 by Jack Barnes

IV- Uniting the Working Class and its AlliesAll or Parts of:

A Transitional Program for Black Liberation
 (in The Transitional Program book)

The Politics of Chicano Liberation
 by Olga Rodríguez Pathfinder Press 2.45

Socialist Revolution and the Struggle
for Women's Liberation
 (Resolution for 11th World Congress
 IIDB No. 4, 1978)

V- The Labor Party--Key to Working Class Political IndependenceParts of:

Teamster Politics by Farrell Dobbs
 Pathfinder Press 4.45

The History of the Russian Revolution
 Volume I, by Leon Trotsky (3 Vol in 1) 9.00

Education for Socialists Bulletin
"United Front vs. Peoples Front" .50

VI- A Socialist Strategy for LaborParts of:

Teamster Bureaucracy
 by Farrell Dobbs
 Pathfinder Press 4.45

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Discussion leaders, teachers and class participants could make use of the "Class Purpose" and "Key Points" listed in each session. Questions listed at the end of each session can be used for group discussions or individual reports.

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Session I The Method of the Transitional ProgramReadings:in: The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution
(third edition)

- . "Trotsky's Transitional Program: Its Origins and Significance for Today," by Joseph Hansen pp. 9-30
- . "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" pp. 111-152
- . "The Political Backwardness of the American Workers" pp. 155-160
- . "Completing the Program and Putting It to Work" pp. 171-182

in: Prospects for Socialism in America

- . The 1975 SWP Political Resolution, "Prospects for Socialism in America" pp. 19-35

in: What Is To Be Done?

- . Chapter III, "Trade-Union Politics and Social-Democratic Politics," especially section c: "Political Exposures and Training in Revolutionary Activity"; and section e: "The Working Class as Vanguard Fighters for Democracy".

in: The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat it.

Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 25
pp. 327-369

in: The Communist Manifesto

- "The Communist Manifesto Today," by Leon Trotsky pp. 3-11
- "Proletarians and Communists" pp. 27-34

in: Rosa Luxemburg Speaks

- "Speech to the Founding Convention of the German Communist Party" pp. 400-427

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Session Purpose:

This class should seek to spark discussion of the basic aims of the Transitional Program: to move the workers from their present consciousness to an understanding of the need for working class independence of the capitalists at every level; that is, to prepare the working class for a struggle for power; and to educate and train in struggle a new leadership for our class. The struggle against unemployment and inflation play an important role in this.

Key Points to have in mind in preparing this class:

- * The Transitional Program is based on the experience of the Russian revolution and the documents of the first four congresses of the Comintern.
- * The Transitional Program was adopted by the Founding Conference of the Fourth International in September 1938.
- * The Transitional Program proposes a method by which socialists can advance the day to day struggles of working people and their allies while building a mass revolutionary socialist party capable of leading the overwhelming majority in a socialist revolution.
- * The Transitional Program starts from an evaluation of the actual situation and needs of the working masses: that is, the fact that capitalist decay--evidenced in world economic crises and wars--makes socialism a necessity for the survival and progress of humanity.
- * The Transitional Program states, "The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism and second by the treacherous politics of the old workers organizations." (P. 113, para. 4).
- * This is shown in this country by the weight of the bureaucratic leadership's class collaborationist policies on the thinking and morale of workers, women, Blacks and other oppressed and exploited people. But it is also reflected in the fundamental shift in the thinking and orientation of working people produced by a capitalist crisis and offensive.
- * The objective situation impels the masses toward challenging the power of the capitalists and fighting for capitalism.
- * But misleadership blocks this development from coming to fruition in effective struggle for working people's rights and ultimately socialist revolution. That is why the Transitional Program sums up the crisis of humanity as the crisis of proletarian leadership. The program proposes a method for overcoming this crisis by creating a new leadership.
- * The program also states, "It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat." (P. 114, para. 4).
- * These quotations cited above summarize the objective basis and the essential method of the Transitional Program.
- * The concept of the Transitional Program is not completely new. Basic lines of it appear in the Communist Manifesto. Lenin used this method in fighting the reformists for leadership of the workers in 1917.
- * The basic concepts of the program are even more valid today, given the depth of the crisis and treacherous character of existing leaderships of the class.

- * Other demands are added or modified as conditions change, and new struggles emerge. The program is a product of class-struggle experience and it is deepened and developed as we gather more experience.
- * The program is an approach to bringing the masses into motion.
- * No demand is an end in itself. Demands are a means to an end. No demand is in and of itself a guarantee or revolutionary purity and anticapitalist struggle. It depends on how it is fought for.
- * Thus escalator clauses are gutted or weakened by being linked to government statistics; seniority can be used to divide the class and discriminate rather than as a weapon against the employers; under certain conditions, even demands for soviets or workers' control can be utilized by class collaborationists to derail the independent thrust of workers' struggles. (e.g. Portugal, first stage of the Russian revolution.)
- * On the other hand, immediate demands and democratic demands can sometimes be the spark for deep-going class struggle-- such as demands for basic trade-union rights, wage increases, and other protections.
- * The Transitional Program is a method of struggle: independent mass action against the bosses and their government, in politics and on the job, and a system of demands that help lead the workers in that direction.
- * Arguing and fighting for such proposals in the workers' organizations is more effective than the general denunciations of rotten bureaucrats that sectarians are fond of. The Transitional Program provides revolutionists with realistic proposals that workers can understand and view as a constructive program, not just dead-end oppositionism.
- * The struggle for a correct program and perspective can split the bureaucracy, instead of allowing the bureaucracy to split and divide the workers.
- * That struggle will lead toward creation of a class-struggle left wing in the unions and ultimately toward workers' formations broader and more representative than the unions are today.
- * All of these demands are inseparable from recruiting in the trade unions and the building of a revolutionary party.

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Session ISuggested Topics for Discussions or Individual Reports:

1. What is the purpose of the Transitional Program?
What are some ways this purpose can be advanced today?
- 2- In one of his discussions with SWP leaders, Trotsky asked,
"Should the program be adapted to the mentality of the American workers....or to the present economic and social conditions of the workers?"

What importance does the present consciousness of the workers have for us?
- 3- Why do we put so much stress on the method of the Transitional Program? Aren't the specific demands important?
- 4- One of our demands is "Open the Books." What happens if a boss opens the books and proves he is losing money?
- 5- Seniority arose as a union demand to protect union members, militants and committee stewards from reprisals. How do we view it today?
- 6- How have the class-collaborationist policies of labor gutted the grievance procedure from what it is supposed to accomplish?
- 7- Why is a "bridge" needed? Why can't we just explain to workers that they need a socialist revolution?
- 8- What is the difference between the Transitional Program's proposals for fighting unemployment and proposals like the Humphrey-Hawkins and Harrington "youth jobs" bills?
- 9- Is it possible for the demands of the Transitional Program to be advanced by conscious enemies of class independence?
- 10- In 1945/46, during the 113 day General Motors strike, Walter Reuther presented the demand that GM open its books. Was he using the transitional method?

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Session II--The Importance of Democratic DemandsReadings:

- in: The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution
(third edition)
- "Transitional and Democratic Slogans as Bridges...."
by Joseph Hansen pp. 33-37
- "The Role of Democratic Demands"
by George Novack pp. 51-63
- "The Struggle Against War, and the Ludlow
Amendment" pp. 90-97
- in: SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol 33, No. 5
"The Ludlow Amendment" by George Breitman
- in: The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution
"The Political Backwardness of the American
Workers" pp. 155-160
- "Completing the Program and Putting it to Work" pp. 171-182
- in: What is to be Done?
(see sections recommended in session I)

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Session Purpose

Understanding the potentially anticapitalist thrust of many struggles for democratic demands, many of which are basic rights granted or promised by early capitalism and which capitalism is unable or unwilling to maintain or fulfill today.

How the historical task of achieving them falls to the working class.

How ultraleftists are unable to view struggles for them as bridges toward socialist consciousness.

How reformists view democratic demands as ends in themselves.

How Trotskyists view struggles for democratic rights as one avenue through which masses begin to move into action, beginning to effect a change in power relations between the classes--aiding the exploited and oppressed, unifying the labor movement with its allies and pointing toward the establishment of a workers power which can institute a genuine democracy.

How the struggle, through independent mass action, for democratic demands, becomes intertwined with transitional demands and needs to be focused toward the objective of workers power.

Key Points to have in mind in preparing this class:

* George Novack states:

"How do we approach the problem of fighting for democracy in our time? For us, democratic slogans are viewed in the same light, and directed towards the same ends, as the other elements of the Transitional Program. They're levers for the mobilization of the masses with the aim of improving their situation and at the same time opposing and combating the capitalist state..."

P. 54, para. 5

* Democratic rights are defined as those extensions of equality, real or assumed, granted by capitalism or promised in its ascendancy over feudal society. Some are codified, others assumed freedoms such as freedom of thought, press, speech, religion, to organize, and to control one's own body. Another example of democratic demands is provided in the Feb. 2, 1979 Militant:

"Constituent Assembly

Iranian Trotskyists, meanwhile, are organizing to bring their ideas to the masses. They call for a government based on popular sovereignty, to be organized through the democratic election of a constituent assembly. Such a representative body would serve as an arena where the various proposals for Iran's future could be debated before the eyes of the whole people."

* Capitalism, in its death agony, emphasizes the rights of the ruling class only, against those of the majority. Not only are additional assumed rights contested (ERA), but capitalism also seeks to take back those already won.

* These democratic rights concern not only the working class and labor movement but all of the oppressed and exploited who in turn find themselves facing a common enemy: the state, the government, and the political parties of capitalism.

* The purpose of advancing democratic slogans and the struggle for them is to mobilize the working class and its allies in action, to help raise political consciousness, to begin to effect a change in the power relations between the classes to the advantage of the exploited and oppressed: to break the political and ideological hold of the ruling class and increase the confidence and self-consciousness of the workers.

* In many instances, these struggles flow from illusions: the working class believing we possess certain rights, then struggling to achieve them. Such illusions can often provide a powerful impetus to struggle.

* Fighting for democratic rights provides us with levers for the mobilization of the masses with the aim of improving their situation and at the same time opposing and combating the capitalist state.

* This is the Trotskyist view in contrast to the ultraleftists' failure to understand the gap between the level of consciousness as compared to reality.

* As compared to reformists who view democratic demands as a way to make capitalism more viable, Trotskyists view the struggle for their attainment as part of the struggle leading to the establishment of workers power.

* This was a central point made by Trotsky in the discussions that took place in 1938 around the Ludlow amendment and provided us with a rich contribution by him.

* Viewing the Ludlow amendment "...as a practical question which can introduce us to the general question...", he discussed the role and importance of democratic demands. (p.92)

* This was developed in the Transitional Program which states: "...the Fourth International supports every, even if insufficient, demand, if it can draw the masses to a certain extent into active politics, awaken their criticism, and strengthen their control over the machinations of the bourgeoisie." (p. 130, par. 2)

* Commenting on this, Joseph Hansen states, "Note carefully: No matter how one characterizes democratic slogans, we fight for them with proletarian methods of struggle--not bourgeois methods..." (p. 33, par. 3)

* Such was the case in the anti-war struggles of the 1960s that occurred in a period characterized by the relative quiescence of the labor movement. Our central demand, "Out Now", reflected a class struggle approach of defending the colonial revolution against imperialism.

* The antiwar movement, in addition to other experiences, demonstrated how the class struggle concept and use of the method of the Transitional Program does not always apply to the labor movement only, but to other sectors of society. We were able to play a crucial role in the antiwar movement because we were deeply rooted in the student movement and among radicalizing youth who were the backbone of it. To the extent that we are a part of the unions today we will continue to have our fingers on the pulse of the radicalization in the working class.

ness not simply limited to "trade unionist" issues. As exemplified by the teamsters class-struggle leadership in the 1930s, we need to strive to use the potential power of the unions to achieve the key objective of uniting the class and its allies. We need to bring in social issues concerning the right to abortion, affirmative action, busing, social security, undocumented workers, designed to bring all together against a common enemy that is threatening and harming all.

* Around such demands as the right to asylum and the right to self-determination and against U.S. imperialist intervention abroad we seek the development of an international consciousness within the working class.

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Session II; Suggested Topics for Discussion or Individual Reports

- 1-Trotsky advocated our supporting the Ludlow amendment providing for a vote on war. What if a majority had voted for war?
- 2-How is our concept of the place of democratic demands in our program reflected in our defense policies as compared to our opponents?
- 3-Can you conceive of us fighting for the rights of a priest or a religious organization? Wouldn't doing that contribute to the support of religion?
- 4-What is our attitude toward the freedoms and rights listed in The Bill of Rights. How do we fight for them?
- 5-Is it realistic to fight for democratic rights in the period of imperialist decay?
- 6-How was Lenin's understanding of the use of democratic demands illustrated in the attitude of the Bolshevik's towards the Constituent Assembly?
- 7-What was the difference between the slogans, "Bring the Troops Home," "Out Now!" "Support the NLF" and "Smash Capitalism"?
- 8-What rights would you say the working class has illusions about today? Are these completely illusory? How do we deal with these illusions?
- 9-How does the Trotskyist conception of democratic demands relate to the minimum-maximum program that Rosa Luxemburg argued against? Are there any forces that put forward a "minimum-maximum" concept today?
- 10-What role do democratic demands play in unifying the class and its allies?

Session III-Trade Unions and the Capitalist Offensive

Readings:

in: Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions

"Trade Unions in the Transitional Epoch" pp. 59-62
(This is a section of the Transitional
Program)

"Discussion with a CIO Organizer" pp. 62-68

"Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist
Decay" pp.68-75

in: The Transitional Program for Socialist
Revolution (third edition)

"The Death Agony of Capitalism and the
Tasks of the Fourth International" pp. 116-127
& pp. 135-136

in: Party Organizer, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 78

"Leading the Party into Industry,"
by Jack Barnes
(report to Feb. 1978 National Committee Plenum)

Session Purpose

This class should seek to get across the basic objective situation facing the labor movement and the objective possibilities that exist for replacing class collaboration with class struggle as the guiding orientation for the unions. The educational class can take up the weakened position of the unions under bureaucratic misleadership in the face of the bosses' offensive, and the growing need of workers for strong, fighting unions. The Transitional Program is an instrument for replacing class collaboration with class independence, and for creating a class-struggle leadership for the working class.

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Key Points to have in mind in preparing this class:

- * Today's capitalist crisis is highly explosive, not only in the U.S. but on a world scale. Although in its early stages, this crisis threatens the survival of capitalism and will offer opportunities to replace it with socialism.
- * Even in crisis, American capitalism is tremendously powerful and the epicenter of world imperialism.
- * American capitalism responds to the crisis with attacks on the rights and living standards of workers at home, and by increased competitiveness and aggressiveness abroad. Their slogan at home and abroad is to make workers pay for the crisis.

- * Despite the setback to U.S. imperialism in Indochina, war and threats of war are an essential aspect of capitalism and especially of capitalism in crisis. Note crises in Iran, the Middle East, southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, the escalating arms race, etc.
- * Growing numbers are aware that this society is sick. They are worried and would like to do something about it if something practical could be done.
- * A new period is beginning. The capitalist offensive and the economic crisis are changing the thinking of workers. The miners' strike was an indication of the potential power of workers resistance. More such struggles will occur over time.
- * The only force that can save the human race from worsening misery and ultimately nuclear destruction is the working class. The workers' role in production provides them with the capacity to lead a breakthrough to a new and better social order.
- * The most powerful section of the working class is the industrial work force.
- * The American working class is particularly important because it confronts the most powerful capitalist class in the world in the central bastion of imperialism. Trotsky said the decisive battles for world socialism would be fought here.
- * The unions are the primary defensive organization of the workers in this country. In fact they are the only mass organizations of the working class in this country. Through them the workers have tremendous potential power--indicated again by the miners' strikes as well as by the struggles of the 1930s and 1940s. The American labor movement has never suffered a decisive defeat such as the German or Spanish working class did with the rise of fascism.
- * The decisive section of the union movement is the industrial unions. But they are crippled by a class-collaborationist leadership.
- * Class collaboration is a whole system of union leadership practices from the handling of grievances on the shop level to class collaboration on the level of government and state power (support for Republican and Democratic parties, for U.S. foreign policy, etc.).
- * The bureaucratic leaderships are "drawing closer and closer together with the state power" in the hope of gaining concessions and guarantees for positions and privileges. The government and the ruling class are out to weaken the unions so as to cut living standards and boost profits. This means taming them and making them instruments to discipline and suppress the workers. Ultimately it means defeating and crushing them. We saw both these drives in the attack on the miners.

- * On many issues, the official policy of union leaderships is downright reactionary: affirmative action, undocumented workers, Middle East, nuclear power, etc.
- * Steelworkers Fight Back showed that many workers think very differently from their leaderships, and feel that the old ways aren't working. The Miners for Democracy struggle and the miners' strike policy showed that the class-collaborationist course can be challenged. With a correct policy it can even be overturned and replaced with a policy of class independence.
- * Instead of opposing Blacks, women, and other oppressed groups, the unions can help unite the class by fighting firmly for their rights.
- * To survive as working class organizations, unions are going to have to think socially--to think about all the issues and problems facing working people, and not just narrowly defined "trade union" issues.
- * To win, workers are going to have to act politically as a class against the bosses: problems of society can only be solved by a workers government.
- * Our fight is a long-term battle to change the political course of American labor. The new thinking among American workers is the chance we have been waiting for to get a greater hearing for our ideas in the factories, unions, and communities of the oppressed.
- * Our central task is to deepen our participation in the unions and in the struggles of industrial workers, not to launch power struggles against the bureaucracy, but to win workers to our alternative strategy for labor by explaining and defending our reasonable proposals for resolving the crisis in favor of the workers.
- * We have a realistic program to unite the class for a fight against the government-employer offensive.
- * This means pressing the fight for democracy in the unions; the bureaucracy must suppress democracy to practice class collaboration.
- * We press for further steps in class independence leading toward the working class challenging the capitalists for power (the meaning of the labor party slogan) and this requires building a class-struggle left wing.
- * This strategy does not ignore the basic limitations of the unions. As broad defensive organizations, they are no substitute for a revolutionary party.
- * Even more, they involve only a minority of the working class (not even all industrial workers) and an even smaller minority of all the oppressed and exploited.

- * And they do not draw into their ranks the non-working-class allies like the farmers.
 - * To decisively challenge capitalist control, broader formations will tend to develop leading toward soviets.
 - * These will supplant unions, basic defensive organizations which workers support even during periods of relative quiescence and will need even after a socialist revolution.
- *But building a class-struggle left wing with a policy of posing a class challenge to capitalist political power, and aiming at allying with all the oppressed against capitalism, is the best way to reach out to these broader layers and move toward the creation of broader soviet-type formations, drawing in all the oppressed for a decisive struggle to end capitalism.

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Session III

Suggested Topics for Discussions or Individual Reports

- 1-Will we relive--or are we now reliving--the radicalization of the 1930s?
- 2-What do you think of the formula: high standard of living= conservative working class?
- 3-How do you think the working class has been affected by the civil rights, student, antiwar, and women's movements?
- 4-How can anyone say the working class is revolutionary when the class is so full of racism, sexism, and conflicts between older and younger workers, between employed and unemployed, between skilled and unskilled workers, between U.S. citizens and undocumented workers, etc.?
- 5-In contrast to the 1930s, women plus oppressed nationalities plus under-twenty workers make up the majority of the labor force now. How do you think this affects the unions?
- 6-What mutual problems do working farmers, undocumented workers and factory workers have in common?
- 7-When the United Farm Workers reversed its previous position and came to the defense of the undocumented workers, was that "thinking socially"? Why did they reverse their position?
- 8-Why, in the unions, do we center our main attacks on the capitalists?
- 9-How is the policy of class collaboration illustrated in the way the grievance procedure works today?
- 10-Sadlowski is a supporter of the Democratic Party. Why did we support him in the Fight Back movement? Was that consistent with our fight for independent labor political action?

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Session IV-Uniting the Working Class and its Allies.Readings:

- in: Prospects for Socialism in America
 "Changing Character and Composition of the Working Class" pp. 29-35
 "Radicalization and Mobilization of the Allies of the Proletariat" pp. 35-59
- in: The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution
 "A Transitional Program for Black Liberation" pp. 200-220
 "The Death Agony of Capitalism...." pp. 123, 126-128, 133-135, 150-151
 "A Strategy for Revolutionary Youth" pp. 221-246
- in: The Politics of Chicano Liberation
 "The Struggle for Chicano Liberation" pp. 31-57
 "Chicano Liberation Report to the 1976 Convention", by Olga Rodríguez pp. 129-152
- in: International Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 4 in 1978
 "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation," United Secretariat resolution for the 11th World Congress.

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Session Purpose

This class should seek to deepen our understanding of two key strategic problems. One is the problem of uniting the working class which is inseparably linked to the struggle for political independence. The road to class struggle unity is through labor supporting the struggles and demands of oppressed nationalities, women and youth--within the unions and by building the independent movements of oppressed nationalities and women.

This approach is key to another central task: uniting the employed and the unemployed. Failure to overcome these divisions will be fatal to the labor movement. Overcoming them is the road to a decisive victory over the class enemy.

A second strategic problem also must be solved if the working class is to successfully lead the overturn of the old order and the construction of a new society. That is the problem of allying with forces who have no perspective under capitalism but can only be brought toward socialism if the working class had a program for defending them against the depredations of big business. The most important of these groups is the working farmer.

Key points to keep in mind in preparing this class:

- * The 1975 resolution, "Prospects for Socialism in America" includes a section on the need for alliances with non-proletarian forces who are also fighting the capitalist ruling class and have an interest in going forward with the workers toward socialism that deserves careful study.
- * Of these, the working farmers are the most important. Though they number only 4 percent of the population today, they still play a decisive role in producing the food we eat and other necessities. They can be powerful allies or deadly enemies of a proletarian revolution.
- * They are being squeezed against the wall by banks and the big food processors and distributors. We have an interest in defending them against this oppression and exposing the lies that claim that the farmer and the working-class consumer have conflicting interests. Big business is robbing both to the benefit of neither.
- * The classic example of an alliance between workers and producers of another class to accomplish a proletarian revolution was the Bolshevik revolution. In that instance, the Bolsheviks simply adopted the agrarian program of the peasant-based Socialist Revolutionary Party as its own. The petty-bourgeois SRs, of course, were completely incapable of carrying out their own program.
- * Trotsky writes, "While the farmer remains an 'independent' petty producer, he is in need of cheap credit, agricultural machines and fertilizer at prices he can afford to pay, favorable conditions of transport, and conscientious organization of the market for agricultural products. But the banks, the trusts, the merchants rob the farmer from every side. Only the farmers themselves, with the help of the workers, can curb this robbery." p.126
- * The Transitional Program states that "the alliance proposed by the proletariat" is not with "the 'middle classes' in general, but with the exploited layers of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, against all exploiters, including those of the 'middle classes.'"
- * A program for the interests of the exploited farmers, and other "middle layers" is a vital part of blocking the mobilization of fascist forces against the proletariat.

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- * The 1969 resolutions on students and Black liberation that are published in the Transitional Program are examples of the extension of the program to new arenas of struggle, demonstrating the flexibility and living character of the program and its method.
- * These are not separate transitional programs but part of the Transitional Program, leading to the identical conclusion: Workers as a class must take power.
- * The capitalist system divides the workers by its very nature.
- * The capitalists, aided by the labor bureaucracy, foster and multiply these divisions in order to prevent unified working-class struggle and to assure themselves of superprofits from specially exploited labor.

- * The result: workers are weakened as a class. This is demonstrated by the present offensive of the ruling class. Divisions of the class gives added momentum to the ruling class which seeks to drive new wedges.
- * The class struggle cannot be fostered by supporting the status quo in terms of the racial and sexual stratification of the working class--this policy (opposing changes in seniority or hiring practices to overcome discrimination, for instance) leads to deepening divisions and further weakening workers.
- * Our central aim is to achieve unity for independent struggle against the rulers, not fake unity for subordination to the rulers (the phony unity advocated by the bureaucracy).
- * Our View: Despite divisions, we all have a common enemy, the capitalist class. We all have a common problem: capitalism and breaking the stranglehold of class-collaborationist policies.
- * To overcome the divisions and foster a united battle unions must support the struggles of the most oppressed. All workers would be strengthened by such a course.
- * The working class should support affirmative action and quotas, and oppose discriminatory layoffs. As a class, workers have no interest in allowing bosses to relegate Blacks and women to the bottom of the heap, or as a special reserve army of labor.
- * Like seniority, affirmative action and quotas limit the ability of the boss to hire and fire in his own interests. Seniority and affirmative action are compatible if unions will fight to modify seniority to eliminate privileges based on racial discrimination.
- * If not, bosses can pit whites against Blacks, and bar a united fight against unemployment and for jobs for all. This is similarly true with Chicanos and women.
- * A real fight against unemployment is impossible without a fight against the special oppression of Blacks and women and undocumented workers.
- * Campaigns against undocumented workers and for import quotas are typical capitalist efforts to turn workers against each other instead of against the boss. Capitalist strategy is to use class-collaborationist bureaucrats to con workers into supporting bosses against other workers (Korean textile workers or immigrants or Blacks or women).
- * Uniting employed with unemployed, Black with white, women with men, old with young, skilled with unskilled, and establishing common interests is key to the victory for the working class.
- * The ruling class fosters unemployment to press down wages and working conditions. If you won't work more for less, the boss says, someone else will.
- * Unemployment threatens the working class with social disintegration: hopelessness and desperation induced by long-term unemployment fosters drug addiction, crime, mental illness, suicide, violence in the family--as well as extremes of poverty and ill health. The working class cannot afford to let this deepen indefinitely.

- * Leaving the unemployed at the mercy of the government and employers is suicidal: the result could be an army of demoralized workers, potential scabs who have given up hope in unions, if the bosses have their way.
- * Unions must lead the fight against unemployment: sliding scale of hours and wages, demand for public works useful to society, and affirmative action are all vital to uniting employed and unemployed.
- * Important not to begin with the backwardness and obstacles created by the bureaucracy, but with the changed composition and thinking of the working class which creates new openness to our approach.
- * Our approach is part of the struggle for a class struggle left wing in the unions.
- * Alliance with the oppressed nationalities and women means not only the unity of Black and white, and men and women workers within the labor movement, but the alliance of the labor movement with Blacks and other oppressed nationalities and women as independent movements.
- * The Transitional Program for Black Liberation is a class program for the Black movement to carry on an independent struggle and forge these alliances.
- * New leaders of the Black, Chicano, and women's movements will arise within the unions as struggles unfold.
- * It too poses the question of independent working class political action through the demand for a Black party--no contradiction with the demand for a labor party.
- * Both are propaganda slogans to be put forward singly or together, wherever appropriate. Both foster the key idea of a class break with capitalist politics.
- * Labor cannot stop at supporting job rights of oppressed groups--it has to support the whole range of struggles of oppressed nationalities up to the right of self-determination for Blacks and Chicanos. They should oppose any effort by the capitalist government to force these oppressed nationalities to remain within a common state if they decide they want a state of their own.
- * Labor must fight for abortion rights, ERA, and child care, in the same militant spirit.
- * The attack on labor, the oppressed nationalities, and women, don't stop at the factories but touch every area of life and all must be fought.
- * Black, Chicano, and women's rights caucuses in the unions can be important formations for fighting for this policy and advancing a class-struggle left wing in the unions.
- * Only a revolutionary party, deeply involved in struggles and organizations of the oppressed and exploited, can put forward a program for fully uniting the class, and the class with its allies.

Session IVSuggested topics for discussions or individual reports

- 1-In 1968, the United Federation of Teachers in New York City (Shanker) went on strike protesting community control of the schools. The SWP advocated and practiced crossing the union picket line. Was that consistent with trade-union militancy?
- 2-Why do we refer to oppressed nationalities as "allies" when they are in fact part of the working class?
- 3-What is the difference between the SWP's strategy of unifying the class and its allies with that advocated by the Communist Party and the Spartacist League?
- 4-Since workers are a majority, can't they make a revolution without allies who aren't working class?
- 5-What is meant by "the combined character" of the coming American revolution?
- 6-What does the concept of an alliance with the exploited "middle classes" have to do with the struggle against fascism?
- 7-Why does "the capitalist system divide the workers by its very nature?"
- 8-Is it practical thinking to try and unite in struggle highly paid skilled workers who live in the suburbs with low-paid unskilled workers who live in slums?
- 9-Unions are organizations seeking better wages and working conditions. Is it realistic to ask that they also discuss social questions that affect the whole society!
- 10-Can you provide examples of immediate, democratic and transitional demands?

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Key Points to have in mind in preparing this class:

*The capitalist crisis takes the form increasingly of givebacks demanded of workers in the area of wages, working conditions, health and old age benefits, etc. In addition, inflation and unemployment are major means of eroding workers' living standards, as are sharp cuts in public services.

*Each of these raise political questions involving the government and the political parties of the bosses. The government stood behind the coal operators and tried to impose their contract on the workers. In fact, their contract was the government's contract too! The government fuels inflation through war spending. The government refuses to help the unemployed. Federal, state, and local governments cut back social services and fire workers.

*The struggle over working conditions and wages in each workplace and industry is necessary, but the struggle can't end there. Workers' interests can't be defended without challenging the employers' government.

*The class-collaborationist policy of the trade-union bureaucracy is central to the ability of the ruling class to get away with the offensive. Their class collaboration in politics permeates everything they do: in the plants, in the communities, and wherever conflict with the ruling class takes place.

*Socialists counterpose to the bureaucracy's class collaboration the idea of independent working-class political action.

*The labor party slogan functions as a means of challenging the capitalist party stranglehold on labor; points up the inability of the reformists and labor fakers to defend the class because of their dependence on capitalist politicians and parties; provides an arena for the growth of class consciousness in the course of struggle; indicates the political road to political organization for the class.

*Every struggle against the offensive poses the question of class political independence.

*The labor party demand stems from the fact that the unions are the primary defense and only mass organizations of the workers in this country. Workers will look to the unions for political as well as day-to-day defense of their economic interests. Attacks on unions fostered and supported by the government will pose political questions before the unions.

*This will probably precede the existence of a mass revolutionary working-class party; the pace of the radicalization will be faster than the growth of the party, and the political movement of the

workers will create an arena to win people to the party program.

- * A reformist-led labor party as in England or Canada is not inevitable, though possible. The labor party will emerge out of a profound crisis and big class struggles that will challenge the grip of the bureaucracy.
- * We would most likely fight within that formation with and for our program. It would be one of the best possible arenas for such a programmatic struggle.
- * The labor party slogan is at the center of the program for a class-struggle left wing in the unions.
- * We advocate our program, the demands of the Transitional Program and other appropriate demands, as the program for the labor party. Only our program can lead a labor party to victory.
- * The labor party stems from the objective need of workers for political power and workers government, not from the moods of the moment--although these too are beginning to move in the direction of our ideas.
- * The fight for a labor party will begin on the level of propaganda, move to that of agitation, and end with action.
- * Our strength, the number and solidity of our cadres, and our presence in the industrial unions is key to the fight for a labor party with a class-struggle program.
- * A labor party cannot concern itself solely with workers' economic interests; it contends for power; it needs allies; and it has to have a program for all the oppressed. A labor party has to have a program for Black and Chicano liberation, and for women's rights.
- * A labor party would fight to replace phony equal sacrifice with the demand that bosses pay for the crisis, and ultimately that the workers reorganize society since the bosses have clearly created a mess.
- * The question of political power is integrated into all our slogans and tactics in the unions and elsewhere; without a working-class fight for political power, the ruling class will continue to hold the offensive and the capacity to impose new losses on working people.

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Session V-Suggested Topics for Discussion or Individual Reports:

- 1-What is the difference between our concept of a labor party and the Staninists' advocacy of a "peoples antimonopoly" party or even their occasional advocacy of a labor party?
- 2-The press reports that there are fourteen members of Congress who belong to unions. Do they represent labor?
- 3-What was meant when Trotsky said that our attitude toward a labor party begins from the objective reality rather than the mood of the workers?
- 4-Why are we for a labor party? Why shouldn't we simply call on people to join the SWP?
- 5-The British Labor Party has procapitalist policies How do we answer those who think that a future labor party here will be like that?
- 6-The European working class, with its own parties, is far more advanced than the working class here. Did Trotsky think the effects of the political backwardness of the American working class were all negative?
- 7-Is it realistic to expect a labor party to be formed given the strength and pro-Democratic stand of the bureaucracy?
- 8-What is the contribution a labor party could make in the struggle of oppressed nationalities?
- 9-Should a labor party have a program for farmers? Students?
- 10-Why did Trotsky state that the labor party question was a separate motion and not part of the Transitional Program? Was it really?

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Session VIA Socialist Strategy for LaborReadings:

"Leading the Party Into Industry" by Jack Barnes
(Party Organizer, Vol. 2, No. 2) \$1.00

in: Prospects for Socialism in America

"Labor's Strategic Line of March," pp.64-81

in: Teamster Bureaucracy, by Farrell Dobbs

"Afterword" pp.285-298

in: The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution

"The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of
the Fourth International" pp.111-152

in: International Socialist Review, May 1978

"The Transitional Program: A Strategy for the
Unions Today," by Frank Lovell

Purpose

This class focuses on the new opportunities to apply the Transitional Program in the American labor movement with emphasis on the lessons in Farrell Dobbs's "Afterword" to Teamster Bureaucracy.

Key Points to keep in mind in preparing for this class:

*The "objective prerequisites for proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened,' they have begun to get somewhat rotten."

*In face of this, the stranglehold of the class-collaborationist bureaucracy on the labor movement is a major obstacle to the solution.

*We do not mistake the bureaucracy for the unions. We realize the potential power of a class that has never been defeated. If the power of labor is brought to bear under competent class-struggle leadership, the relationship of forces favors the workers, not the bosses.

*The crisis reflects the weakness of imperialism. The offensive of the capitalists brings to bear the considerable strength of the rulers against the workers, but does not negate the growing weakness of the rulers. The weakness of the rulers is reflected in the lack of confidence in its own future evidenced by the ruling class.

* The workers of this country as a class have never been dealt a historic defeat. They came out of the big battles of the 1930s and 1940s with significant gains. Specially oppressed sectors of the class--the Black nationality in particular--made added gains during the 1960s.

* The 1978 miners' strike showed the power of the workers, the vulnerability of the bosses and their government. The miners gave the bosses a fight, forced them to give ground despite misleadership. But the misleadership of labor left the workers still with an inadequate contract.

* The crisis and the changes in working-class thinking imposed by the crisis are the basis of our decision to get the majority of our members into industry.

* Our turn also reflects the historic orientation of any revolutionary party toward the mass workers organizations as the only basis for a struggle for power.

*We can take advantage of this period to win supporters in the unions, and strengthen our party. The ideas of a class-struggle left wing can begin to take hold in this period.

*Our perspective is a long-term one and we reject shortcuts to leadership of the masses (sectarian or opportunist power caucuses in the unions, for instance).

*We want to talk about socialism to our fellow workers and recruit the most conscious of them to our party.

*We will work with others to advance class-struggle ideas and points of our socialist program.

*Future battles will convince more and more workers of the need for a new program, a new course for labor.

*Transitional demands are designed to advance, in the course of struggle, the education and growing consciousness of our class-- to raise it to the level of its tasks: the taking of power to reconstruct all of society on a socialist basis.

*Lessons and guidelines provided in the "Afterword" to Teamster Bureaucracy should be studied and examined as we deepen our turn.

*To accomplish our tasks, we must be in industry--a different period which imposes different tasks than the 1960s.

*Building the party in the unions is the key to the victory of a class-struggle left wing, and therefore key to the future of all humanity.

*Only our party can effectively put forward the Transitional Program in the unions. Our party has the perspective of the workers taking power and sees all struggles in that light.

*The task of this period is to build our party, to strengthen the nucleus of revolutionary Marxist workers in the unions. The revolutionary party and its activity are the indispensable guiding force in the struggle to transform the unions.

Discussion Questions

1. Following are quotes from opponent newspapers. Please read and discuss these quotes or slogans on how they compare to the transitional method.
 - a. From the Young Spartacus, 6/75
 "Depending upon the relationship of forces, left organizations or groups of militants in certain situations may correctly decide to take upon themselves the suppression of fascist meetings and demonstrations....we refuse to wait until the fascists get strong enough to carry out their terrorist program, possibly taking the precious lives of some workers and leftists, before we act against it."
 - b. From the Daily World, 5/12/78
 "Smash the Big Business Anti-Union Offensive!"
 "Detente & Peace"
 "Ban the Klan and the Nazi Party"
 "End Racism"
 - c. From the Bulletin, 5/12/78
 (Listing demands for the transit workers in NYC who are voting on the outcome of negotiations just concluded)
 "Fight....the traitors in the union leadership"
 "Expel Guinan and Lawe [the top leaders in the union], the agents of the government inside the TWU"
 "Demand city wide general strike action to back the transit workers"
2. Compare the SWP position on the labor party with the program and activity of other groups and comment on this.
3. What guidelines does Dobbs suggest in "Afterword" on how best to combat the labor bureaucracy?
4. Why are unions in the industrial sector the primary places for revolutionists to be?
5. What criticisms do we have of the "Rank and File Caucuses" that some ultralefts and reformists form? What would we counterpose to them?
6. Would running for and getting elected to top union posts today help us to win more people to our program?

- 7-What would we do if a labor bureaucrat put forward one of our transitional demands?
- 8-Is the Transitional Program "for" or "of" the vanguard?
- 9-Have the activities of ultraleft groups in the United Mine Workers and other unions helped undermine the bureaucrats' support? What is the attitude of these groups toward the fight for union democracy?
- 10-How do we determine what demands to raise in a given situation? Is the fact that one is more advanced than another an important criterion?

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AN
INTRODUCTION
TO

MARXIST ECONOMICS

Six class sessions based
on two pamphlets by Karl Marx:

Value, Price & Profit

&

Wage Labor & Capital

Prepared by: Robert Chester
July 1966

INTRODUCTION

This study course is based on Marx's pamphlets, Value, Price and Profit and Wage Labor and Capital. It is designed as an elementary course on Marxist economics for new members. Its purpose is two-fold; first, to demonstrate that Marxism is a science, and second, that capitalism must follow the laws of its own development -- laws which must not only be obeyed by workers but also by the capitalist (regardless of whether he is a "good" or "bad" capitalist.)

This course is not to be considered as a substitute for studying "Capital." Its main purpose is to begin training party recruits in Marxist economics and to serve as an introduction for the study of other Marxist classics. -- Bob Chester

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LESSON I

Chapter VI. -- Value Price and Profit

Use Value

What invests an object with use value?

What is meant by a need?

Is the maintenance of life the only type of need in society?

Give an example in ordinary life for:

a) a necessity for existence

b) a non-necessity for existence

Can an ornament satisfy a need?

What is use value? (definition)

Is it possible to measure use value?

Commodity

In primitive times barter was the standard system.

What need did this practice fulfill?

What determined the value of an object?

What are the needs of any group in society called? (definition)

What name is given to an object that is produced to fill a social need? (definition)

Socially Necessary Labor

Has a tree standing in the forest any value?

What factor is necessary to make the tree a commodity?

Given equal skill -- what is the value of a coat that takes twice the time to produce as a pair of shoes?

If different skills are required, are the values still the same?

Given a product that can be turned out equally well by hand or machine -- if the machine can turn out ten times as many commodities as by hand -- is the value of one machine product the same as one hand product?

Which method is more efficient?

Which would determine the value of the commodity?

What determines the average time necessary to produce a commodity?

What is this average time and skill called? (definition)

Elementary Economics

How is the average quantity of socially necessary labor required to produce a commodity affected by:

- a) a change in natural conditions?
- b) a change in technological conditions?

Does socially necessary labor remain a constant quantity?

What determines value? (definition)

Suppose it took four hours to produce a table and one hour to produce a chair--what would be the value of the table in terms of chairs?

Could they be exchanged?

What is exchange value? (definition)

Fluctuations in Value

How is the exchange value of a commodity affected by a reduction in the quantity of socially necessary labor required to produce it?

Can values remain constant in any society?

Price

What determines the value of gold or silver?

Does their value change?

When you pay money for a commodity, what are you exchanging?

Is price an expression of value? Of exchange value? (definition)

What happens to the price of a commodity if:

- a) the socially necessary labor to produce it increases?
- b) the socially necessary labor in mining gold increases?

Discussion

Can a commodity be made for one's own use?

Suppose the need for an object dies out, what happens to its value?

Should different skills have different value?

Summary

Use value is determined by the utility or the need for any thing, whether the need flows from the body or mind.

The needs of any group of society are called social needs. An object produced to fill a social need is called a commodity.

Socially necessary labor is the average time required to produce a commodity. This average time is constantly fluctuating, due to changes in natural conditions and the technological advances of society. For example, a nation-wide drought would increase the socially necessary labor incorporated in a bushel of grain; introduction of a new machine for making chairs will reduce the socially necessary labor incorporated in each chair.

Value is determined by the quantity of socially necessary labor incorporated in the commodity.

Exchange value is the rate at which one commodity is exchanged with another. Since values are constantly changing, the exchange values are constantly changing.

Elementary Economics

Gold, the money commodity, obeys the laws governing other commodities. Price is an expression of value in terms of gold. When a person exchanges money for a commodity, he is basically exchanging equal amounts of socially necessary labor time, crystallized in the money and the commodity. Price changes are affected by both changes in value of the commodity and fluctuations in the value of gold.

LESSON IILABOR POWER - SURPLUS VALUEChapters VII, VIII, IX, X - Value Price and ProfitLabor Power

What does the capitalist require from the worker?

What is this quality called? (definition)

Can labor power be bought and sold?

Is it a commodity like other commodities?

Where is it bought?

How is it measured?

How does the worker use his wages?

Does a worker wear out like a machine?

What is necessary to develop a new worker?

Where does the cost of raising and training a new worker come from?

What is the value of the commodities needed to produce and maintain a worker called? (definition)

Capitalist Production

Where does a worker use his labor power?

Whose equipment and materials does he use?

Who does the actual work of turning out the finished product?

Where does the added value of the finished product come from?

Can a capitalist create value?

Surplus Value

Given a factory that processes raw materials, list the factors that enter into the value of the finished product?

Which of these factors create new value?

a) raw materials (where does their value come from?)

b) rent and interest

c) wear and tear (cost of replacements)

d) labor

Out of which factor can the capitalist obtain his profit?

What is this difference between the labor power expended and the value produced called? (definition)

Can the capitalist sell the commodity at its value and still make a profit?

Wages

How is labor power measured?

What is exchanged for it?

- In what form are wages usually paid?
What are "real wages"? (definition)
Do changes in money wages always correspond to changes in real wages?
What happens to real wages if:
a) the value of money rises?
b) the cost of commodities fall?
What is "relative wage?" (definition)
What happens to the relative wage if the proportional part of the wealth that the worker receives out of what he produces:
(a) drops?
(b) rises?
If the worker produces enough value in a day's work to equal his labor power -- what surplus value is produced?
What must he produce to create surplus value?
Work out the following problem as an example:

Example:

A worker receives \$8 a day and produces \$16 a day of new value.

What is his relative wage? ($8/16 \times 100 = 50\%$)

If his wage drops to \$6 per day, what is his relative wage? ($6/16 \times 100 = 37.5\%$)

If his wage rose to \$10, and the value he produced rose to \$30 per day what is his relative wage?
($10/30 \times 100 = 33.3\%$)

Thus, even though there is an increase in real wages there is a decline in relative wages.

Discussion

What are the differences between slave, feudal and capitalist production?

Summary

Labor power is the physical and mental energy of the worker offered for sale. It is sold on the market to the highest capitalist bidder. As with all other commodities, the value of labor power is determined by the quantity of labor necessary to produce and maintain a worker and his family.

Labor is the sum of labor power expended.

The worker sells his labor power by the clock. He is rarely paid for the full value he creates during the day, and is usually paid only enough to maintain and reproduce his labor power. The difference between the labor power paid for and the value produced is called surplus value.

Wages, which are exchanged for labor power, are usually paid in money. However, the value of gold and the value of commodities constantly fluctuate. Real wages are the sum of commodities the worker can buy with his money wages.

Relative wages are that proportion of the value the worker receives out of the total he produces.

Elementary EconomicsLESSON III

Chapters III, IV - Wage Labor and Capital

Chapters IV, V - Value Price and Profit

SUPPLY AND DEMANDCompetition

What is the aim of a seller of commodities?

Given two sellers of commodities, if they offer the commodities for sale at different prices:

- a) which would sell more articles?
- b) what would the other seller have to do to remain on the market?
- c) what is the objective of the one seller who is in competition with the other?
- d) what happens to the price of the commodity?

Where there is competition between sellers, what is the position of the buyer?

If the competition is between buyers:

- a) who has the advantage?
- b) what happens to price?

In the competition between buyers, what is the position of the seller?

Fluctuation of Price

In the competition between buyers and sellers, what happens to prices:

- a) if the demand is greater than the supply?
- b) if the supply is greater than the demand?

In a free market, what are the three types of competition that take place? (definition)

Given a stable value of money, if the price of a commodity changes, what happens to its exchange value?

If production increases and the demand is satisfied, what happens to the price?

What happens with overproduction of a commodity?

In a free market, what is the general law governing the rise and fall of prices? (definition: p. 24 Wage Labor & Capital)

Fluctuation of Wages

Is labor power a commodity? (see Lesson II)

Where is it bought and sold?

Since it is bought and sold on the market, does it vary in price?

What happens to the price of labor power if:

- a) there is a surplus of workers?
- b) a shortage?

Can the price of labor power be forced below subsistence levels?

What is the result of such a situation on:

- a) the health and productive power of the worker?
- b) the propagation of the people?
- c) the ability to raise and train the rising generation?

What then is the minimum wage needed by the worker?

Elementary Economics

Does this standard apply to the individual or to the race?
Under capitalism, are there always individuals and sections of the population living below subsistence levels?

Fluctuations of Profits

When the price of a commodity is raised owing to demand:

- a) what happens to the bosses' profits?
- b) what happens to the flow of capital into this industry?
- c) What happens to the production of the commodity?

With increased production, what eventually happens to the supply?
Does production still keep increasing when supply equals the demand?

With overproduction, what happens to:

- a) the bosses' profits?
- b) to the flow of capital into the industry?
- c) the production of the commodity?

What is the general rule on the relation of rise and fall of production to the rise and fall of price? (definition)

Is this a natural law in a free market?

Must this law be obeyed by producers?

Can a capitalist operate at a loss?

At what point does the employer cease to make a profit?

In competition between producers, what is the point toward which prices tend? (definition)

Relation of Value to Supply and Demand

In a free market do prices remain stationary?

Can prices correspond to values for any length of time?

Are fluctuations in prices independent of values?

Around what level do fluctuations take place? (definition)

When supply equals demand, is the sale price the same as value?

Discussion

Marx wrote "Capital" during the period of the rise of capitalism, when production was constantly expanding. In the present period of the decline of capitalism, what are the factors that condition:

- a) the free market?
- b) the supply of commodities?
- c) labor supply?
- d) prices?

Summary

In an open market, there is a three way competition -- between buyers; between sellers; between buyers and sellers.

Prices fluctuate according to the laws of supply and demand, the price of a commodity is determined by its value.

Under conditions of competition the rise and fall of prices

govern the rise and fall of production and the shifts of capital from one industry to another. Prices are driven toward values by competition. Wages are driven toward minimum socially determined subsistence levels, the minimum cost of the existence and propagation of the worker. This law applies to the whole industry or work force and not to the individual producer or person.

LESSON IV

Chapter XI - Value, Price and Profit

Chapter V - Wage Labor and Capital

CAPITAL

Accumulated Labor

What is necessary to produce value?

In terms of labor, what does an accumulation of commodities represent? In terms of money?

Can past labor, in the form of money be exchanged for other commodities?

To what use are accumulated exchange values put?

Methods of Increasing Accumulation

1. Interest

Why are loans made to manufacturers?

Who lends the money?

What value is this practice to society?

Can interest by itself create new value?

2. Merchants Capital

Commodities are often bought for resale at a profit, by merchants or brokers:

What role do they play in society?

Is control of distribution a necessary part of present society?

Does control of distribution, by itself, create new value?

3. Industrial Capital

Why is money invested in the manufacture of commodities?

What investments are necessary before production can begin?

Do any of the following create new value: plant, machinery; raw materials; maintenance.

What term does Marx give to these investments (definition - Constant Capital)

What term does Marx give to the money paid out in wages? (definition - Variable Capital)

(Note: These definitions are not included in the two pamphlets but are developed by Marx in "Capital." These formulas will be used for the rest of this course).

Out of which factor (Constant or Variable Capital) is the increase of Capital obtained?

Elementary EconomicsCapital

- Is capital composed of an accumulation of past labor?
 Is any sum of past labor necessarily capital?
 Can capital be exchanged for commodities?
 Is any sum of exchange values necessarily capital?
 Can accumulated labor be unproductive and remain capital?
 Can capital be increased by hiring workers who produce surplus value? Is this function a necessary function of capital?
 What is the definition of capital? (See p. 30 Wage Labor & Capital)
 Under the system of capitalism, can interest and merchants capital be independent of industrial capital?

Division of Surplus Value

- How does a worker produce surplus value? (See Lesson II)
 What three types of payments come out of surplus value?
 Which payment works to increase the capital of the employer:
 a) rent and plant maintenance?
 b) interest?
 c) industrial profit?
 Would the addition of these three items necessarily compose surplus value?

Rate of Surplus Value

(Note: In Value Price and Profit, p. 48, Marx uses "rate of profit" to define the term he defines in "Capital" as "rate of surplus value." Hereafter, the term "rate of surplus value" will be used.)

A capitalist calculates his percent of profit on the basis of the total investment (Constant plus Variable Capital) and deducting his interest on debts.

- What would be the result on this rate of profit if:
 a) he is burdened with heavy loans?
 b) his cost of raw materials, overhead, etc. are above average?

Is the worker responsible for these difficulties of the capitalist?

Do these factors affect the surplus value produced by the worker?

What is the definition of the "rate of unpaid to paid labor?"
 (explain the formula Surplus Value)

Wages

How does Marx define "rate of profit"? (definition)

(explain the formula Surplus Value
 Constant plus Variable Capital)

Problem (work with pencil and paper)

A worker needs \$8 per day to maintain himself and his family.
 If he sells his labor power at \$1 per hour, how many hours a day must he work? (8 hours)

Elementary Economics

- If he produces value at the rate of \$2 per hour, what is the rate of surplus value? (100%)
- If the cost of raw materials for one day is \$2, and the cost of plant maintenance and operation is \$2, what is the value of one days production? (\$20)
- If the commodities sell at their value:
 What does the boss receive for them? (\$20)
 What is the surplus value? (\$8)
 What is the % profit of the boss with total capital of \$12 ($8/12 \times 100 = 66.7\%$)
- If the bank gets \$2 in interest, what is the portion of surplus value retained by the boss? ($8-2 = 6$)
- If the government takes an additional \$2 in taxes, what portion of the surplus value is retained by the boss? ($8-4 = 4$)

Summary

- An accumulation of commodities or money is the necessary basis for capitalist investment. A sum of commodities or money is a sum of past crystallized labor. It is also a sum of exchange values.
- Accumulations may also be obtained from interest and commercial trading but are subsidiary to the major use of capital -- industrial investment. The basic characteristic of capital is the domination of past labor over living labor for the purpose of further accumulation. This relation between past labor and living labor is the basis for the system of capitalism.
- Values that go into the production of a commodity, by the investment of capital in living labor -- in wages -- and whose value in the finished product varies, is called Variable Capital. Other values -- raw materials, plant maintenance, etc., whose value is added to the value of the finished product without change is called Constant Capital. The value of the products that go to make up Constant Capital have been established by past labor.
- All sources of "unearned" income -- rent, dividends, interest, etc., are ultimately derived from surplus value.
- The rate of surplus value is the ratio of unpaid to paid labor -- or surplus value to variable capital.
- The rate of profit is the ratio of surplus value to the total capital -- or surplus value to the sum of constant and variable capital.

LESSON V.

Chapters XII, XIII, XIV - Value Price & Profit

Chapter VII - Wage Labor and Capital

CAPITAL AND LABORInterests of Capital and Labor Opposed

From what source does the employer get the funds for wages and the profits?

Elementary Economics

With a given rate of wages and other costs of production, what determines the amount of profit?

If commodities are sold at value, what happens to profits if wages rise? If wages fall?

What is the general rule that governs the relative changes of wages and profits?

How does this rule affect the interests of capital and labor?

Problem:

If the worker adds \$16 per day to the product, what is the rate of surplus value if:

- a) wages are \$8 per day ($8/8 \times 100 = 100\%$)
- b) wages rise to \$10 ($6/10 \times 100 = 60\%$)
- c) wages drop to \$6 ($10/6 \times 100 = 167\%$)

Would the value of the commodity be affected?

Productivity and Wages

Suppose capitalist #1 is competing with capitalist #2 --

If #1 has better equipment than #2, what will be the comparative labor time per commodity of each?

Could #1 sell his commodities at a cheaper price?

Could #1 pay higher wages and still have the same or higher rate of surplus value than #2?

Can high priced labor produce cheaper commodities than low priced labor? Under what conditions?

Is the boss justified in saying that high prices are caused by high wages?

Attempts to Raise Wages or Resist Their Fall

Given an 8 hour work day, 4 hours of which are needed to maintain and reproduce labor power -- if productivity falls, so that 5 hours are necessary to maintain and reproduce labor power:

- a) what is the rate of surplus value?
- b) has the total value of the commodities produced per day changed?
- c) what happens to the price per article?

If wages remained the same, what would happen to the standard of living?

What should the worker demand?

If productivity rises until only three hours are needed to maintain and reproduce labor power:

- a) what is the rate of surplus value?
- b) what happens to the price per article?
- c) if wages remain the same, what happens to the real wages of the worker?

With the tendency of the capitalist to drive wages down, what should the worker demand?

Changes in the Value of Gold

If the necessary labor in producing gold is cut in half what would happen to prices? Why? (See Lesson I)

Elementary Economics

If money wages remained the same, what would happen to real wages?

What should the worker demand?

Length of the Workday

Given an increase in the workday from 8 to 10 hours --

If 4 hours are needed to reproduce and maintain labor power, what is the rate of surplus value?

With the increased hours of work, what happens to:

- a) the value of each commodity?
- b) real wages?
- c) the total value produced?

Who gets all the benefit of the increased hours?

If the increased hours tax the health of the worker, what happens to his span of productive life?

Is the boss interested in this fact? What should the worker demand?

Note: The instructor can bring in at this point how the "transitional demands" are effectively used for these very reasons).

Trade Unions:

What is the role of a labor union?

When the union gets a wage raise for the workers, what does this wage raise represent? Improved working conditions? Shorter hours per day with no reduction in a day's wage?

What effect do these factors have on the profits of the boss?

If the profits of the boss are cut too low, what does he do?

Can a worker work for a boss and not produce surplus value?

If the worker gets a larger share of the value he produces, does capital still accumulate?

Can improving the conditions of the workers eliminate capitalism?

Capitalist production moves in cycles. What should a union fight for:

- a) during a general rise in production?
- b) during a general fall in production?

Discussion

Show how surplus value is produced under the piece-work system.

What are the differences between piece-work and time-work wages?

Summary

Since both wages and surplus value are derived from the value produced by the worker, any increase in one factor causes a decrease in the other. This is the basic relationship that drives capital and labor into irreconcilable opposition.

The value of a commodity is determined by the total necessary labor incorporated in it. With the increase of productivity, labor incorporated in one commodity drops, lowering its value. Thus, a worker, receiving high wages, may produce an article more cheaply than a low paid worker

Elementary Economics

producing the same commodity at a lower rate of productivity. High wages, therefore, do not necessarily result in high prices.

The capitalists constantly try to depress wages and increase surplus values. They try to turn every fluctuation in productivity and value of gold to their advantage. They use every opportunity to increase the length of the work day and intensity of work. Only the need to maintain and reproduce the supply of labor power determines the limits to their efforts.

Labor unions are the mechanism used by the workers to obtain an increased share of the value they produce. However, as long as capitalism remains in effect the production of surplus value continues and capital keeps growing. A union can raise the relative wage received but cannot by this process make any fundamental change in the system. Instead of the slogan "A fair day's wages for a fair day's work" they must advance "Abolition of the wages system."

LESSON VI.

Chapters VII and IX -- Wage Labor and Capital

Increasing Domination of Capitalists Over Workers

The capitalist says that if capital grows the worker gets more work.

What does the worker receive, in wages, for his day's work?
How are these wages used?

What does the capitalist receive from the day's work? How is this surplus value used?

When the capitalist invests his surplus value into obtaining greater production, what two main methods does he use?

If more machinery is used, what happens to the displaced workers?

With a greater supply of workers on the labor market, how is the domination of the capitalist over the worker affected?

What is the product of a growth of capital as regards the domination of capital over labor?

Competition Among Capitalists

How does increased production affect competition among capitalists?

How does increased productivity affect the ability of one capitalist to compete with another?

What methods are used to increase productivity?

For division of labor to be effective, what scale of production is necessary?

With high priced machinery, what is the necessary scale of production?

In this case, what happens to the ratio of Constant to Variable Capital?

What is the effect of mass production on concentration of capital?

Elementary Economics

With constantly increasing concentration of capital, what happens to productive levels?

Prices

Suppose capitalist #1 turns out a clock requiring two hours of labor, and capitalist #2 with one hour under an improved method --

If there is sufficient demand to absorb the production of both, will capitalist #2 sell at 1/2 the price of capitalist #1?

How will he scale his prices? If capitalist #2 sells all his products much above the value, what happens to his rate of profit?

What alternatives has capitalist #1?

If capitalist #1, by improving machinery and production methods reduces his labor time to 1 hour --

What is the relation of the two capitalists? What happens to prices?

If capitalist #1 improves his machinery and methods so that 1/2 hour is all that is necessary, what is the relation of the two capitalists? Does the process begin all over again?

Under capitalism, what is the general tendency of prices?

Wages

As division of labor increases, what happens to the skill required of the worker?

What happens to the cost of training a new worker?

How does division of labor affect:

- a) wages
- b) competition among workers
- c) rate of surplus value

How is the buying power of the worker affected under these conditions?

Skilled Workers

With the increased use of machinery, a group of especially skilled men arise.

Why are their wages higher than unskilled workers?

What is their main function in production?

Is their function independent or subordinate to the general system of mass production?

How is skilled work affected by division of labor?

What direction are they driven?

As educational methods are stepped up, what happens to the supply of skilled men? To their wage rates?

Can their interests be in conflict with those of the unskilled workers?

Decline in the Rate of Profit

If the capitalist invests \$100 Constant Capital and \$10 Variable Capital to obtain \$20 in new value --

Elementary Economics

What is the rate of surplus value? (100%)

What is the increase of capital? (\$10)

What is the rate of profit? ($10/110 \times 100 = 9\%$)

If the capitalist invest \$1000 Constant Capital and \$5 Variable Capital to obtain \$20 in new value --

What is the rate of surplus value? ($15/5 \times 100 = 300\%$)

What is the increase of capital? (\$15)

What is the rate of profit? ($15/1005 \times 100 = 1.5\%$)

With increases of Constant Capital, what is the tendency in the rate of profit?

Capitalists, under the whip of competition, try to maintain a given % return on investment -- for example, 6%. With increasing sums of Constant Capital invested, what must he do to maintain 6%? Must he constantly increase production?

Must he have an expanding market?

Must he obtain greater surplus value from the workers?

What happens to the buying power of the workers?

With overproduction on a wide scale, a crisis arises. Is the capitalist able to control and prevent crises?

Summary

As capital grows profits grow, further increasing capital as well as the domination of capital over labor.

Competition among capitalists drives them to constant improvement of their methods of production. This process requires larger and larger investments of Constant Capital, leading to ever higher levels of production.

But increased productivity leads to increased competition among capitalists, forcing them to reduce the price of their commodities, cutting the rate of profit, driving them to seek new methods of increasing productivity and the process begins all over again.

Division of labor reduces the time necessary to train and replace a worker, reducing the value of his labor power. By division of labor competition among workers is increased as is the rate of production of surplus value.

Skilled workers, because of the increased time necessary to train them, receive higher wages. However, advanced methods of training that increase the supply of skilled men, and the encroachment of division of labor into their domain, are constantly driving them down into the ranks of the average worker.

As Constant Capital increases, the rate of profit tends to decline. The capitalist, in order to maintain his rate of profit, is driven to ever greater production and exploitation of the worker. But he is helpless. With overproduction crises arise. Periodic crises are inherent in capitalism.

STUDY GUIDE FOR TROTSKY'S HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

CLASS 1: THE PECULIARITIES AND BACKGROUND OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Essential Readings: Preface, Chapters I, II, III (Volume One).

Optional Readings: Chapters IV, V, VI.

Supplementary Reading: Understanding History, Novack, Pp. 82-130.

Objective:

The Russian Revolution was the first successful revolution led by history's most modern class--the working class. Yet it took place in one of the most backward countries of its time. The class will discuss how this could happen; the concrete conditions of Russia's economy, state, classes and parties. The roles they played in the period leading up to the revolution and how they developed historically will be examined. The class will also take up the context in which the revolution took place and the factors which led up to it.

Discussion Question:

1. Describe the law of uneven and combined development. Give some examples from American history and from your own experience.

Study Questions:

1. Russia was a very unusual country, backward and primitive in some ways, advanced in others. How did it get that way? What were some of its unusual features? How did this effect the revolutionary process?

2. The development of the working class in Russia took place very late. Why? How did this effect it, its moods, its outlook, its parties? Even at the time of the revolution it was a small minority of the population. How then was it to play such a revolutionary role? Why didn't the peasantry play this role?

3. Trotsky talks about political strikes--as opposed to economic ones. What is a political strike? Have we seen any in the U.S.?

4. What is a democratic revolution? What would its tasks be? Who would lead it? What would its parties be? Could it have happened in Russia?

5. A deep radicalization was already occurring in Russia before the war. Might this have led to revolution had the war not occurred?

6. Trotsky says in the preface that "the dynamic of revolutionary events is directly determined by swift, intense, passionate changes in the psychology of classes which have already formed themselves before the revolution."

He also says that "the swift changes in mass views and moods derive, not from the flexibility of man's mind, but just the opposite, from its deep conservatism."

What is all this about? How was it to manifest itself in Russia? What does it mean for us in the U.S.?

Related Readings:

Permanent Revolution, Trotsky, Pp. 36-61.

1905, Trotsky, Pp. 3-56.

Understanding History, Novack, Pp. 130-173.

CLASS 2: THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION AND DUAL POWER

Essential Readings: Chapters: IX, X, XI, XII.

Optional Readings: Chapters XIII, XIV.

Supplementary Readings: The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, Trotsky (3rd Ed.), Pp. 136-137.

Objective:

This class will review the forces and events that came into play during the February Revolution. It will discuss the leading role of the workers districts in the "five days" in February; the role of the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries; the nature of the Duma and of the Executive Committee. The focal point of the class will be a discussion of the paradox of the February Revolution.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is dual power usually a characteristic of a revolutionary period? What happens to the institutions of the old order during this period? Why do the legal forms (amnesty, legalizing the eight-hour day) lag behind the action of the masses?

2. Why did it take the working class to solve the agrarian question in Russia?

Study Questions:

1. How did the soviets arise? Who organized them? Why did the Mensheviks and SRs win many more representatives to the soviets than the Bolsheviks even in the most radical working class districts? What role did the soldiers play in the elections?

2. What was the real relationship of power between the Soviet and the Duma? Did the bourgeoisie feel confident about its own power? What was the attitude of the workers and soldiers toward the Duma? Why was Kerensky able to play such an important role even though he was not a member of any of the leading parties in February? How does Kerensky's role relate to the questions of dual power?

3. What was the social base of the Mensheviks? Of the SRs? Of the Bolsheviks? What did the Mensheviks have in common with the SRs? What role did these parties play in the Soviets? Did the leaders of the Soviet accurately reflect the views of those they represented? What was the role of the soldiers in the Soviets? What was the relation of the Petrograd Soviet to those in other cities?

4. What was the role of the Bolsheviks from the time of the insurrection to mid-April when Lenin arrived? What was their attitude toward the Duma? Toward the Executive Committee?

Related Readings:

"The Dual Power," Lenin, CW Vol. 24, Pp. 38-41.

"Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," Lenin, CW Vol. 23, Pp. 236-253.

(This guide prepared by the
New York Socialist Workers Party)

CLASS 3: A PARTY OF WORKER-BOLSHEVIKS

Essential Readings: Chapters III, VIII, IX;
Lenin As Campaign Manager, Jenness.

Supplementary Reading: What Is To Be Done?
Lenin, Pp. 108-131.

Objective:

This class will take up the question: What kind of party is necessary to make a socialist revolution? It will use the example of the Bolshevik Party. The presentation will center on the relationship between the program and outlook of a revolutionary party as well as its composition and character. Finally, the role of the Worker-Bolsheviks in the February Revolution will be examined.

Discussion Question:

1. What was the relationship between the Bolsheviks' industrial orientation and their program? Why were the orientation and composition alone insufficient to lead a successful struggle for power?

Study Questions:

1. How did the Bolsheviks' industrial orientation and composition affect their participation in the February revolution? What happened to other groups with a different orientation?
2. How did the advantages of Leninist party organization and norms come through to the Bolsheviks' advantage in the February revolution?
3. Was the Bolshevik Party able to keep up with the pace of events?
4. What was the relationship between the Bolsheviks' industrial orientation, their election campaigns and their newspaper?

Related Readings:

"Socialism and the Political Struggle" and "Our Differences," Selected Philosophical Works, Vol. 1, G. Plekhanov.
"Who Are the Friends of the People and Why Do They Fight the Social Democrats?" Lenin, CW Vol. 1, Pp 296-300.
"The Tasks of Russian Social Democrats," Lenin, CW Vol. 2, Pp 327-47.
"The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement," Lenin, CW Vol. 4, Pp 366-71.
"Letter to a Comrade on Our Organizational Tasks," Lenin, CW Vol. 6, Pp 229-250.
The Bolsheviks and the Tsarist Duma, Badayev.
"Workers and Pravda," Lenin, CW Vol 18, Pp. 299-301.
"From the History of the Workers Press in Russia," Lenin, CW Vol. 20, Pp. 245-253.
"The Working Class and Its Press," Lenin, CW Vol. 20, Pp. 363-371.
"Our Tasks," Lenin, CW Vol. 36, Pp.281-284.

CLASS 4: RE-ARMING THE PARTY AND THE "APRIL DAYS"

Essential Readings: Chapters XV, XVI.

Optional Readings: Chapters XVII-XXIII; Appendix II.

Supplementary Readings: "Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution," Writings, 1939-40, Trotsky (2nd Ed.), Pp. 55-73; "Lessons of October," The Challenge of the Left Opposition, Trotsky, Pp. 205-212, 216-220; "Letters from Afar," Lenin, CW Vol. 23, Pp 297-342.**

**Available in separate pamphlet form.

Objective:

The purpose of this class is to study how, upon his return to Russia, Lenin reoriented the Bolsheviks to carry out a line of independent class struggle action in preparation for October. This class will review: the views of the Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, and Trotsky on the character of the Russian Revolution in the pre-1917 period; the approach of the Bolshevik leadership before Lenin's arrival; and why Lenin was able to correct the party's course so quickly. It will discuss the historical significance of Lenin's "April Theses". The class will also take up the April crisis provoked by the Provisional Government and how the crisis set the stage for the "July Days".

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the significance of Lenin's April program? How did the line of independent working class action prepare the Bolsheviks for October? What relevance do the "April Theses" have for revolutionaries today? What did subsequent revolutionary situations show about Lenin's method? (E.g., Chile, 1972-3; Portugal, 1974-5; Italy and Spain today).
2. Discuss how it was possible for the workers to be 100 times further to the left than the Bolsheviks, when the Bolsheviks had a program to take power.

Study Questions:

1. What was the early attitude of the Bolshevik leaders toward the Provisional Government? What was the source of this attitude? What would have been the possible results of unity with the Mensheviks?
2. How important were the slogans "Democratic Republic," "Confiscation of the Landed Estates," and "An 8-Hour Day" in the history of the Bolshevik Party? How valid were these slogans after February?
3. What were the main programmatic and tactical points Lenin attacked at the April conference? What did he propose in their place?
4. How was Lenin able to win a majority in the party so quickly? What traditions of the Bolshevik Party prepared it to grasp Lenin's approach?
5. How necessary was the role of Lenin--the individual--to the revolution?
6. What were Miliukov's objectives in sending the April 18 note to the Allies? What were the aims of the workers' demonstrations? How did the April events indicate the real relation between the Executive Committee and the Provisional Government?
7. What is the importance of Trotsky's analysis of the time lag in all representative institutions (Pp. 328-9, Sphere; 363-4, Pluto). Also, the time lags in consciousness (403-5, Sphere; 445-7, Pluto).

Related Readings:

"Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers," Lenin, CW Vol. 23, Pp. 367-374.
From Lenin, CW Vol 24:
"Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution," (April Theses), Pp. 21-26.
"Letters on Tactics," Pp. 42-54.
"The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," Pp. 54-92.
"Political Parties in Russia and the Tasks of the Proletariat," Pp. 93-107.
"Report on the Present Situation and the Attitude Towards the Provisional Government," Pp. 141-151.
"Minutes of the March Conference," Stalin School of Falsification, Trotsky, Pp. 235-301.
The Challenge of the Left Opposition, Trotsky, Pp. 274-279.
Leon Trotsky on China, Pp. 87-95; 158-198; 291-341.

CLASS 5: THE "JULY DAYS" AND KORNILOV'S INSURRECTION

Essential Readings: Chapters I, II, IX, X, XI (Volume Two).

Optional Readings: Chapters III, V, VI.

Supplementary Reading: The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, Trotsky, Pp. 132-141.

Objective:

In the July Days, the Bolsheviks were faced with a premature challenge by the Petrograd masses to the Kerensky regime. The party had to attempt to restrain the masses without abandoning them. At the same time, it had to defend and preserve its own forces in the face of the repression which followed; it had to know when and how to retreat.

Kornilov's attempted coup d'etat transformed the situation. The Bolshevik response provides a textbook example of the united front in action. It also illustrates how a sound policy of defense can lay the necessary basis for a renewal of the offensive struggle.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is the defense of democratic rights and even of bourgeois-democratic institutions often a paramount task of the workers movement even in pre-revolutionary situations?
2. What lessons can we learn from the Leninist defense of Petrograd about the tactic of the united front?

Study Questions:

1. What were the causes of the July Days--both in terms of the government's policies and of the masses' outlook.
2. What policy did the Bolsheviks adopt during the July Days? What risks did this policy contain? Why did the Bolsheviks decide not to try to seize power in July?
3. What attitude toward coalition with the bourgeois parties did the masses express in July? What was the response of the SRs and the Mensheviks?
4. Why did the Kadet ministers withdraw from the coalition government?
5. Why did Kornilov's forces attempt to overthrow Kerensky? How did the program of Kornilov and Kerensky dovetail? How did they diverge?
6. In the struggle against Kornilov, what was the Bolshevik policy towards Kerensky and the Compromise parties?
7. What was the effect of the anti-Kornilov struggle on the soviets themselves and their relationship to the masses of workers, peasants, and soldiers?
8. What effect did the events of July and August have on the Petrograd masses' political outlook? What effect did they have on the masses' attitude toward the Bolsheviks?

Related Readings:

From Lenin, CW Vol. 25:
 "How to Fight Counter-Revolution," Pp. 97-8.
 "What Could the Kadets Have Counted on When They Withdrew from the Cabinet?" Pp. 153-4.
 "Where Is the State, Where Is the Counter-Revolution?" Pp. 157-61.
 "Constitutional Illusions," Pp. 196-210.
 "On Compromises," Pp. 309-314.
 "Draft Resolution on the Present Political Situation," Pp. 315-321.
The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, Trotsky, Pp. 142-263.
The Spanish Revolution (1931-39), Trotsky, Pp. 125-7; 142-151.

CLASS 6: THE PEASANT AND NATIONAL QUESTIONS

Essential Readings: Chapters I, II, "A Further Note on Nationalities (Volume Three).

Supplementary Readings: "Results and Prospects," The Permanent Revolution, Trotsky, Pp. 29-122.
 "Lenin's Real Views on Nationalism," Tony Thomas, International Socialist Review, Jan. 1972.

Objective:

This class will examine the peasant and national struggles in the Russian Revolution as a confirmation of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution. It will discuss how the Bolshevik approach on the national question is an example of the transitional method. It will also take up how the Bolshevik approach on the national question was opposed to the Stalinist approach, specifically in the case of Georgia.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the theory of the permanent revolution relate to the coming American revolution?
2. Does the right to self-determination apply in a workers' state? Wouldn't secession be a step toward restoration of capitalism?

Study Questions:

1. Why couldn't Russian capitalism give the land to the peasants?
2. Why were the Social Revolutionaries unable to lead a peasant revolution?
3. How did the Bolsheviks relate to the peasantry? What slogans and forms of struggle were used?
4. Wasn't it a contradiction for the Bolsheviks to stand for the right to self-determination and for a single, multinational party?
5. What part do the peasant and national questions play in our program today for the political revolution in the USSR?
6. What is meant by "nationalization of the land?" Is nationalization of the land a bourgeois or a socialist step? What is the difference between the bourgeois and socialist stages on the land question?

Related Readings:

"Critical Remarks on the National Question," Lenin, CW Vol. 20, Pp. 17-51.**
 "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," Lenin, CW Vol. 20, Pp. 393-454.**
Lenin's Fight Against Stalinism, Lenin and Trotsky, Pp. 127-148.
Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination.
The Spanish Revolution (1931-39), Trotsky Pp. 109-110; 155-157; 161-164.
 "Stalin as a Theoretician," Writings, 1930, Trotsky, Pp. 308-334.

CLASS 7: THE TRANSITIONAL METHOD AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Essential Readings: Chapters III, IV, V.

Supplementary Readings: Appendix I (Vol. 3); "Lessons of October," The Challenge of the Left Opposition, Trotsky, Pp. 221-256; "The State and Revolution," Lenin, CW Vol. 25,** (especially chapters I and III).

Objective:

This class will examine how the Bolsheviks employed the transitional method step-by-step to win the masses to the socialist revolution in the period opened by Kornilov's defeat. It will discuss Lenin's role in pushing the party to act decisively when organizing the insurrection became the immediate task. How Lenin's programmatic clarity was decisive in overcoming the hesitation, and even open opposition to

insurrection, in the party's leading bodies will be reviewed. The methodological roots of Trotsky's Transitional Program will be assessed in light of the Bolsheviks' October program summarized by the slogan: "Power to the Soviets, Land to the Peasants, Peace to the Nations, and Bread to the Starving!" Also, the transitional approach will be appraised in light of the tactics of the Bolsheviks.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did the Bolsheviks employ the transitional method? Why did they advance certain slogans (e.g., "Power to the Soviets") at some times and not at others? How did their tactics reflect their mastery of the transitional method?
2. What did Trotsky mean when he said, "the tactical mistakes of Lenin were for the most part by-products of his strategic power"?
3. What does the dispute with the Zinoviev-Kamenev minority show about the centrality of the party to the transitional method?

Study Questions:

1. Why did Lenin characterize the pre-Parliament as a "Bonapartist Fraud"? What was the significance of the Bolshevik withdrawal?
2. How did the Bolsheviks force the Central Executive Committee to call the Soviet Congress? How did they prevent it from sabotaging the Congress? What can we learn about their methods for our work today?
3. How was the Committee of Revolutionary Defense (Military Revolutionary Committee) set up? How did the Bolsheviks use it? How did its status within Soviet legality fit with the Bolsheviks' aims?
4. Why was the legal framework of dual power still observed by both sides? Why were mass demonstrations unnecessary in this period? What was the tactical line of the Bolsheviks? Why did Lenin express concern about the "peaceful development of the revolution" while emphasizing the primacy of the military preparations for the insurrection?
5. How did Lenin establish the true relation of forces in such a confusing period? What did he consider the turning point that made the insurrection immediate? What international factors did he take into account?
6. What was Lenin's attitude toward the Bolshevik leadership? What was the crisis in the Bolshevik party? What were the main line-ups at the Central Committee meeting of Oct. 10?
7. What were Kamenev and Zinoviev's main arguments? How prevalent were their views in the party? What was Stalin's role?

Related Readings:

The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, Trotsky (3rd Ed.), Pp. 109-154; 171-182.
From Lenin, CW Vol. 25:
"On Slogans," Pp 183-190.
"Lessons of the Revolution," Pp. 225-239.
"The Impending Catastrophe and How to Fight It," Pp. 319-365.**
From Lenin, CW Vol. 26:
"The Bolsheviks Must Assume State Power," Pp. 19-21.
"From a Publicist's Diary," Pp. 52-58.
"The Tasks of the Revolution," Pp. 59-69.
"Letter to L. Smilga," Pp. 69-73.
"The Crisis Has Matured," Pp. 74-86.
"Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" Pp. 90-136.
"Theses for Report at October 8 Conference," P. 143.
"Letter to Petrograd City Conference," Pp. 145-8.
"Revision of the Party Program," Section VII, Pp. 169-173.
"Letter to Comrades," Pp. 195-215.
"Letter to Bolshevik Party Members," Pp. 216-9.
"Letter to the Central Committee," Pp. 223-7.
"Letter to Central Committee Members," Pp. 234-5.
The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, Trotsky, Pp. 97-98.
The Challenge of the Left Opposition, Trotsky, Pp. 280-292.

CLASS 8: THE ART OF INSURRECTION AND THE CONQUEST OF POWER

Essential Readings: Chapters VI, XI, X.

Optional Readings: Chapters VII, VIII.

Supplementary Readings: In Volume II, Pp. 328-9, Sphere Edition; Pp. 845-6 Pluto. The Challenge of the Left Opposition, Trotsky, Pp. 163-198; "What Is a Revolutionary Situation?" Writings, 1930-31, Trotsky, Pp. 352-355.

Objective:

This class will discuss the October Insurrection and the elements of insurrection which lead Marxists to speak of it as an art. It will examine the difference between the Blanquist and Marxist approaches to insurrection. How the Bolsheviks isolated the Provisional Government in the last days and led the seizure of power before the Soviet congress convened will be discussed. The class will take up the importance of defensive tactics and formulations, even through the insurrection itself. The measures taken by the Bolsheviks to ensure the retention of power will be examined along with the role and fate of the Constituent Assembly.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do Marxists refer to insurrection as an art? What are the elements of this art? What relevance do the elements of this art have for revolutionary strategy and tactics today?
2. How do the lessons of the History of the Russian Revolution apply to the present period in the advanced capitalist countries? In the underdeveloped countries? Why does the Russian Revolution serve as a model for revolutionaries today--as opposed to the Chinese, Cuban or Yugoslavian revolutions?

Study Questions:

1. Is there an element of "conspiracy" in even the most popular revolutions? In what sense?
2. What is Blanquism? What are its positive aspects as well as its basic weaknesses? Is guerrilla warfare Blanquism?
3. Why is timing so important in an insurrection? Why is it necessary to bring over the wavering elements, especially sections of the middle class?
4. Why weren't the masses summoned to the streets to carry out the insurrection?
5. What was the role of the Red Guard? How did its existence act as a thermometer of the stage of the revolution?
6. Why did Trotsky favor taking power through the Soviets rather than, as Lenin advocated, directly in the name of the party?
7. What are defensive formulations? Why are they so important, especially in a period of insurrection?
8. What were the first measures proclaimed by the new government? What was the purpose of the Bolsheviks taking over the S.R. land program?

Related Readings:

From Lenin, CW Vol. 26:
"Marxism and Insurrection," Pp. 22-27.
"Advice of an Onlooker," Pp. 179-181.
"Meeting of the Petrograd Soviet," Pp. 239-241.
"Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets," Pp. 247-263.
"Speech on the Constituent Assembly," Pp. 353-355.
"Theses on the Constituent Assembly," Pp. 379-383.
"Speech on the Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly," Pp. 437-441.
"The Slogan of a National Assembly in China," Writings, 1930, Trotsky, Pp. 164-167.
"On the Declaration of the Indochinese Opposition," Writings, 1930-31, Trotsky, Pp. 29-33.