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TO ALL ORGANIZERS AND EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed are three study guides that were described in preparation in the April 15, 1974 communication on summer school programs.

They are "A Marxist Approach to the Labor Movement", an up-dated version of a five-class series that appears in the Education for Socialists bulletin, Guide to Marxist Education; "Revolutionary Defense Policies and Principles", a three-class series taking up key aspects of our approach to defending the left against ruling class repression and attacks on our rights by other working-class tendencies; a two-class study guide on Teamster Rebellion, by Farrell Dobbs; and a two-class study guide on Teamster Power, by Farrell Dobbs. Both of the latter books are published by Monad Press.

Comradely,

*Fred Feldman*

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National Education Department

A MARXIST APPROACH TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT  
(A Five-Class Series)

Class 1: The Trade Unions and the Class Struggle

Reading: Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions, (Pathfinder Press); especially the following sections:

"Communism and Syndicalism," pp. 15-23

"The Unions in Britain," pp. 53-57

"Trade Unions in the Transitional Epoch," pp. 59-62

"Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," pp. 68-75

Supplementary Reading: V. I. Lenin, Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Chapter VI, entitled, "Should Revolutionaries Work in Reactionary Trade Unions?"

- QUESTIONS: 1. What are the major strengths and limitations of the trade unions from the point of view of advancing the class struggle as a whole?
2. For revolutionists, is trade unionism an end in itself? Is it possible to bypass the trade unions?
3. In addition to the trade unions, what other forms of working class organization presently exist? What other forms may develop in the course of the class struggle?
4. Can an organization fulfill the functions of a trade union and a revolutionary party at the same time? What was the error of the IWW on this line? What was wrong with the Comintern's "Third Period" theory of red trade unions?
5. What is the goal of revolutionary work in the trade unions? In what ways does the attitude of revolutionary Marxists toward the trade unions differ from that of most militant workers? From that of the union bureaucrats?
6. For party members in the trade unions who are elected to trade union posts, what is the relationship between party discipline and trade union discipline? How does the party's approach to this question differ from that of the Stalinists and Social Democrats?
7. In the epoch of imperialist decay, what tendency is developing in the relationship between the unions and the capitalist state? What is the role of the union bureaucracy in this process? How is this reflected in the United States? Why won't increased trade union militancy alone suffice to counteract this trend?

Class 2: A Key Demand: The Sliding Scale of Wages and Hours and the Fight Against Inflation

Reading: Leon Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International (The Transitional Program)" in The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, pp. 76-88 (Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, First Edition)

Inflation: What Causes It, How to Fight It by Linda Jenness and Dick Roberts (Pathfinder Press)

Supplementary Reading: Leon Trotsky, "Discussion with a CIO Organizer," in Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions, pp. 62-68

QUESTIONS: 1. What are the basic causes of inflation? Are higher wages a cause? What is the role of military spending? What advantages and disadvantages does inflation have for the capitalist class?

2. What was the reason for the government's wage controls? Why are some elements in the ruling class now willing to consider lifting controls? Have their objectives changed?

3. How are wage controls enforced? Why are price controls a fraud?

4. Why does the transitional program give prominence to the demand for a sliding scale of wages and a sliding scale of hours? Why are these demands necessarily interlinked?

5. How does the sliding scale of wages and hours help overcome the divisions in the class between organized and unorganized workers? Between old and young? Between employed and unemployed? How does the sliding scale of wages and hours relate to the needs of Black, Chicano, and women workers?

6. How does the sliding scale of wages and hours link up with other demands in the Transitional Program, such as the opening of corporate books to workers inspection, workers control, committees on prices, a public works program, etc.? Discuss how our fight for the sliding scale of wages and hours differs from the way the labor bureaucrats sometimes adapt to these demands--for instance, their acceptance of the government cost-of-living figures and their attempt to limit concessions to the privileged strata of the working class.

7. In what way are these demands transitional? In what way do they strike at the capitalist class? Do they seem reasonable to the workers? How were these demands derived?

8. Is "30 for 40" identical to the sliding scale of wages and hours? Does it move in that direction?

9. Why can't each union acting alone--or in concert on an industry-by-industry basis--beat back the attack on living standards?

### Class 3: The Labor Party

Reading: "How to Fight for a Labor Party in the U.S.", discussion with Leon Trotsky in The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, (Pathfinder Press), pp. 113-124

"Campaign for a Labor Party" by James P. Cannon in Aspects of Socialist Election Policy (Education for Socialists Bulletin), pp. 12-17

"Election Policy in 1948," Report and Summary in Aspects of Socialist Election Policy, pp. 21-34

QUESTIONS: 1. Why do we call for a labor party? Why didn't we call for such a party in the early 1930s? What are the objective conditions in the United States that underlie this slogan?

2. What program do we advocate for a labor party? Would we support a labor party with a reformist leadership?

3. Why did Cannon propose an agitational campaign on the labor party slogan in 1942? What changes in conditions justified this? What is the difference between propaganda and agitation? Is the labor party a propagandistic or agitational slogan for us today? What is wrong with the Workers League concept of the labor party slogan?

4. What are the differences between a labor party and a party like Henry Wallace's Progressive Party?

5. What is our attitude toward reformist labor parties like the British Labor Party or the Canadian New Democratic Party? What are our objectives when we work in such formations? Is a reformist labor party an inevitable stage of the class struggle in the U.S.?

6. Given the composition of the industrial unions, and the working class in general, what is the inter-relationship between the calls for independent Black and Chicano parties and the call for a labor party?

7. How do the objective conditions and needs of the workers lead them toward support for the labor party slogan?

Class 4: Basic Outlines of the Present Trade Union Policy of the SWP

Reading: From Selected Documents on SWP Trade Union Policy (Education for Socialists bulletin), "Class Struggle Policy in the Unions," Resolution of 1954 SWP convention, pp. 3-9; "Memorandum on Trade Union Policy," adopted at the May 1968 Plenum of the SWP National Committee, pp. 10-13; "Black Caucuses in the Trade Unions"; Political Committee Memorandum adopted April 18, 1969, pp. 15-17  
"Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," from Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions (Pathfinder) pp. 68-75

Supplementary Reading: "Trade Union Panel, 1973 SWP Convention" Internal Information Bulletin No. 4 in 1973

QUESTIONS: 1. What is the difference between a class struggle program and a class collaborationist one? Why is there a necessity for building a class struggle left wing within the unions? Why can't the bureaucracy reform itself?

2. What are some of the central demands that must be included in the program for a class-struggle left wing? Are these demands limited to "bread and butter" demands?

3. How must a class struggle program in the labor movement relate to the demands being raised in the Black, women's and Chicano movements? What are the opportunities that formations like Black Caucuses or Conference of Labor Union Women present revolutionists for advancing their program in the unions?

4. Why should the main fire of a left wing program be directed at the class enemy rather than the labor bureaucrats? How will this aid the struggle against the bureaucrats?

5. What were the considerations involved in the party's cautious attitude toward campaigns for union posts in the 1954 resolution? What contradictions would a party member holding a union post find him or herself in if there was no left wing development in the union? What illusions did the resolution seek to guard against? What considerations determine our attitude toward such campaigns today?

6. In what sectors of the working class is a class struggle left wing likely to find its strongest support? Its strongest opposition?

7. Trotsky says that "There is one common feature in the development or more correctly the degeneration of modern trade union organizations throughout the world: it is their drawing closely to and growing together with the state power." How is this illustrated in the United States today? What is the alternative to this process? Can unions simply return to their relative independence of the past?

8. The 1954 resolution states, "The integration of the Social Democrats into the CIO leadership strengthened the grip of the bureaucracy by giving it new weapons of social demagoguery..." Does this statement still hold true for the AFL-CIO today?

9. The 1971 Political Resolution states, "The decisive mass of workers will not be politicalized until the underlying international crisis of American imperialism forces it into a show-down with the labor movement? Why is this the case? Have events moved toward such a confrontation?"

#### Class 5: The Present Political Situation and the SWP's Labor Policy

Reading: "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization", 1971 SWP Political Resolution; especially the following sections: "Making the Workers Pay for the War"; "How the Radicalization has Affected the Working Class"; "Government Offensive Against the Unions"; and "A Dogmatic View of How the Workers Will Radicalize"

Jack Barnes, Political Report to the SWP National Committee, March 1971. Especially Sections 7, 8 and 9

The above two documents are available in A Revolutionary Strategy for the 1970s (Pathfinder Press) and in SWP Discussion Bulletin, Volume 29, No 1,

"Draft Political Resolution," 1973 SWP Political Resolution, especially the following sections: "The Evolution of Ruling Class Strategy"; "New Struggles"; "Undocumented Workers"; "The Farm Workers Struggle"; "Inflation and the Meat Boycott"; "Our Answer"; "General Characteristics of the Radicalization"; and "The Unions"

Supplementary Reading: Towards an American Socialist Revolution Pathfinder Press, pp. 152-178 (1969 Political Resolution)

QUESTIONS: 1. How does the evolution of the world capitalist economy and the changing world economic and political situation of U.S. imperialism affect the American working class?

2. Why is the ruling class seeking to lower the living standards of the workers? What weapons are they using? What conceptions underly the response of the top union leaders?
3. What changes have occurred in recent years in the composition of the work force in the United States? How has the radicalization of youth, Blacks, women, and Chicanos affected the working class?
4. How does our policy in the unions differ from that of all our opponents on the left?
5. Why do we hold that the comparatively high living standards to which many American workers have become accustomed can become a revolutionary force?
6. Why does the 1973 resolution state that "substantial social reforms and concessions on the scale of Social Security won in the 1930s can be wrested from the ruling class only as a result of a massive upsurge of the working class?" What is the political significance of this conclusion?
7. What is the general outline of our program in the unions? Why don't we lay down general tactical prescriptions applicable to all unions?
8. Why do we say the "ascending industrial-union movement was a vast social movement?" What features of the radicalization of the 1930s assure that the present radicalization won't be a "rerun" of the 1930s? What tasks did the earlier radicalization accomplish? What tasks did it fail to accomplish?
9. What does the struggle of the farm workers tell us about the interrelationship of the labor movement and the struggle of oppressed nationalities?
10. Does the strategic power of the workers increase or decrease with the increase in the sophistication, automation, mechanization of the advanced capitalist economy? Why? What is wrong with the New Left theories about a "new working class?"
11. Why do we call for the union movement to convene a congress of labor? What would a congress of labor look like? How would it differ from a regular AFL-CIO national convention? What should a congress of labor do?

REVOLUTIONARY DEFENSE POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES  
(A Three-Class Series)

Class 1: Defense of Democratic Rights

Required Reading: Defense Policies and Principles of the SWP  
(Education for Socialists Bulletin), pp.1-15

The Transitional Program for Socialist  
Revolution (Pathfinder Press, 1973, First  
Edition), pp. 51-68

Supplementary Reading: The Case of the Legless Veteran, by  
James Kutcher (Monad, 1973)  
Chapter 14

Democracy and Revolution, by George Novack  
(Pathfinder Press, 1973), Chapters 10 and 12

The First Ten Years of American Communism, by  
James P. Cannon (Pathfinder, 1971), pp. 159-  
165

Notebook of an Agitator, by James P. Cannon  
(Pathfinder Press, 1973), pp. 3-71

- QUESTIONS: 1. What are the origins of democratic rights in bourgeois democracies? What happens to the attitude of the bourgeoisie towards these rights as capitalism develops? What historical examples can you find of this process? What role do the institutions of bourgeois democracy play in protecting democratic rights? Can revolutionaries have confidence in bourgeois courts and legislatures as protectors of democratic rights?
2. Explain the difference between the defense of democratic rights and defense of bourgeois democratic institutions. How does the revolutionary approach to this question express the method of the Transitional Program?
3. What is the value of the slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all?"
4. How did the International Labor Defense help to originate the idea of a united front defense policy?
5. In what way does a properly conducted defense campaign or committee resemble a united front? How does it differ?
6. How have the Stalinists violated the concepts of united front defense and labor solidarity?
7. How is the concept of a defense campaign as a forum for revolutionary ideas compatible with the concept of a non-sectarian, united front defense campaign?
8. Why is it important that control over defense policy in a political case remain with the defendants rather than the lawyers?
9. What are the differences between a revolutionary defense policy and a liberal or reformist one?

Class 2: Ultraleftism Vs. a Revolutionary Defense Policy

Reading: "Defense Policy in the Minneapolis Trial," by Grandizo Munis and James P. Cannon, in Socialism on Trial (Pathfinder, 1973), pp. 128-177

"How We Overcame Ultraleftism in Our Defense Work," Interview with James P. Cannon in Intercontinental Press, January 14, 1974

Supplementary Reading: Socialism on Trial, pp. 1-127

Leon Trotsky Speaks (Pathfinder Press, 1973) pp. 15-32

The Case of the Legless Veteran (Monad, 1973) Chapter 19

QUESTIONS: 1. Why was the government's charge in the Minneapolis trial that the SWP called for violent overthrow of the government not true?

2. How does this position square with the revolutionary criticisms of reformist illusions about a "peaceful transition to socialism"?

3. In his defense of the Petrograd Soviet of 1905, Trotsky makes the point that the soviet "prepared for" rather than "prepared" the insurrection. What is the significance of the distinction?

4. Explain the concept behind the term "defensive formulation." How do such formulations express reality? Why are such formulations an aid to effective propaganda?

5. What was wrong with Munis' criticism of Cannon's formulation on "submitting to the majority"?

6. Do revolutionaries' formulations on violence undergo a change in a period of revolutionary upsurge?

7. Why is it important for a revolutionary party to defend and extend its legal rights? Does this compromise a revolutionary party's efforts to expose the undemocratic nature of capitalist society?

Class 3: Revolutionary Defense Policy and Violence Within the Workers Movement

Reading: From Against Violence Within the Workers Movement (Education for Socialists Bulletin): "Introductory Note on Violence Within the Movement," by Caroline Lund, p. 3; "On Workers Democracy," by Ernest Mandel, pp. 4-7; "Our Defense Against the Goon Attack Launched by the NCLC," by Barry Sheppard, pp. 26-31; and "Letter to the Attorney-General of Mexico," by Leon Trotsky, pp. 31-2.

Supplementary Reading: History of American Trotskyism by James P. Cannon (Pathfinder, 1973) Lecture 4, "The Left Opposition Under Fire"

Teamster Power by Farrell Dobbs (Monad, 1973) Chapter 11

Notebook of an Agitator by James P. Cannon (Pathfinder Press, 1973), pp. 238-241



QUESTIONS: 1. What does the term "workers democracy" mean in relation to capitalist countries? How does this concept differ from the bourgeois concept of democracy?

2. Why would it be counter-productive for a genuinely revolutionary organization to use force to suppress its working-class opponents--for example--opportunists in the union movement? Why do so many of our opponents--from the CP to the Spartacist League--resort to such methods?

3. Does it mislead the masses to call on a bourgeois government to defend democratic rights?

4. When can a call for action by the authorities be of use in a campaign against violence from within the workers movement? (Give examples.) How large a part can such a call play in a defense campaign?

5. Is it correct to call for a bourgeois government to suppress a fascist or racist organization? Why not?

6. Was it correct to call for the exclusion of the NCLC from public meetings? Why was it incorrect for some groups to call for the revocation of campus charters of NCLC groups?

7. How can the use of violence within the workers movement be used by government provocateurs? What is the attitude of the bourgeoisie toward such outbreaks?

8. What factors must be considered in determining the tactics of self-defense?

# STUDY GUIDES FOR "TEAMSTER REBELLION" AND "TEAMSTER POWER"

BY FARRELL DOBBS

Note: The extensive questions in these study guides are for the assistance of teachers in pinpointing the key political lessons of these books. For the purposes of discussion groups, teachers may find it desirable to increase the number of classes given or to reduce the number of questions for each class.

## Teamster Rebellion

A Two-Class Series

### Class 1: The Organizing Campaign and the May Strike

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

Supplementary Reading: American Labor Struggles, 1877-1934, by Samuel Yellen (New York: Monad Press, 1974)

Labor's Giant Step, by Art Preis (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972) Chapters 1-5

- QUESTIONS: 1. What developments, locally and nationally, provided the "opening wedge" for a union organizing drive in Minneapolis? What prompted the coal drivers strike in February?
2. How did the Teamsters bureaucracy try to block the strikes? Why didn't the union organizers bypass the reactionary leadership of the AFL and start a new union under more militant auspices? Why did the Trotskyists direct their main fire at the coal yard and trucking bosses rather than at Cliff Hall and other bureaucrats? How did such a "flanking" tactic help to strengthen the militant wing? How did these tactics contrast with those advocated at the time by the Stalinists?
3. What is the significance of continuity and tradition in the development of a revolutionary movement? What is their significance in the development of the workers movement as a whole? Contrast the structure of the chapter, "Seeds of Revolt," with the usual way this subject is handled by bourgeois historians.
4. What were the pitfalls and hidden opportunities of deciding to organize coal yard workers and drivers in Minneapolis in 1933? What was the "plan of battle?"
5. What is the difference between real and formal leadership? How can the two be separate and yet coexist? Why is this often necessary? Could the "general mobilization of the truckdrivers have been undertaken otherwise?
6. What were the advantages and disadvantages of having a Farmer-Labor Party governor of Minnesota? How did the Trotskyist union builders deal with the opportunities this situation presented?
7. What conditions made it possible for the workers to organize physical combat to fight off the strikebreaking cops and deputies? Why haven't we advocated similar methods against the goons that have been used against the farmworkers strike?

8. Why is a degree of compromise involved in all contract settlements with the bosses? What necessitates such compromises? In view of the gains made by the strikers in May, why would it have been incorrect to simply call the agreement an unqualified victory?

9. Did the union officialdom present a solid front to the Trotskyist organizers? What were the differentiations that appeared in the course of the struggle?

10. What was the role of the revolutionary party in such a situation? What would you conclude were its central tasks? How were these carried out?

## Class 2: Winning a Decisive Battle

Reading: Teamsters Rebellion, pp. 108-190

Supplementary Reading: History of American Trotskyism, by James P. Cannon (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972), Lectures VII-VIII, pp. 118-168

- QUESTIONS: 1. What are the employers chief weapons when open class warfare begins? How are they able to make use of federal intervention? Police? The courts? The press? Hospitals? Red-baiting?
2. One of the tactics utilized by the employers in labor disputes is to mobilize other sectors of the population against the striking workers. How did Local 574 cut across this tactic in winning the support of other unions? Women? The unemployed? Farmers? How did the attitude of the strike leaders contrast with the attitude of top union leaders today?
3. What was the role played by regular publication of the Organizer?
4. Why was coldblooded murder unable to stop the strike? Why was it necessary to disarm the strikers of handguns, etc.?
5. Governor Olson had been put into office by a party built by workers and farmers, and based on the union movement. Did this mean that Minnesota did not have a capitalist government? What did Olson's activities during the July-August strike indicate about this?
6. What was the role of "impartial" arbitrators in the July-August strike? Is impartial arbitration of labor disputes possible? What was the difference between the attitude toward arbitration of Local 574 (even while accepting the Haas-Dunnigan proposal) and the attitude of top union leaders today?
7. What hampered military strikebreaking and finally prompted all AFL unions to demand the removal of the National Guard?
8. What was the role played in the Minneapolis organizing campaign by mass democratic decision-making meetings? How should negotiations be carried on to assure that the decision-making power of the ranks is unimpaired?
9. How did Local 574 finally win the July-August strike? How was the contradiction between the formal and the actual leadership of the local resolved? In what important respects had the union changed and what were the tasks ahead?

10. What are the fundamental revolutionary attributes necessary to expose and defeat the trickery of the employing class and its political agents? Did involvement in leading a massive strike change the fundamental tasks facing a revolutionary party? Was it contradictory for a small propaganda organization to lead a struggle of such scope?

11. Why did the American Trotskyist movement wage a national campaign around the Minneapolis strikes? How was this campaign implemented?

### Teamster Power

#### A Two-Class Series

#### Class 1: A Fight for Survival Against the Union Bureaucracy

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

QUESTIONS: 1. How were close ties maintained between the leaders and members of Local 574? How did the leadership practices of the Local 574 leaders differ from those of trade union bureaucrats then and now?

2. What were the characteristics and purposes of the class struggle left wing in the Minneapolis labor movement that was organized by the leaders of Local 574? Why and how did this formation avoid the implication that it was creating an alternative structure to the existing labor movement?

3. What consistent aspects of the strategy and tactics of Local 574 enabled it to help other unions in Minneapolis--the hosiery workers, ornamental iron workers, and others--to win strikes? What caused the defeat of the Fargo, North Dakota strike? Why was Tobin afraid of the growing influence of Local 574?

4. In his attempt to read Local 574 out of the labor movement, why was Tobin insistent on keeping "inside workers" out of the union? How did Local 574 win other AFL unions to support their fight to survive? What was the role played by the national AFL leaders in the fight and how did Local 574 respond to it? What were Tobin's objectives in giving the go-ahead for goon attacks on union members and leaders? How were these attacks met by Local 574?

5. Why was it preferable for the unemployed to be organized within the organized labor movement rather than in independent formations?

6. What were the main points of the offer made by Pat Corcoran for readmitting the truckdrivers union into the Teamsters Union? What conditions in Local 574, in Minneapolis, and in the nation convinced Dobbs that the militant leaders could strengthen their position through this agreement? What risks did he see in rejecting it? Why did Cannon, who questioned this view, decide to back up the judgment of the local leaders?

Class 2: The Over-the-Road Organizing Campaign

Reading: Teamster Power, pp. 133-250

- QUESTIONS: 1. What did the dissolution of the Citizen's Alliance in Minneapolis signify? What were the indicated changes in employer tactics? Why did political class consciousness become more important in the face of such a shift and mere fighting militancy less adequate?
2. What are the reasons for the attitude expressed by Dobbs on no-strike pledges in union contracts? On the length of union contracts? On squeezing additional gains from the bosses during the term of a contract? How do these positions fit in with the attitude Dobbs was trying to convey to the new young leaders on page 236?
3. Our sectarian opponents often project left wings in the unions as pure-and-simple "rank and file" formations directed against union officials. How did the approach of the Trotskyists differ from that of the sectarians? How was this manifested concretely in their attitude to the members of the Executive Board of Local 574 during the 1934 strikes? In their attitude to the former leaders of "Local 500" after the truckdrivers union was readmitted to the Teamsters? How did flanking tactics aid in "sorting out" the union officialdom?
4. How did the Trotskyist leaders of Local 574 win Tobin's support for the over-the-road organizing drive? What were Tobin's motivations in finally accepting the campaign? On what key questions did he have to give ground in order to support the campaign?
5. What do the final discussions between Dobbs and Tobin, and between Dobbs and Sandy O'Brien tell us about the fundamental differences in outlook between "business" unionists --even relatively militant ones--and revolutionary socialists in the union movement?
6. What are the main factors in the radicalization of workers? What is the main advantage that revolutionists have in winning the leadership of the workers? How was this advantage reflected in overcoming bureaucratic obstacles to the over-the-road organizing campaign?
7. How was democratic involvement of the ranks maintained in the over-the-road organizing drive given the greater dispersion of the drivers and the greater centralization needed for negotiating an area-wide contract?
8. In the end, the Trotskyists were not able to build a massive left wing movement in the Teamsters Union against the Tobin bureaucracy's class-collaborationist practices. Does this mean that the strategy followed by the Trotskyists was wrong? Would a frontal attack on Tobin have made the organization of a left wing more successful? What objective factors acted to prevent the preparatory work of the Trotskyists from coming to fruition in a massive left wing formation? What short- and long-term gains did the revolutionary party make out of its work in the over-the-road campaign?